

THE SECULAR COMMEDIA

COMIC MIMESIS IN LATE
EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY MUSIC



WYE JAMISON ALLANBROOK

EDITED BY MARY ANN SMART
RICHARD TARUSKIN

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS



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The publisher gratefully acknowledges the generous contribution to this book provided by the Otto Kinkeldey Endowment of the American Musicological Society.

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Wye Allanbrook in the Hargrove Library; she was an important part of the effort to get the library built. Photo by Kathleen Karn, UC Berkeley Department of Music.

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University of California Press
Oakland, California

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Allanbrook, Wye Jamison.

The secular commedia : comic mimesis in late eighteenth-century music / Wye Jamison Allanbrook ; edited by Mary Ann Smart and Richard Taruskin.

pages cm.—(Ernest Bloch lecture series ; 15)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-520-27407-5 (cloth : alk. paper)

ISBN 978-0-520-95887-6 (ebook)

1. Music—18th century—History and criticism.
2. Music—18th century—Philosophy and aesthetics.
3. Opera—18th century. 4. Comic, The, in music.
5. Mimesis in music. I. Smart, Mary Ann. II. Taruskin, Richard. III. Title.

ML195.A45 2014

780.9'033—dc23

2014004820

Manufactured in the United States of America

23 22 21 20 19 18 17 16 15 14
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

In keeping with a commitment to support environmentally responsible and sustainable printing practices, UC Press has printed this book on Natures Natural, a fiber that contains 30% post-consumer waste and meets the minimum requirements of ANSI/NISO Z39.48–1992 (R 1997) (*Permanence of Paper*).

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FOREWORD

Ethos is made known through action, through motion, through the image of a character “at work.” . . . If one is only fully oneself when one is “at work,” it follows that only in action will characters display the true object of their desires—the thing that “makes them tick.”

These sentences from the first chapter of *The Secular Commedia* capture something important about the spirit of the book and its author. The book argues compellingly, if never quite explicitly, for the centrality of the relationship between character and expression; and the author’s intuition about that essential link permeates her writing on every page. Her historical observations and musical interpretations—her professional expressions—are everywhere colored by her character: her warmth and generosity, and her special gift for community-fostering friendship. We believe that it was her sense of an affinity between musical style and the depiction of diverse and encyclopedic humanity that drew her to writing about comedy—both in opera, in her famous first book *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart*, and now, here, in the instrumental music of the late eighteenth century.

The Secular Commedia is a filled-out version of the Ernest Bloch Lectures that Wye J. Allanbrook—henceforth Wendy, as she was known to all her friends and colleagues—delivered at the invitation of the University of California at Berkeley’s music department in the fall of 1994. These lectures were, in the memory of all who heard them, the best set of Bloch lectures that ever were. All were aware that they were witnessing the birth of a major work. And when the senior faculty of the department retired en masse that very same fall, as a result of the university’s cost-cutting “golden handshake” policy to encourage the early departure of expensive graybeards, the department

pounced. We invited Wendy to apply for one of the permanent jobs that had opened up and gained a colleague whose presence transformed the air we breathed for the length—alas, much too short—of her tenure among us.

Wendy served as a Berkeley professor for only twelve years—years that were to have begun with the revision and publication of the Bloch lectures as the easy second book the department had to assure the administration she would produce almost immediately, to justify her being hired at the rank of full professor. No one imagined that it would languish the way it did, let alone that it would have had to be posthumously edited by a pair of grieving colleagues and friends. But man proposes . . .

Two years after her appointment in 1995, Wendy agreed to serve as chair. She threw herself into administration with verve and gusto—and with amazing results. She and John Roberts, then our music librarian, were a congenial pair, and together they managed to get our new music library, known officially as the Hargrove Library after its principal donor, financed and built. That was the story of the next six years of Wendy's life, from 1997 to 2003, encompassing two terms as chair and culminating in the dedication of the cornerstone. In 2003 came her return to full-time faculty work, and the by now rather long-deferred completion of the book. Or it would have meant that, had not another set of events intervened. The first was her election as president of the American Musicological Society, which looked like it might delay the book, but not for long and in pleasant (or at least prestigious) fashion. But then came the second, the fatal blow that determined the sad final chapter of her life: her diagnosis with a cancer that she fought energetically for seven years, but that finally, inevitably, defeated her, forcing her first to give up the AMS presidency and, in 2006, to retire from the department with a disability pension.

Thereafter, her friends faced a dilemma. We wanted desperately to help Wendy get the book out, but we felt a bit constrained by her situation from putting pressure on her. The two undersigned had many talks with her about it, read drafts to the limited extent that she was producing them, and made note of her ideas and ambitions for the book in case it became necessary to do what, in fact, we have now done. During her last year we began the actual editing for publication, at first in collaboration with her. By the time of her death, the situation was as follows:

The first chapter, "Comic Flux and Comic Precision," corresponding to the first lecture, was virtually completed in the form in which it has now been published. The second chapter, "Comic Voice in the Late Mimetic Period,"

was complete but for an unfinished last section that we have, regretfully, dropped from the published version, since its proper continuation and conclusion could not be extrapolated from the documents Wendy left behind. The third chapter, “The Comic Surface,” was in a shape that permitted completion according to what we confidently imagine to have been Wendy’s intentions. The fourth chapter, “Comic Finitude and Comic Closure,” is a conflation of the last two lecture scripts (the fourth, which bears the same title as the published chapter, and the fifth, which was delivered as “The Comic Narrative”), which Wendy never had a chance to revise. Specifically, the fifth lecture has been nested within the fourth, which had a beginning that could serve for both, and an ending that placed an appropriate emphasis on endings. We cannot claim that this final chapter is what Wendy would have produced herself had she lived, but we do think that it has a shape that will not seem less elegant than those of the completed texts, as well as a bulk comparable to theirs. In short, we have striven for, and hope we have achieved, a viable text that fairly represents the incomparable contents of the lectures in a form that will appear to have been written as a book.

The first chapter has already become a locus classicus, Wendy’s “polyp theory” having become, by word of mouth and the circulation of the text to those who have requested it, well known to those concerned with the historiography of the “Classical” period—although it feels strange to make the claim in such terms, since one of Wendy’s primary objectives was to discredit and discard the old period moniker. The second chapter is the one by which Wendy herself set the most store because it offers a defense of topical theory, as first enunciated by Leonard Ratner and practiced since his day primarily by Wendy and by Kofi Agawu, on terms that Ratner himself could not have summoned on his own behalf. Here we meet, for the first and only time in her published work, Wendy Allanbrook the full-time and full-strength classicist, who had an undergraduate degree in classics and who had practiced that trade for a couple of decades as a tutor at St. John’s College of Annapolis before coming to Berkeley. She brings to bear her erudition in Greek and Latin literature in both reenunciating and significantly refining topical theory in a way that, we are in no doubt, will give it a new lease on life. The third chapter is the one that may prove the most influential on the actual practice of musicology, since it amounts to a thorough subversion of the principles according to which music analysis has been practiced within the discipline; while the fourth ties the musical questions the book has raised and treated to the largest cultural issues of the Enlightenment.

But, having reported the facts about the text, we want to return, in introducing it, to its author—and not only because our redaction of it has been a posthumous project, undertaken after many years of warm friendship and colored by loss. At the memorial service held for Wendy in Berkeley in 2010, friends and colleagues unanimously celebrated Wendy's remarkable ability to interact with people, and with music, in a spirit of exchange, attentiveness, and sympathy. She was a superb listener, quick to get to the essence of personalities, feelings, and communications of all sorts. She combined a voracious intelligence with an exceptional natural grace, and with the beautiful manners and social polish instilled by her upbringing. But it seems important to add, as well, that none of this came as easily to her as it seemed. Wendy's warmth and humor and affection were all the more precious because they surfaced from within a rather dark vision of the world. She was not constituted to expect the best of either events or people; and yet she always *acted* as if she did, radiating an atmosphere of benevolence and light—and in that way she brought about those finest qualities in events and people that she did not dare expect. As Richard Will put it in his remarks for the 2010 memorial, "*Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart* . . . not only imagined a whole new way of hearing and writing, but . . . also directed its entire effort toward unveiling the human contents of music: motions and emotions, convictions and contradictions, personalities and genders and social classes and all the rest. In the mid-'80s, there was nothing else like it—to put it mildly. Then I met Wendy and discovered how much she embodied the generosity, sensitivity, wit, and passion she so admired in Mozart."

In *The Secular Commedia* she makes a powerful case for these precious values as foundational to the music of the late eighteenth century. Writing to some extent against analyses that privilege sonata form or tonal structures (but commenting on those interpretations with her wonted wit and generosity), Wendy shows that both the appeal and the meaning of eighteenth-century music were understood by listeners and analysts of the time to reside mainly in melody, in voice, and (at bottom) in character. Key to her vision is the primacy of opera, and especially opera buffa, where facility at sketching character in just a few notes or rhythms flourished and then seeped into instrumental music, transforming its core vocabulary along with crucial aspects of its syntax. While the music and characters of works like Pergolesi's *La serva padrona* are sometimes viewed as shallow, lacking the reflection and self-analysis endemic to the nineteenth-century novel and the later opera that

arose in its wake, Wendy shows that this music, far from unsophisticated, actually embodies the classical doctrine of *enargeia*, presenting characters through their actions in the sphere of the everyday. When the figures and formulas that depict these comic characters are transferred to instrumental music, they retain their eloquence, their power to characterize—and to locate musical discourse in concrete and recognizable social milieus. Once we listen in this spirit, she argues, a symphonic first movement or the closing rondo of a piano sonata is no longer an abstract structure built on the play of opposing tonalities or an abstract unfolding through the stages of a stock formal design, but more like a miniature drama in which characters interact and emotions rapidly shift and collide, perhaps played out on notional stage sets that evoke such concrete if metaphorical occasions as hunts, dances, or battles.

This emphasis on characters depicted through action and through the everyday seems utterly characteristic of Wendy, who was so active and so effective in so many areas of life and work—as a legendary department chair; as a classical tutor dispensing not only Plato and Aristotle (whose lessons about music and ethics she brings to fruition in this book), but also Euclidian geometry in the original Greek; as a beloved presence in the AMS, which elected her an honorary member after her tragically brief service as president; as an inspiration to her pupils and her junior colleagues; and as a loving and very present mother to her son, John.

It is also completely in keeping with Wendy's personality that the account of musical communication and musical style she offers in these pages grants such an important role to community. In a beautiful gloss in chapter 1 on the first sentence of *Pride and Prejudice*, she shows that Jane Austen condensed everything essential to the comic mode into those famous few words, "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife." It is often noted that this gambit instantly telegraphs the importance of the marriage plot, the need for a wedding as a resolution to this comic drama. But it took Wendy Allanbrook to notice that Austen's apparently formulaic beginning—"it is a truth universally acknowledged"—implies, with a blend of irony and simple pleasure, the presence of a "universe" of people who will observe the actions of the main characters and will approve and celebrate their union in the end. This idea of community, transferred in her work to a community of listeners who react to music, to whom music matters deeply because it moves their hearts, is at the center of her vision.

The Secular Commedia is, among other things, a mission of rescue for the role of mimesis in music. Asserting a startling continuity of values about music and aesthetics reaching back two thousand years, she reminds us in chapter 2 that a central premise for both Plato and Aristotle, when they wrote about music and mimesis, was “a world held in common among human beings.” Musical forms and materials were to be drawn from that outer world, “likenesses of moral dispositions” captured through motion, rendered as rhythms and melodies.

Even at the beginning of the nineteenth century, she shows, many influential theorists were still listening for voice, motion, and character in instrumental music. In his *Musikalisches Lexikon* of 1802, Heinrich Christoph Koch still held vocal music to be superior to instrumental music, granting instrumental music the power to “move the heart” only when it was associated with political or religious events whose context would stimulate emotion, or when it expressed sentiments to which the heart was already open by dint of experience. Only vocal music, according to Koch, had the expressive force to change minds or make people feel and believe things. The trajectory traced in *The Secular Commedia* counters the Foucault-inflected narrative that posits sharp epistemological breaks or falls from grace, whether around 1600, with a shift from a semiotics of resemblance to one of representation, or around 1800, with the rise of “absolute music.”

Yet even as Wendy insists on the persistence of mimesis and the primacy of the vocal beyond 1800, she traces the roots of our current—if now contested—aesthetics of form and abstraction back to Kant and Schiller. Once these thinkers had identified the aesthetic as a vital component of the social sphere where people could meet and share values and experience in common, it became necessary for music to become “disinterested,” for its meanings to reside purely in the play of form, so that all listeners could still, in principle, share the experience of listening.

Wendy grounds this claim, like everything else in *The Secular Commedia*, on a fresh and careful reading of the sources—here Schiller’s *Aesthetic Education* and Kant’s *Critique of Judgment*. Elsewhere texts ranging all the way from Plato’s *Republic* and Cicero’s *Topica* to Mattheson’s *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* and Curtius’s *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* are subjected to loving exegesis and reconstrual. By returning to origins and to the horses’ mouths, the former professor of Euclid and Dante and reeditor of Strunk’s *Source Readings* for the eighteenth century manages to sweep away

a thick layer of received wisdom and return to first principles, to what eighteenth-century people—a very broad array of them—actually said and thought. Through her we learn of Burney’s enjoyment of the play of musical topoi, we hear the strains of Pergolesi that so impressed Rousseau, and, unforgettably, we become acquainted with Diderot’s polyp, and Trembley’s. But most centrally, and (truth be told, as Wendy loved to say) somewhat unusually of late, Wendy’s arsenal of primary sources includes many, many musical scores and performances, which she reads as attentively and as surely as she does the literary and philosophical texts. All these various texts are made to inform one another, and, thanks to Wendy’s deep learning and acute hearing, musical works offer up their social and emotional meanings as easily as do blunter treatises and manifestos. This musical and social vision, as embodied at last between two covers, is Wendy Allanbrook’s parting gift to us all.

Mary Ann Smart and Richard Taruskin
 Berkeley, June 2013

Comic Flux and Comic Precision

It's call'd a Polypus . . .
And 'tis a reptile of so strange a sort,
That if 'tis cut in two, it is not dead;
Its head shoots out a tail, its tail a head.

—Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, *Isabella; or Odes* (1740)

Le Neveu de Rameau, the disquieting dialogue-satire by Denis Diderot, contains a long passage in which the eponymous Nephew lectures his interlocutor, a Diderot-like figure, on the merits of Italian over French opera. Opera criticism is not the dialogue's principal preoccupation, but rather the far more somber issue of cynicism's clash with moral philosophy. Yet about two-thirds of the way through, the discussion veers off into a peculiar musical topicality: the usually cynical Nephew begins to argue ardently for one side in the well-known mid-eighteenth-century Parisian culture war known as the *guerre des bouffons* (the Italian, as it happens). The passage is often plucked out of context by music historians and anthologized as one more piece of documentary evidence for that noisy quarrel.¹

Indeed, I was in the process of so treating it myself when I was arrested by a curious image the Nephew uses in his opera discussion.² The image is buried in the middle of this oft-excerpted passage and passes by so quickly that it rarely disturbs the casual reader. The third or fourth time through, however, its mild incongruity begins to nag. It occurs in a harangue that the Nephew is delivering on the nature of the language most appropriate for opera libretti. Here is his description of the ideal style:

It is the animal cry of passion that should dictate the melodic line, and its expressions should be pressed out urgently, one after the other; the phrase must be short,

the meaning cut off, suspended; the musician must be able to make use of the whole and of each of the parts—to omit a word or repeat it, to add a word that is missing, to turn the phrase backward and inside out like a polyp, without destroying it.³

At first the Nephew's fleeting mention of the polyp seemed to be no more than a whimsical solecism, wholly in character for an eccentric creature from whose trains of thought one does not demand complete coherence. Like most modern readers, I was ignorant of the nature of Diderot's particular polyp, having only vague marine and medical associations with the word.⁴ But a brief investigation led me to an unlikely site of exploration for a music historian studying the habits of musical comedy—the freshwater ponds of eighteenth-century naturalists—and to the tale of an important biological discovery that rapidly insinuated itself into the literary and philosophical discourse of the period.

The scene of Diderot's dialogue is an imagined encounter in a Parisian café, sometime between 1760 and 1762, between a philosophe-narrator (so he establishes himself in his brief exposition) and the actual nephew of the actual composer Jean-Philippe Rameau. The author designates them *Moi* and *Lui*, respectively. The Nephew, Jean-François Rameau, was both in truth and in Diderot's fiction a music teacher and professional parasite (the Nephew seeing little difference between these two occupations). Again in both truth and fiction, he was a man of extravagant changeableness—as *Moi* describes him early on, “a compound of elevation and baseness, of good sense and folly.”⁵ In the words of the writer Jacques Cazotte, who as an old school chum had known the actual Nephew, “That strange man nursed a passion for glory and never found any way of attaining it.”⁶ Talented, but living in the shadow of his famous uncle, whom he professed to despise, he is pictured here as choosing in company to burlesque the madman, delivering brilliantly cynical critiques of human nature from behind this façade. He mounts an extraordinary performance for *Moi*, who at first pretends mere amusement at the antics of his old acquaintance. But he is clearly transfixed by Rameau's strange blend of nihilism and innocent candor.

The discussion of the virtues of Italian opera occurs toward the climax of the dialogue. The Nephew exults in the crushing blow delivered to the operas of his detestable Uncle by the Italian juggernaut that triggered the *guerre des bouffons*. The 1752 production in Paris, by an Italian buffo troupe, of Giovanni Battista Pergolesi's intermezzo *La serva padrona* (The maid mistress) on the hallowed neoclassic stage of the Opéra provoked passionate responses from

Parisian intellectuals, including Jean-Jacques Rousseau's notorious *Lettre sur la musique française*, a devastating critique of the musical potential of the French language.⁷ The Italians took the capital by storm, causing a national crisis of confidence in the powers of French music.⁸ Two camps formed, rallying around the King (for the French) and the Queen (for the Italians). Rameau "the great" was the figurehead of the French camp, while Rousseau, Diderot, and other philosophes took up their cudgels for the Italian. Earlier in the dialogue the Nephew had gleefully reported, "These cursed *bouffons*, with their *Serva padrona* . . . have given us a real kick in the ass" (a vulgarism that is also a topical pun, since the French word for ass here is "cul," and the stuffy Académie Royale de Musique, known less formally as the Opéra, stood at the end of a cul-de-sac, a fact of which the Nephew reminds us a few sentences later).⁹ If it stood alone, this portion of the dialogue would be no more than it seems—an eccentric and polemical but surprisingly substantive account of that famous tempest in a *salon de thé*. (Later, in the *Confessions*, Rousseau, claiming responsibility for the controversy, suggested that by stirring it up he had saved the monarchy from a far worse fate.)¹⁰

The aesthetic doctrine advanced by the Nephew in the polyp passage is nothing out of the ordinary; it could have come straight from Rousseau's *Essai sur l'origine des langues*. Libretto language, the philosophes argued, should voice "the animal cry of passion"—that is, the short and disjunct exclamatory expressions of the movements of the soul that they ascribed to the invention of the Italians.¹¹ In *La Nouvelle Héloïse* Rousseau has that paragon of *sensibilité*, Saint-Preux, praise Italian opera texts as revealing "the powerful and secret link between passion and sound."¹² In the *Lettre sur les sourds et muets* Diderot had judged the French language incapable of such direct passionate utterances: French, he argued, is a language of logic but not of poetry; it traces out brilliant thought sequences, tight trains of reasoning, but cannot capture the semaphoric gestures of the passions—"hieroglyphs," Diderot termed them.¹³ As the Nephew explains, "This makes French lyric poetry much more difficult than in languages with inversions, that by themselves offer all these advantages."¹⁴ French libretto poetry had a fatal propensity to stiffly well-turned phrases and measured aphorisms—a style appropriate to the *Maximes* of La Rochefoucauld or the *Pensées* of Pascal, but not to the direct representation of human nature on the comic stage. In an impassioned speech just after the polyp metaphor occurs, the Nephew cries out, "We need exclamations, interjections, suspensions, interruptions, affirmations, negations; we call out,

we invoke, we shout, we groan, we weep, we laugh out loud. No wit, no epigrams; none of these pretty thoughts. It's too removed from simple nature."¹⁵ Simple nature is represented in this dialogue by the image of the polyp.

What, then, is a polyp, and what light can it shed on the subject of the comic musical theater? As I hinted at the start, my own associations with polyps had been more medical than zoological, involving Ronald Reagan, who so candidly, in the fine tradition of our nation's ailing presidents, brought intestinal polyps to the nation's attention. (Closer to musical home, Haydn suffered for a good deal of his life from a nasal polyp.) Polyps, however, come in two classes, the zoological and the pathological. In its earliest usage, the word "polyp" in both French and English designated not only morbid growths in human organs but also large, free-floating shell-less mollusks of the class of Cephalopods, like the octopus and the cuttlefish or squid. Their distinguishing characteristics are a large amorphous body and a plethora of feet. ("Polyp" is from the Greek *poly* and *pous*, "many-footed," and the Greek name for octopus was "polupous.") The identification of medical polyps with these mollusks is at least as old as Horace, a semantic transference that was probably suggested by the tentacle-like ramifications shared by the two organisms.¹⁶ Owing to the ability of these mollusks to change colors in order to blend with their background, "polyp" earned an extended meaning that was something like "Protean." (The connection of polyps with Proteus is easy to establish: the god of changes was from the sea, and zoology salutes mythology by calling the common amoeba, another amorphous organism, *Amoeba proteus*.) A 1583 *Mammalia* cited in the *Oxford English Dictionary* notes that "the Polipe chaunge themselves into the likenesse of everie object," and a 1606 wordbook extends this with the statement that "inconstant persons are sometimes said to be Polypes." The original polyp was a marine chameleon.¹⁷

In the mid-1700s, even as the use of the term "polyp" to designate these Cephalopods was becoming obsolete, the name was transferred to a newly discovered organism, another Protean creature.¹⁸ This new organism was Protean, however, in displaying a different sort of adaptive behavior—its refusal to be classified firmly as an animal or a plant. In 1740 the young Genevan naturalist Abraham Trembley, examining the teeming aquatic animal and plant life he had captured in powder jars on a country estate where he was a tutor, discovered a peculiar "insect" later to be dubbed the freshwater polyp or hydra.¹⁹ This creature exhibited stunning generative and regenerative behaviors never observed before. It "budded" new offspring like a plant, pop-

ping out a little protuberance like the nub of a branch that would rapidly separate to become a new polyp. And, even more amazing, when cut into any number of pieces (Trembley first tried two, then four, and then was emboldened to chop it into innumerable little bits), each piece would regenerate into a fresh polyp! Driven in a spirit of Baconian thoroughness to torture his “little aquatic Being” to the utmost, Trembley even managed to turn it inside out, performing a *retournement* or inversion, as he called it. With the aid of a boar’s bristle, he made the tiny creature’s inside its outside and fixed it permanently in this position, despite its efforts to right itself, by driving another bristle through its body near its lip. Fastened firmly thus, the polyp continued to live, eat, and reproduce quite capably.

The discovery made by this meticulous young naturalist was stunning to both biologists and philosophers (the distinction between the two being far less clear-cut in the mid-eighteenth century than it would become over the next fifty years). By 1741, through the busy network of correspondence by which scientists communicated in this period, the news of this discovery had traveled to Paris to the Académie des Sciences, and to the Royal Society in London. There is an extensive description of Trembley’s discovery in the first edition of the *Encyclopédie*. The existence of the polyp raised grave questions about the constitution of natural beings, some so radical that even its discoverer was unwilling to countenance them. Rhetoric ran high: in the *Histoire de l’Académie des Sciences* the ever-regenerating polyp was compared to a phoenix rising from the ashes, and a disciple of the great naturalist Réaumur reported the furor in the grand ironic vein: “A miserable insect has just shown itself to the world and has changed what up to now we have believed to be the immutable order of nature. The philosophers have been frightened, a poet told us that death itself has grown pale.”²⁰ The polyp appeared to be an animal, not a plant, because it was capable of locomotion: it could detach itself from one position and take up another. Its discoverers classified it as an insect.²¹ Yet like a plant it could produce offspring without benefit of mating; in its hollow transparent core it appeared to have none of the organs hitherto considered necessary to animals; and, most importantly, once chopped into pieces, each fragment could produce a new and separate creature. If animals have souls, where in these fragments could the soul of the original polyp reside?

Long-standing distinctions between plant and animal, soul and body, were challenged by this discovery, forcing notions of the discrete to give way to the continuous, the formed to the formless, the divine unitary to the mundane and

messy manifold. In previous theories of generation, God and Chance had battled it out for the position of final cause. Now Nature was being inserted as a mean between the two extremes. In Cartesian rationalism the separation between the thinking soul and the soulless but animate body (mere “extended substance”) had enforced the opinion that animals, lacking rationality, were machines without souls—automata. Generation was caused by the serendipitous collisions of drifting molecules. This unpalatable theory had been partially displaced in the late seventeenth century by a teleological biology more in conformity with Christian principles, in which generation took place by means of a limited number of preformed germs or seeds—fully formed “animaliculi” planted there at the time of the Creation. Each contained a minuscule version of itself, which at birth sprang fully formed, organized to “grow” its miniature organs to maturity. When these germs ran out, the world would end.

The polyp put paid to both hypotheses. It demonstrated that soul-matter is infinitely divisible, so that neither an externally installed soul nor a pre-existent germ could survive the random cutting of the polyp’s substance. The power of generation, growth, and change must be immanent in the very matter of the polyp, not implanted by divine ordinance. Hence the polyp revealed living matter’s capacity for autonomous activity, its ability to direct its own somatic and psychic development.²² This living example of the continuity of matter challenged teleology, blurred the distinctions between creatures, and plunged thinkers like Diderot into revolutionary, evolutionary thoughts about the mutability of species.²³

Any doubt that Diderot had in mind Trembley’s stunning discovery in the passage from *Le Neveu* with which this chapter opened is allayed by diction that can be no mere coincidence: Trembley’s word for the turning of the polyp inside out was *retournement*, and the Nephew uses the words *tourner et retourner* to describe the torturing of the libretto phrase (having just previously in this same passage described music as the most *violent* of the arts). The scientific literalism of the polyp simile, intentionally comic in its incongruity, suggests various local meanings. Perhaps the mention of the animal cry of passion in the same breath as the description of this most voiceless of animal specimens could be meant to twit Rousseau for his famous discussion of the relation of language and the cry of passion in the *Essai*. (No one emerges well from this dialogue.) And the polyp as Cephalopod seems to have been proverbial in French parlance for its tenacity—it just sticks to things. The Nephew has something of this quality in himself.

The central intention of the passage, however, is to characterize the new opera; clearly Diderot meant to connect this astonishing discovery of contemporaneous natural science with the powers of opera buffa. And this connection resonates powerfully with other claims made by the philosophes for the significance of this moment in operatic history. The polyp image may seem strange to us, but it is no stranger than equating the animal cry of passion with the comic periods of *La serva padrona*—which is precisely what the philosophes did. What is convention to one is nature to another. *La serva padrona*—and indeed most opere buffe—strike modern audiences as convention-ridden, although delightfully so. They are praised for their brilliant use of comic stereotypes, simplistic but efficient reductions of human behavior.²⁴ But the polyp metaphor suggests that the philosophes saw the new opera in a different light. It made its appeal to them as a natural organism: to Rousseau, to Diderot, opera buffa seemed nature itself. Unlike those Cartesian machines of the *tragédie lyrique* that projected the motions of the passions of the soul with eloquent *froidueur*, the genre manifested a new vitalism—a “principle of motion and rest in itself” (to crib from Aristotle’s definition of nature)—the volatility of its matter.²⁵ Its appeal was the potential infinity of its divisibility and the power of its being to survive and adapt in fragmentation. It was constructed out of materials resembling Diderot’s hieroglyphs—fragmentary gestures that, no matter how tiny, still retained their identities, so that their brief yet precise representations were understood.

In the dialogue these representations are brought into being by the Nephew, the ventriloquist, who “does all the parts.” Here we have a suggestion of that other polyp, the Cephalopod, the “marine chameleon,” with its ceaseless capacity for mutation into others’ shapes. The Nephew, who speaks so fondly of the Protean, is a polymorph himself, a Proteus of the pantomime, who keeps up a relentless running mimicry of all the beings discussed in the dialogue, and finally, in a climactic moment, enacts an entire opera buffa. In these repeated pantomimes, the Nephew takes on an endless parade of different shapes, fragmenting his identity nearly beyond recognition. The Diderot figure describes one of these virtuoso performances: “He mimicked a man who’s growing angry, who’s indignant, who grows tender, who gives commands, who begs, and delivered without preparation speeches of anger, sympathy, hatred, and love. He sketched the characters of the passions with amazing finesse and truth.”²⁶ The Nephew’s Protean nature is foregrounded at the outset by the epigrammatic fragment Diderot affixed to the dialogue,

a quotation from a satire of Horace: "Vertumnis, quotquot sunt, natus iniquis" (loosely, "he who is born under the variable Vertumnus's hostile star"). The Etruscan deity Vertumnus was "the changeable god of the seasons, 'an Italian Proteus.'" ²⁷ The large saltwater polyp (Cephalopod) is as peculiar a natural organism as its tiny freshwater namesake. Like Horace's god Vertumnus, it has a kind of "negative capability": without voice, intentionality, or shape of its own, it is defined by taking on the shapes of other beings, which it does ceaselessly, in a state of continual flux. Diderot presents the comic surface of opera buffa as a kaleidoscopic series of imitative gestures strung out by a master narrator who "does all the shapes." The new comic art is both natural and Protean: buffa is an art of fraction and flux.

This principle can be seen at work in the very opera that caused all the fuss: Pergolesi's *La serva padrona*. When the Nephew described the rude shock administered to Parisian audiences by *La serva padrona*, he was telling only the unvarnished truth. In the reception history of opera buffa there is no avoiding the phenomenon of this opera, as the Italian savant Francesco Algarotti reports. A severe critic of his own country's serious opera, Algarotti was as taken as the philosophes with the natural expressive powers of this beguiling comic piece: "But no sooner was heard upon the theatre of Paris the natural yet elegant style of the *Serva padrona*, rich with airs so expressive and duets so pleasing, than the far greater part of the French became not only proselytes to, but even zealous advocates in behalf of the Italian music. A revolution so sudden was caused by an intermezzo and two comic actors."²⁸ Of course Pergolesi's intermezzo was more a symbol of the phenomenon than a source of it. The new comic style had developed in Naples early in the century, having been given a boost, as more than one observer wryly noted, by its expulsion from the serious stage by the Arcadian reformers. It met with overwhelming acceptance as it traveled through Italy, settling in Rome and Venice by the late 1730s and '40s and in London in 1748. The report of Charles de Brosses, a French magistrate visiting Italy in 1739–40 and a generally reliable and thoughtful critic, demonstrates how powerfully the early intermezzi had worked their wiles: "I confess that these sorts of pieces, when they are like . . . *La serva padrona*, and *Livietta e Tracollo* by the charming Pergolesi, give me greater pleasure than all the others. The bluestockings in this country, who admire only serious operas, tease me for having lost my head over them. But I persist in my opinion that the less serious the genre, the more successful Italian music is at it."²⁹ The lionizing of *La serva padrona*

in Paris simply ratified the new genre's enormous and widely recognized appeal.

There is no doubt that the motivation for that famous battle was political as well as aesthetic: by attacking the Opéra, a symbol of the self-glorification and chauvinism of the monarchy, the philosophes were firing potshots at the régime under the cover of music criticism. But ultimately the Pergolesi phenomenon transcended local politics. Although the composer's short life was over at the age of twenty-six, sixteen years before the famous performance, he assumed a posthumous position as cultural icon, a phenomenon that was wittily prophesied after the fact by the Baron Friedrich Melchior von Grimm, the German diplomat, Parisian man-about-town, and intimate of Diderot. In his pro-Italian polemic "Le petit prophète de Boehmisch-Broda" (1753), Grimm intones in the voice of pseudo-Jehovah:

You will bring [the "vain and proud" French people] the music of my servant Pergolesi, whom men to this day call divine, because I caused him to spring fully formed from my brain.

And it will be the time of signs and miracles.³⁰

And it was so. *La serva padrona* received at least twenty-four new productions in its first ten years in the major operatic centers of Italy and Germany. Any survey would surely reveal that Pergolesi was the composer most often mentioned in writings of the period, and it is an established fact that his *Stabat Mater* was the most published work in the eighteenth century (to the annoyance of some critics, who lamented the intrusion of comic and sentimental elements into a sacred work).³¹ The Italian intruder had properly chastised the "vain and proud French."

Not, of course, without the approval and self-aggrandizement of some of their own countrymen. Pergolesi's position as cultural icon was bound up with—and matched by—Rousseau's. As mentioned earlier, the latter's seditious *Lettre sur la musique française*, with its ringing conclusion ("the French have no music and cannot have any; or . . . if they ever have, it will be so much the worse for them") was generated by his first hearing of *La serva padrona*.³² The *Lettre* became as much a touchstone of late eighteenth-century music criticism as Pergolesi's intermezzo had been of opera buffa; it was well nigh obligatory when writing about music to mention this notorious text. Rousseau was ravished by Pergolesi's music. In the article on duos in his *Dictionnaire* he chooses all three of his examples from "the immortal Pergolesi," praising the

opening movement of the Neapolitan composer's *Stabat Mater* as "the most perfect and touching duo that has come from the pen of any musician," and the first duet from *La serva padrona*, "Lo conosco," as the "comic duo perfectly to my taste in all its parts."³³ Such veneration from a devotee of *sensibilité* is strong testimony to the fact that in the presence of the buffi the French *bouffonistes* thought themselves face to face with simple nature.

Nature also emerges front and center in the rapt account of the opera by no less a personage than the Baron d'Holbach, the Maecenas of the philosophes, who was one of the first on the firing line in this particular culture war. In his 1752 "Letter to a Lady of a Certain Age, on the Present State of the Opera" this well-known cynic and misanthrope was nonetheless able to summon up ardent enthusiasm for Pergolesi's creation: "The *Serva padrona*! There's more genius in only one of these pieces than in all our immense compilations of notes."³⁴ No mere rave, d'Holbach's description helpfully spells out some of the virtues of the new phenomenon:

[Pergolesi's is] a dialogued music without equal. The tunes have a simplicity, elegance, and expressiveness the like of which we have never heard before; they would suffice alone to convey the meaning of the words. The tone of nature is there, always rendered with power and truth, and often at those very moments when it would seem least likely of being captured. . . . What . . . can such epithets as *Mountebanks*, *Buffoons* signify when applied to Comedians who, with the utmost delicacy, give expression to passions common to all humanity and who present them from the most striking angles? Someone, a better judge of these extraordinary portrayals, said, "It is life itself; and at the same time these melodies are divine!"³⁵

That it proceeded in "dialogued" style was one of the features of the new opera that projected the "tone of nature." An audience accustomed to an unbroken succession of solo arias in opera seria must have been overwhelmed at witnessing actual sung interactions between performers. Tunes that successfully mimed the dramatic situation are another feature. But perhaps the most striking attribute of the new genre mentioned by d'Holbach was the power of the acting. Given what usually appears to us today as a limited emotional range in characterization, as compared to the extensive anatomy of the passions that occupied opera seria, it may be surprising to learn that the buffi were celebrated for their histrionic abilities. De Brosse praises the precision of the ensemble in the musical performance, and this must have been an important factor in their reception.³⁶ But d'Holbach, Algarotti, Charles Burney, the Italian singing teacher Giambattista Mancini, whose treatise on

singing was a paean to the great voices of the past—these pundits all were moved by more than mere musical skill. They remarked on the superior dramatic power of the acting on the buffa stage, and consequently, as can be seen in Charles Burney's remarks below, its greater universality. In Naples, at a dismal performance of *Gelosia per gelosia*, an opera buffa by Piccinni, Burney praised the powers of the comic actor Signor Casaccia, "a man of infinite humour; the whole house was in a roar the instant he appeared; and the pleasantry of this actor did not consist in buffoonery, nor was it local, which in Italy, and, indeed, elsewhere, is often the case; but was that of original and general sort as would excite laughter at all times and in all places." Later, at another performance of the same opera, he returned to further praise of the singer's acting: "There is so much *vis comica* in Casaccia, that his singing is never thought of."³⁷ Mancini saw good acting as the cause of buffa's elevation from intermezzo to independence: "How have the *opere buffe* and dances that at one time served only as intermezzos in *opere serie* both come to stand on their own, and to become principal spectacles instead of accessories, if not by means of the dramatic art? The actors and comics with their gesticulation and the dancers with their pantomime are today effectively the only ones who still use and appreciate good acting."³⁸ It is important to realize that the buffi were not just a diverting pack of mountebanks who had stumbled onto the Parisian stage and into a political battle in which they came to serve as convenient pawns. Nor were they welcomed by Parisian intellectuals as a postmodern critic might welcome a new TV sitcom—condescendingly, as a fresh and interesting revelation of bourgeois cultural practice. The new form of comic theater that developed out of the Neapolitan comic tradition offered both to the philosophes and to critical witnesses in other European capitals a fresh kind of musical fiction of serious matter. With its engaging mode of mimesis it challenged the tradition-encrusted, hierarchical institutions of the reigning musical theater in the same way that calcified Cartesian and Christian notions of generation had metamorphosed under the pressure of Trembley's little polyp. The Spanish-born Jesuit Stefano Arteaga, an early historian of opera writing in the 1780s, held that the passions of the ordinary people represented in opera buffa, being less intense and therefore more natural than those of opera seria personages, were easier to represent truthfully, relying as they did not on *passaggii* but on the true histrionic skills of the performers.³⁹

A sample from the oft-evoked but seldom-studied *Serva padrona* may shed some light on its success. If you don't know the story, the title—*The Maid*

Made Mistress—says it all. Serpina, the clever serving maid, manipulates her blustering master, Uberto, into marrying her, and at the end they expect to live happily ever after. (It is mere ornament to the basic plot line to mention the complication of a third actor, the mute butler Vespone, whose main function is to appear toward the end dressed as the rough soldier whom the blackmailing Serpina threatens to marry.) *La serva padrona* begins with a basso buffo singing a list of infinitives with their chiming *-ire* rhymes—no sterile epigrams here:

Aspettare e non venire,
Stare a letto e non dormire,
Ben servire e non gradire—
Son tre cose da morire!

To wait around and have no one come,
To lie in bed and get no sleep,
To serve well and get no thanks—
These are three things that kill me!

A happy ending is foreshadowed even in Uberto's opening infinitive list, which seems at first to mouth a conventional comic complaint about the "servant problem" (Leporello's "Notte e giorno faticar" in reverse). But the enumeration of grievances moves from the master's annoyance at the recalcitrant servant—"To wait around and have no one come"—to a complaint about ingratitude for service rendered, ingratitude on Serpina's part for the master's service to the *serva*! (Uberto claims to have raised Serpina as though she were his daughter.) In an opera called *La serva padrona* the *padrone* uses the word *servire* of himself before the story has even gotten underway. His comic self-pity signals vulnerability—a resistance easily broken. The seeds of his capitulation are sown at the start.

The musical setting twists the simple text about like a polyp (example 1). Uberto's aria opens with a sequence of three-measure phrases, drawn out by the exaggerated rhetorical accent of a whole note held across the bar line: "As-pet-ta-re e non venire." The infinitive list—it climbs one sequence too high, as if in comic self-forgetfulness—is adroitly counterstated by drawn-out descending half notes on "Son tre cose." Quick rising sequences continue to bend the text about, leading to the dominant pedal, and a new set of sequences drives to the final cadence. The cadence figure, on "da morire," is another buffa topoi—basso buffo chromaticism. Quick half-step motion is awkward to

EXAMPLE 1. Giovanni Battista Pergolesi, "Aspettare e non venire," mm. 7–20, from *La serva padrona*, act 1.

7 Uberto

A - spet - ta - - re e non ve - ni - re, sta - re a let - - to

12

e non dor - mi - re, ben ser - vi - - re e non gra - di - re, son tre

17

co - se da mo - ri - re, da mo - ri - re.

negotiate in a resonant lower register; hence it provokes laughter. It can be comically menacing (like Osmin in the *Seraglio*) or a comically pathetic expression of exasperated despair, as here. Absent are seria's elaborate melismas on emblematic words like *amore* or *furore*: Uberto's anger is communicated by musical accents, rising lines, and rhetorical pauses; textual self-consciousness is nowhere in view. On the stage of the Opéra the fresh slangy directness of his grumbling must have been bracing; it resounded as the voice of nature and a challenge to the institutionalized stodginess of the official operatic art.

I've already mentioned the usual snap judgment that most comic characters are one-dimensional stereotypes who introduce themselves as though with nametags at a conference, offering up one salient trait as a quick identifier. Modern critics reserve their praise for composers who depart from these stereotypes to give a character that much sought-after quality of a developed

subjectivity—of “real depth.”⁴⁰ Comic opera is contrasted to its disadvantage with serious drama, where character—true personhood—is a field of difference to be explored with self-conscious discursiveness, Hamlet providing the extreme case. No matter how creaky the conventions of baroque opera may seem to modern audiences, the genre permitted a similar subjective discursiveness through that regular form of aria, the soliloquy: in repeated pauses during the drama, namely the arias, interaction with the other characters would cease, leaving the stage free for the soloist to step out of the action in order to explore his or her interiority, to report at some length on the passions—*pathē* (feelings suffered or tolerated by the receiving body) that were at the present moment gripping this particular soul.⁴¹ (That seria characters conducted this soulful examination singing high tragic music tends to further the judgment that they were particularly “deep.”) Accustomed as modern readers are to the great nineteenth-century European and Russian novels, this discursiveness is nature to them—not one of many possible conventions or habits of fictional character depiction, but as direct a representation as possible of the processes of actual interior lives.

It is easy to forget that fictions are fictional, and that every fictional country has its ways. As the philosophes’ reactions make clear, what was depicted in eighteenth-century musical comedy was also nature—but under another description, one that in fact answered more closely to the notion of character in classical antiquity than to the modern conception of discursive introspection. While there may be less room here for the roundedness and complexity one meets in other fictions, the alternative is not necessarily a forest of empty stereotypes. Opera buffa articulated an entire social cosmos, highborn to lowly, and its emphasis was comparative: on *ēthē* rather than *pathē*, on character-signaling behavior rather than on the discursive expression of the passions.⁴²

In *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, for example, Wayne Booth speaks with unfeigned admiration of the characters of Boccaccio’s *Decameron*, even as he terms them “two-dimensional, with no revealed depths of any kind.”⁴³ Boccaccio, he argues, was a skillful writer who revealed just enough information about his characters to make the fiction work in the vein he intended, filtering out any details that would distract. Sometimes we learn about these characters from their actions; at other times it is enough for the storyteller to describe them with a few key words: to tell us that a character is “gallant,” or “no less virtuous than fair.”

Booth's reading saves the expression "two-dimensional" from pejorative connotations. Instead it is the equivalent of the master draftsman's ability to suggest an image with two telling strokes of his pen—two *strokes* rather than the disparaging "two dimensions." The story Booth chooses for his example comes from the tales of the fifth day of the *Decameron*, the day for which the announced theme is "good fortune befalling lovers after divers direful or disastrous adventures." The story has a happy ending: in order to allow the lovers to marry, a husband and son have to be killed off, and a much-prized falcon murdered and consumed at luncheon like Thyestes' children. But these passings are barely noted; it is arranged that we will be entirely engaged by the graces of the protagonists so that we can delight in their ultimate good fortune. That third stroke or dimension—the tragic dimension of willful and brooding self-consciousness—might distract from the enjoyment of the mechanics of the commedia. Hence its conspicuous absence. This "two-stroke" paradigm gives us the characters of most true comedies. What is needed for depicting them is a means of vivid and precise description, which catches the character in glints and facets in the Boccaccian manner.

A little slogan occurs to me that neatly sums this up: in opera buffa, *enargeia* is *energeia*. Translation: in opera buffa, vivid character depiction—*enargeia*—is accomplished by *energeia*, or by showing us glimpses of men and women "at work." *Enargeia* is a term in classical poetics for the power to project lively images. It has an interesting derivation, from *argos*, "bright" or "flickering"; the adjective *enargos* was used by Homer of gods appearing in their own forms to mortals. "Manifest" and "manifestness" might be good general synonyms. *Enargeia* usually refers to images in the graphic arts, but it is no less helpful as a term that captures the lively essence of efficient character delineation in the musical theater.⁴⁴ The other term in the slogan, *energeia*, is an important Aristotelian word that can be translated as "being at work" (the preposition *en-* or "in" plus *ergon*, or "work"). *Energeia* to Aristotle is "what makes the world go round," both literally, in the response of the planetary spheres to the being of the Prime Mover, and more metaphorically, in a human being's pursuit of his telos, the ultimate object of his desire—his *moti*-vation.⁴⁵ To Aristotle one is only oneself when one is "at work," and hence the motions of work will be most revealing of self.

In the *Poetics* Aristotle gives his imprimatur to the "two-stroke" paradigm. In his judgment, one often baffling to the casual modern reader, plot is the central factor in both tragedy and comedy, and character is inseparable from,

but importantly subsidiary to, action: “For tragedy is an imitation not of men but of actions and of life. Both happiness and unhappiness lie in activity and our end is some activity, not a quality. Now it is according to characters (*ēthē*) that we have qualities, but it is according to activities that we are happy or the reverse. Hence [on stage] they do not do actions in order to imitate characters, but they comprehend characters through actions.”⁴⁶ In other words, *ethos* is made known through action, through motion, through the image of a character “at work.” The character of Oedipus, Aristotle’s principal example, is revealed not by hermetic self-analysis but by his ceaseless public efforts to bring to the light the truth behind his city’s sickness. If one is only fully one-self when one is “at work,” it follows that only in action will characters display the true object of their desires, the thing that “makes them tick.” Discursive psychological insight has no place here; it is a relatively modern development.

Because the musical conventions of opera buffa in the late eighteenth century left characters to reveal themselves in the motions of action—*en ergō*, so to speak—they possessed the quality of *enargeia*—lively essence—to a high degree. On stage these creatures, as they move in and out of incident, reveal themselves *unwittingly*—without introspection—in the gestures of their arias and duets. The matter of these revelations is various topoi, simple ones like the basso chromaticism mentioned above and more mediated ones, which use dance and other rhythms or characteristic styles as their materials.⁴⁷ These codifications of gesture and signification had been available to earlier, serious opera, but only in its aria-soliloquies; to indulge in discursive interiority one must be alone. As I’ve said, different fictions, different expressive habits. Opera buffa’s focus on its characters’ social rather than interior natures made these gestures brief and allusive, embedded them in actions, and hence (the most significant musical innovation) deployed them in constant gestural contrasts—in the “dialogued style,” the “tone of nature.” These precise, forceful, and concentrated images could be employed and contrasted or counterstated in the same aria, duet, or ensemble. High, middle, and low topoi jostled each other about in profusion; opera buffa was shaped by precision in flux.

Another example from *La serva padrona* will serve the point. The opera’s two duets function as embryonic buffa finales. Rousseau’s favorite duet, “Lo conosco,” at the end of the first act, manifests this enargetic brilliance (example 2). Hearing the increasing fragmentation of the lines of dialogue as the duet progresses must have been an energizing experience for the Parisian audience after the long-windedness of the serious opera. And warring bits of

EXAMPLE 2. Pergolesi, "Lo conosco a quegli occhietti," mm. 1–39, from *La serva padrona*, act I.

Allegro

staccato

5

8 **Serpina**

Lo co-no-sco, lo co - no-sco a que-gli oc-chiet-ti, a que gli oc-chiet-ti fur- bi,

11

la- dri, la-dri ma-li- gnet - ti, che se ben voi di-te no, no, no, pur m'ac-

15 **Uberto**

cen- na - no di sì, sì, sì, sì, sì; pur m'ac - cen- na - no di sì Si-gno-

p

18

ri - na, si-gno-ri - na, V'in-gan - na - te, v'in-gan-na - te; trop-po, trop-po,

(continued)

EXAMPLE 2. (continued)

21

trop-po, trop-po in al-to voi vo-la- - - te: gli oc-chi ed io vi di-con no,

24

no, no, ed è un so-gno- que-sto qui sì, sì, sì, sì ed è un

27

Serpina

so-gno que-sto qui. Ma per-chè? ma per-chè? Non son i-o bel-la,

31

gra-zi-o-sa e spi-ri-to-sa? Su mi-ra-te: leg-gia-dri-a, leg-gia-

35

-dri-a, vè che bri-o, che bri-o, che ma-e-stà! che ma-e-stà!

cresc.

word painting cleverly keep score in the contest between master and servant. Serpina has proposed marriage to Uberto, and in a triumph of illogic she accuses his “shifty eyes” of telling the truth about his feelings for her, a truth that she insists that his shiftier words belie. In response he accuses her of getting above herself—of “flying too high”—and his ineffectual protest is underlined by a comic melisma on the word *volate*—“you’re flying”—a parody of high-flown rhetoric. In a sure-footed miming of innocent puzzlement and pique, Serpina asks him if he hasn’t noticed her charms and her dignity, her *maestà*, which she mimes with long and lofty pitches. She is both putting on airs and displaying her wares. The slow-witted Uberto can’t stand it, and she knows it. Simple means project rather subtle relations between the lovers.

This fresh clarity of characterization and the new power to mix modes combine to introduce a powerful new weapon in the buffa style—irony. In an aria about his bewilderment about the predicament he is caught in, “Son imbrogliato io già” (I’m all snarled up), Uberto’s imitation of a serious topos reveals with unconscious irony his inflated sense of self-importance (example 3). In his confusion he speaks of hearing a mysterious voice that says to him, “Uberto, think of yourself.” (The little bird that suggested this line to him was probably Serpina, who had just enjoined him piteously to “think of Serpina” when she’s gone.) Putting the brakes on the feverish imbroglia style, his oracular directive to self-interest is rendered with all the trappings of a sepulchral voice from opera seria. The juxtaposition of contrasting topics also makes possible a musical version of ironic dissimulation. Serpina, for example, puts on a high—or at least sentimental—style when, pretending to be leaving Uberto for that nonexistent husband, she begs him to remember her. Just in case the audience is slow to pick up her trick, she alternates the doleful *Larghetto* with a quick *Allegro* aside exulting at its discernible success; you see, she winks, he’s coming around (example 4).

These two topics alternate several times during the aria, and each time the *Allegro* returns, we welcome back Serpina’s spirited voice—what we recognize to be her true voice—which throws her imitation of the serious into relief as histrionically lugubrious, pure manipulation. The subversive nature of this juxtaposition of styles is not to be understated. Against the conventional modern assumption that the serious is the locus of truth telling, this “aria” frames a serious gesture as theatrical, a false face, a caricature, the comic topos exposing its pretense. The mixed mode of comedy undermines the elevated

EXAMPLE 3. Pergolesi, "Son imbrogliato io già," mm. 12–41, from *La serva padrona*, act 2.

12 Uberto

Son im-bro- glia - to io già, son im-bro- glia - to io già, son im-bro- glia - to io

15

già, ho un cer- to che nel co- re che, dir per me non so, non so s'è a-

21

mo- re, s'è a- mo- re o s'è pie - tà, pie - tà. Sen - t'un che

27

poi mi di - ce, mi di - ce, mi di - ce: U - ber - to, pen -

34

sa a te, pen - sa a te.

EXAMPLE 4. Pergolesi, "A Serpina penserete," mm. 3–26, from *La serva padrona*, act 2.

3 Serpina

A Ser-pi - na pen-se - re - te, pen-se - re - te qual-che vol-ta e qual-che di... e di-

re - te e di-re - te: ah! po-ve - ri - na, ah! po-ve - ri - na, ca - ra, ca - ra un tem - po, un tem -

9 rit.. Allegro

po el - la mi fu, el - la mi fu. (Ei mi

12

par che già pian pia - no s'in - co - min-cia a in - te - ne - rit...

19

s'in - co - min-cia, sì, già pian pia - no, sì, s'in - co - min - cia a in - te - ne - rit.)

pp

p

mf

style, making it difficult to take the serious seriously. No wonder conservative critics have always regarded stylistic mixture with suspicion.

In opera this new comic style, with its precise fractionings of gesture, was welcomed wholeheartedly by the philosophes and other European writers. It also began to have its effect on instrumental music, but there the reception was less welcoming, and understandably so. After all, the polyp metaphor, although it seems benign in the Nephew's first invocation, is not without its disturbing implications. The Nephew's virtuoso performance must be evaluated in its relationship to the longer work in which it is embedded. *Le Neveu de Rameau* is a study of a bizarre soul, a seeming madman, who nevertheless plagues the reader with disturbing flashes of cynical truth about the threat of moral flux. (He will make a significant reappearance in Hegel's *Phänomenologie des Geistes* as the representative of alienated consciousness.)⁴⁸ One must be wary of Diderot the ironist, the devotee of dangerous play who left so many of his manuscripts, including *Le Neveu*, unpublished in his lifetime.⁴⁹ He styled himself as a latter-day Socrates, and *Le Neveu de Rameau* is a deliberately aporetic dialogue, which closes on a question and leaves the conflict between the stodgy philosophe and the disreputable parasite carefully unresolved.

Perhaps the dependable Nature so rationally classified by natural scientists is just the tip of an iceberg of infinite and formless beings, of heaving protoplasm engaged in self-directed but pointless mutation. The polyp's infinite secility suggests to Diderot the thrilling possibility of vast unknown worlds: "People think there's only one polyp! And why would nature entire not be of the same order?"⁵⁰ He gives this excited but formless speculation a fantasizing sci-fi form in *Le Rêve d'Alembert*, where he imagines d'Alembert dreaming of "human polyps in Jupiter or Saturn!" "A man breaking up into an infinity of human atoms, . . . a human society formed from—a whole province populated by—the debris of one single individual—that's so pleasing to imagine."⁵¹ Later Nietzsche will seize on the polyp as symbolizing the monstrousness of the infinite when, in *Der Fall Wagner*, he contrasts the rounded, organized, "perfect" music of Bizet with its now detestable opposite, "the polyp in music, the 'infinite melody'" of Wagner.⁵² And in its other incarnation, the cuttlefish, the polyp suggests the dangers of the empty and the formless: creatures that habitually take on others' shapes must be suspected of having no proper shape

of their own. In the climactic pantomime of *Le Neveu*, a kind of operatic mad scene, the Nephew comes close to being eradicated in his frenzied affecting of a jumble of passions:

He began to move into the grip of a passion, and to sing very softly. He raised his voice as he grew more impassioned. Then came gestures, grimaces, and bodily contortions, and I said: "Good; there's a guy who's lost and a new scene on its way." And indeed off he goes off with a shout: *Je suis un pauvre misérable . . . monseigneur, monseigneur, laissez-moi partir . . . O terre, reçois mon or; conserve bien mon trésor . . . mon âme, mon âme, ma vie! O terre! . . . le voilà le petit ami; le voilà le petit ami! . . . aspettare e non venire . . . a Zerbina penserete . . . sempre in contrasti con te si sta . . .*⁵³ He crammed together and jumbled up thirty tunes, Italian, French, tragic, comic, of all sorts and descriptions; sometimes in a bass voice he descended to hell; sometimes hoarsely mimicking a falsetto, he tore up the high end of the airs, aping in his gait, in his bearing, in his gestures, the different people singing; now raging, now appeased, now commanding, now sneering. . . .

Now his head was completely wasted. Drained by fatigue, like a man coming out of a deep sleep or a long trance, he stood motionless, dazed, astonished. He looked around like a lost man who is trying to recognize his surroundings. He was waiting for his strength and his wits to come back; he mechanically wiped his face.⁵⁴

The Nephew could be described as in a process of *retournement*—of turning himself inside out—in the frenzy of his performance. Fraction and flux threaten self-annihilation.

For the Protean polyp is wittily unlike the type of natural organism that would in the nineteenth century become such an important metaphor for the analysis of music. The romantics enshrined an organism that was "a whole presupposed by its parts," a being in which, because parts contain the germs of their wholes, wholeness is distinctly prior to partness. The nineteenth- and twentieth-century understandings of a musical organism have more in common with the pre-Trembley teleological notion of the preformed germ. This is especially true of the work of the theorist Heinrich Schenker, who performed an untiring inspection of works of music to reveal the primal seed; consider, for example, his statement that "the quest for a new form of music is a quest for a homunculus."⁵⁵ The polyp challenges the wondrous organic unity of Nature; it suggests instead Nature's tendency to fraction, and the shifty character of her taxonomy. A "part" is a curious entity when it has no apparent nature of its own, when it offers no dotted lines on which to cut. And if it is prior to the whole, the whole also lacks a "nature." The polyp is a study in infinity and its potential monstrousness.

The question of the dangers of infinity, albeit raised by Diderot in the context of “opera criticism,” did not figure in any obvious way in the public debate about Italian operatic comedy, whose own natural flux was received by the philosophes with open-hearted enthusiasm, not with apprehension. But the question was indeed raised in criticisms of the new instrumental music taking shape just after midcentury—the music of the so-called “Classic” style, the newly emergent freestanding sinfonias, chamber works, and solo sonatas. Critics of this music used language that echoed the descriptions of opera buffa, but in a pejorative manner. The forces of reaction were puzzled by the fractioned, Protean nature of the new style; they saw it as shifting, full of idle contrasts, without a unifying voice—a list of polyp-like qualities. In 1755 the French neoclassic critic Pluche set the theme that would dominate at least thirty years of music criticism:

The most beautiful melody, when it is only instrumental, almost necessarily becomes first cold, then boring, because it expresses nothing. . . . You would never think well of a person who passes from sadness to great outbursts of laughter, and from jesting to an air of gravity, to an air of tenderness, to anger, and to rage, without having any reason to laugh or to be offended. Now are sonatas and many other kinds of music anything else than I have just said? They are to music what marbled paper is to painting. It even appears that the more impassioned they grow, the less reasonable they seem.⁵⁶

Pluche sees instrumental music as engaged in a referenceless miming of shifting emotions. In his last quoted sentence he might have been describing the Nephew himself in his climactic pantomime.

Writing in his *Hamburgischen Dramaturgie* (1769) of symphonies composed to accompany spoken drama, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing sounded the same motif: “Now we melt with sympathy and suddenly we are to rage. Why? How? Against whom? Against the person for whom our soul was just now all pity? or against someone else? [Instrumental] music cannot specify all this; it only leaves us in uncertainty and confusion; we feel, yet without perceiving a correct sequence for our feelings; we feel as we do in a dream; and all these disorderly feelings are more fatiguing than agreeable.”⁵⁷ Less thoughtful but admirably pithy criticisms of this sort can be found in large numbers in Bellamy Hosler’s *Changing Aesthetic Views of Instrumental Music in Eighteenth-Century Germany*: an “incomprehensible mishmash” (*unverständliches Mischmasch*), “ear-tickling jingle-jangle” (*ohrkitzelndes Klingklang*), “mere noise” (*bloßes Geräusch*).⁵⁸

Strikingly, these criticisms were often couched in terms of the intrusion of the comic into the serious mode. C. P. E. Bach's irritable words in a letter to a publisher about musical taste testify to the pervasiveness of the comic: "How often [taste] changes in music! How corrupted is it not, right now! Everything must be foolish and comic."⁵⁹ From the chorus of complainers two others are particularly worth quoting because of their vivid descriptions of the intrusion. The German critics Johann Adam Hiller and Carl Ludwig Junker, writing in the 1770s, both personify the intruder as a character from the comic stage. Hiller grumbles about that "odd mixture of styles, the serious and the comic, the exalted and the low, that are so often found together in one and the same piece."⁶⁰ In one essay he makes explicit the sense that this comic intrusion has come straight from the theater:

Far be it from me to consider [the taste for the comic] as base and reprehensible in and of itself. But I would prefer that it did not invade other places in which it does not belong. . . . How many concertos, symphonies, and so on are heard these days in which we experience the majesty of music in calm and dignified tones; but before one suspects it, Hanswurst [the Harlequin of the Viennese comic stage] leaps into the middle and through his vulgar jesting begs our indulgence all the more, the more serious was the previous affect.⁶¹

In an essay on the life of the composer Karl Ditters von Dittersdorf, Junker also blames the theater for the comic contamination; interestingly, his intruder is female. In the process he takes a swipe at Haydn: "The comic maiden, once cast out of the domain of the theater, appears to have implored music for admission; the priest [Haydn], a man who seemed to have been created for humor, was moved. He seized the funny creature and thrust her into his temple, and ever since we laugh about Viennese music." Then Junker poses a set of anxious rhetorical questions: "Is the comic a truly satisfying emotion for music? Is it not too wearisome, too monotonous, to become national? Is it not beneath the art—is it not too base?"⁶²

Such alarm is perfectly predictable in critics whose experience had been shaped primarily by the notion of unity of affect in baroque music and the sober unities of the neoclassic stage. And they were responding to what was indeed an extraordinary musical phenomenon. The beginning of a Haydn symphony written a few years earlier—Symphony No. 59 in A Major, "Das Feuer," probably composed about 1767—can serve as an example of what was in their ears—the disorderly and dreamlike sequence of affective postures that Lessing describes (example 5).⁶³ Of course a thoroughly domesticated

modern audience will have the opposite problem: in order to respond to this antic diorama of the passions displayed for its delight it must suppress an obedient tendency to a structural listening that trains listeners to winnow the “substantive” from the merely “transitional.” The opening is successively annunciatory, misterioso, purposeful, agitated, urbane, rollicking, valedictory, and all in just over a minute of music: what are these postures if not the enervating—mimetic—units we just observed in opera buffa? And where do they come from if not from the new comic habits—Hanswurst invading the temple of tragedy? Comic flux and the precision of comic mimesis were not exclusive to the comic stage. To its eighteenth-century audiences the polyp-art was only acceptable when attached to words, which gave limits to its potential infinity. When transferred to instrumental music, the fractioned, Protean style of opera buffa seemed dangerously to court the formless and the morally inarticulate, without the moral rudder of words; listening to the new music must have been a riskier enterprise in the late eighteenth century than it is possible to conceive today. Nonetheless, this descent into the comic so distasteful to eighteenth-century critics seems to have been the source of what is most effective in the “Classic” instrumental style. It is the theater of surface and stylistic heterogeneity, of precision in flux. There is nothing “Classic” about it.

Unfortunately, until the last few decades of the twentieth century writers looking back on this music have managed to see only the temple, and not the variegated host that constituted its congregation. They have persistently read the instrumental music of the presumed high Viennese Classic style against the wrong paradigms—against distinctively modern ones, tempered in the convulsive fires of the nineteenth century and hardened into covert values in the twentieth. The waning of the eighteenth century saw what Carl Dahlhaus, after Thomas Kuhn, dubbed a “music-aesthetic ‘paradigm shift,’” in which a curtain came down on habits of thought about music’s nature that had been sustained in one mode or another since antiquity, and the longstanding view of art as mimetic and referential suddenly ceded to an aesthetic that argued music’s autonomy from the domain of human activity.⁶⁴ The lofty name of “absolute music” resulted from the “lofty claim” (Dahlhaus’s words) that the art of music now granted to the initiate “a premonition of the absolute”—an unparalleled access to, in E. T. A. Hoffmann’s words, an “unknown realm, a world quite separate from the outer sensual world surrounding him, a world in which he leaves behind all precise feelings in order to embrace an inexpressible longing.”⁶⁵ This was a far cry from the humbler assumption of earlier days

EXAMPLE 5. Haydn, Symphony No. 59 in A Major, I, exposition.

[illegible]

(continued)

EXAMPLE 5. (continued)

The musical score for Example 5 (continued) consists of two systems of staves. The first system (measures 22-26) includes a piano (p) and a cello/bass. The piano part features a series of chords and melodic fragments, while the cello/bass part provides a rhythmic and harmonic foundation. The second system (measures 27-31) continues the piece, with the piano part playing a more active melodic line and the cello/bass part providing a steady bass line. The score is written in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time.

that music's virtue was to imitate *with precision* the actions of ordinary mortals. The newly blinkered view effaced all consciousness of the vivid mimetic representations that had been passed on in the eighteenth century from the comic musical theater to the infant symphonic style. Apparently self-contained, instrumental music was seen as the best guide to the absolute: it came to be theorized as offering a pure organic structure, which, because it was completely separated from the taint of a worldly referential content, could best provide the longed-for "intimation of infinity."⁶⁶ Instrumental music "is the most romantic of all arts," Hoffmann continued, "since its only subject-matter is infinity."⁶⁷

The poet Keats became a bard of the new aesthetic with the famous assertion, in "Ode on a Grecian Urn," that "Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard / Are sweeter." The poet urges the soundless pipers ringing the hephonymous urn to

... play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endeared,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone.⁶⁸

That curious word “ditty” has suffered a lot of alteration over the years. For Thomas Morley, at the end of the sixteenth century, it meant a text for musical setting, whereas for Keats, two centuries later, it specifically connotes wordlessness.⁶⁹ In the nineteenth century it often meant birdsong, and the nightingale’s transcendent song fluting its astonished way through the darkness was for Keats an embodied version of those “unheard melodies,” that immaterial song from the beyond.

The next best thing to unheard melodies, of course, was music for instruments alone, music that had sloughed off the mundane expressivity of the word. Theorists determinedly abstracted from the “Classic” repertoire’s brilliant mimetic surface—and, it should be pointed out, from all vestiges of mimetic habits in their own repertoires, and there are many—in search of an organic, purely self-referential structure that would mark music’s detachment from the worldly and its direct connection with the infinite and the sublime. Hoffmann opened his famous essay on Beethoven’s instrumental music with a rhetorical question: “When music is spoken of as an independent art, does not the term properly apply only to instrumental music, which scorns all aid, all admixture of other arts (poetry), and gives pure expression to its own peculiar artistic nature?”⁷⁰ Suddenly the *logos*, the word, ancient bearer of truth and reason, seemed inadequate, prosaic. A wordless, imageless art showed the path to a higher truth, pointing beyond mere worldly experience to deeper mysteries. No longer the poor sister of language and painting, forced to call on the precision of words in order to move its auditors properly, music became the handmaiden of the ineffable, the indeterminate, and the expressively empty—semiotically, an “empty sign.”⁷¹ The motivation behind these new values was the inherently impossible goal of making present those unheard melodies, and the medium of choice was no longer the opera that had dominated the imagination of the eighteenth century but the new German instrumental music, especially the symphony as practiced by Beethoven—the ideal of *deutsche Tonkunst*.

The many recent discussions about this sudden alteration in music’s fortunes have been the source of an important consciousness raising concerning the sedimentation of unconsidered premises lying behind modernism’s aesthetic judgments—its set of “covert and casual values.”⁷² The veneration of the autonomous and the absolute has finally lost the status of a tacit value and, shorn of its transparency, has become available for critique, freeing historians and critics from the grip in which, unknowing, they were held. Looking

backward to the “Classic” style’s prehistory, it is possible to bracket the style with its origins rather than with its aftermath, uncovering a far more appropriate model for its music-making habits than absolute music—namely, the mimesis of the comic musical theater.

Mimesis—the much-maligned “doctrine of imitation,” or *Nachahmungslehre*—had offered what seemed like a perfectly reasonable account of the function and value of the arts from the time of Aristotle and Plato well into the eighteenth century.⁷³ Today’s music historians are entirely willing to accept mimesis and the notion of an expressive code as applying to music through the time of J.S. Bach, and indeed they have sometimes been a little too credulous about the degree to which in baroque music the expression of the passions was codified in a *Lehre*.⁷⁴ But reading backward from this side of the nineteenth century, they have tended to draw a sharp line of demarcation between the “baroque” and the “Classic” or “Classical,” the very word asserting the purity of the new style that reigned in the latter half of the eighteenth century.⁷⁵ Rarely has anyone asked why the trajectory plotted by mimetic music should have been interrupted so abruptly, why it would not seem more reasonable for there to be a continuity in expressive habits between two musical styles that shared so much else.

And there was a second notable blind spot in nineteenth-century aesthetics: comedy. The aesthetic of musical autonomy is natively a tragic one, hostile to the comic spirit. The posture of autonomy, of individuality, is a tragic stance; as Charles Rosen observed (in a telling context—a discussion of Mozart’s Piano Concerto No. 20 in D Minor, a work high on the romantic hit parade), unity is a quality endemic to the tragic.⁷⁶ George Steiner, in his study of the centrality of Sophocles’ tragedy *Antigone* to the history of modern consciousness, writes of the conventions of philosophizing since the nineteenth century: “The major philosophical systems since the French Revolution have been tragic systems. They have metaphorized the theological premiss of the fall of man. . . . To philosophize after Rousseau and Kant, to find a normative, conceptual phrasing for the psychic, social, and historical condition of man, is to think ‘tragically.’”⁷⁷ As in philosophy, so in aesthetics—but not always with the profundity of Kant or Heidegger. Our uncritical exaltation of Storm and Stress from a topos to a lifestyle was perhaps one regrettable result of the romantic “paradigm shift.” The heavenly city of the eighteenth-century philosophers stressed not the fall of man but the possibility of redemption, and hence was essentially a comic notion, at one with the social accommoda-

tions of the comic theater. Firmly embedded in the social context that comedy provided, buffa's stylistic heterogeneity was wholly antithetical to the spirit of absolute music. It was the very trait that organicists strove to transcend with their narratives of unity and deep structure. Yet while the image of comedy offered in *Le Neveu* catches its kaleidoscopic mimesis seductively, at the same time the dialogue stresses the art's dark and dangerous side, the tendency toward ungroundedness that instrumental music's eighteenth-century critics also sensed. Although these critics read this tendency as insubstantiality and a failure of significance, Diderot took it much further: the Nephew's comedy threatens to disintegrate into madness and social collapse. Yet no matter how risky and novel it may have seemed—no matter how “un-Classic”—no one has ever claimed that the music of the “Classic” repertoire is the music of madness and disintegration. How, then, did mute instrumental music resist the dangers implicit in comic fractioning? What allowed the comic equilibrium to remain in balance? What made the center hold?

In the matter of mimesis one inevitably looks to the ancients: Aristotle in his discussion of tragedy provided a paradigm for character in motion, for the flickering manifestations of being that action affords. But neither he nor his contemporaries offered a satisfactory paradigm for the comic theater. Athenian comedy was far less influential than its tragedies: Aristophanes' scurrilous topicality requires much glossing to be at all funny; Menander exists primarily in fragments and is best known for his influence on the Romans; and a treatise by Aristotle on comedy is unfortunately lost, although a modern reconstruction exists.⁷⁸ But medieval and Renaissance discussions of *commedia* as a genre were not concerned with the anatomy of humor; they spelled out the vision of the human estate that comedy by its nature represented.

Unlikely as it may seem at first, the great *Commedia* of Dante Alighieri provides an instructive model for the eighteenth-century comic musical theater. It seems unlikely, because according to conventional wisdom Dante's poem can hardly appear to be a comedy at all; the proper subject matter for comedy is the profane, not the sacred, so the word “comedy” here at best seems to be stripped of its ordinary reference. Its author, however, with no prejudice to its exalted subject matter, sternly insisted on calling it a comedy.⁷⁹ He obligingly provided a gloss on this decision in the form of a famous letter to

his patron Can Grande della Scala, which describes the several levels on which his great sacred poem can be read. Toward the end of the letter Dante explains with utmost clarity why he entitled his arduous journey from Hell through Purgatory to Paradise *La commedia* (the adjective *divina* was added in the sixteenth century):

To understand the title, it must be known that comedy is derived from *comos*, “a village,” and from *oda*, “a song,” so that a comedy is, so to speak, “a rustic song.” Comedy, then, is a certain genre of poetic narrative differing from all others. For it differs from tragedy in its matter, in that tragedy is tranquil and conducive to wonder at the beginning, but foul and conducive to horror at the end, or catastrophe, for which reason it is derived from *tragos*, meaning “goat,” and *oda*, making it, as it were, a “goat song,” that is, foul as a goat is foul. . . . Comedy, on the other hand, introduces a situation of adversity, but ends its matter in prosperity. . . . And as well they differ in their manner of speaking. Tragedy uses an elevated and sublime style, while comedy uses an unstudied and low style. . . . So from this it should be clear why the present work is called the *Commedia*. For, if we consider the matter, it is, at the beginning, that is, in Hell, foul and conducive to horror, but at the end, in Paradise, prosperous, conducive to pleasure, and welcome. And if we consider the manner, it is unstudied and low, since its speech is the vernacular, in which even women communicate.⁸⁰

Although in his discussion of comedy Dante uses as reference point hoary and perhaps spurious Greek etymologies associated with the theater, the word *commedia* in the fourteenth century had a broader application, denoting a narrative of any genre that describes a journey from adversity to prosperity. It is a way of apprehending the world that offers a decisive alternative to the tragic perspective; if anything, it can be said to encompass tragedy because it incorporates the torments of Hell into the comic journey. In his description Dante was merely saying about the genre what in his time everybody knew.⁸¹ His title is all the more pointed when one remembers that he called the great work by his pagan guide, Virgil, the *Aeneid*, an *alta tragedia* (high tragedy).⁸²

A happy ending and a vernacular style are the *commedia*'s salient characteristics. To sing in the vernacular is perhaps to imitate the Scriptures, whose use of simple language for exalted subject matters had overturned conventional assumptions about high and low diction.⁸³ But in the letter Dante invokes the poet Horace, who in his *Ars poetica* tacitly assumed the appropriateness of the low style to comedy and vice versa when stating that comic writers can “speak like the tragic, and also the reverse of this.” Dante's poetic vernacular

was of course Italian—the language of his native city and the *dolce stile nuovo*, or “sweet new style” of love poetry in which he had learned to sing. It makes possible the characters, incidents, and actions with which he peoples his poem—old friends and enemies, historical figures, men and women whose stories could not be appropriately told in Latin, the elevated literary language of the time. To be a true narrative of salvation the poem must be all-inclusive, including in its embrace the humble and vile as well as the sublime and elevated, and, importantly, the female as well as the male—the vernacular being the language in which “even women communicate.” It must be, to borrow a term from Erich Auerbach’s famous exegesis of the *Commedia*, “encyclopedic,” or, to quote C. S. Lewis, “as crowded and varied as a London terminus on a bank holiday.”⁸⁴ Low, middle, and high types must all be contained there, must jostle each other about. They must be sharply defined so as to be quickly recognizable; they are rarely allowed a lengthy expository aria. They are the quintessential en-ergetic characters: what they are up to when we encounter them defines them entirely, whether they are sentenced to work *out* the action of their sin to eternity, as do the souls in *Inferno*, or allowed to work *off* their sin in the *Purgatorio* by enacting its opposite until purged.

The happy ending—the *lieto fine*—is the second essential characteristic of Dante’s *Commedia*, and perhaps its more defining one—no mere convention but a theological necessity. Because the poet’s subject is the salvation of our immortal souls, the poem must terminate in the beatific vision. But the happy ending of the *commedia* was a custom of the secular comedy, which Dante appropriated for his sacred theater. If Dante’s insight was that the story of Christian beatitude brought the comic habit to its fullness, then its essential matter must reside in the humblest of profane comedies as well.

To put this hypothesis to the test, let us return to Serpina and her wiles. Her trick works well, and finally there comes the anticipated happy ending, the resolution into connubial bliss—the ratifying of the social contract that protects their topsy-turvy world. The affairs of this world and its well-being are the concern of comedy, and we can hear this reflected in the duet that closes the intermezzo, where the lovers join in the unanimity of parallel thirds. The duet is set as a gigue, the first real dance topic to be introduced; its swinging and buoyant ⁶/₈ rhythms not only project the “mirth and cheerfulness” appropriate to a *lieto fine*, but they also suggest a formal celebration, conflating the recognition scene and the marriage, that marriage by which all comedies are ended (example 6).⁸⁵ This marriage is one we may legitimately have our

EXAMPLE 6. Pergolesi, "Contento tu sarai," mm. 157–end, from *La serva padrona*, act 2.

Serpina 157

Überto Oh spo-so gra-zi - o - so, gra - zio-so mio spo - set-to, gra - zio-so

sempre cresc. Spo - set-ta mi - a di - let-ta di - let-ta mia spo - set-ta,

168

spo - set-to! co - sì co - sì mi

di - let-ta spo - set-ta! sol tu, sol tu mi

181

fai_ go - der, co - sì mi fai go - der, mi fai go - der, mi fai go - der.

fai go - der, sol tu mi fai go - der, mi fai go - der mi fai go - der.

ff

193

m.d.

198

doubts about: is it appropriate for the Maid to become Mistress? For the social orders to be inverted? Who is the good person here? Uberto begins to seem like a man who is standing in his own way. Serpina connives, but her spirited cleverness is attractive; we grow impatient with Uberto's blindness to the chance that her conniving could issue in a desirable end. Rather than being appropriately cautious, he is foolishly playing the heavy, resisting the possibility of marital bliss. Our doubts dissolve in the happy ceremony of the final duet, when this inappropriate coupling of a wily servant and her blustering master suddenly seems a real love match.

Serpina and Uberto share their terminal bliss with the main characters of most other eighteenth-century comic fictions, so many that Jane Austen was moved to articulate this convention in the famous first sentence of *Pride and Prejudice*: "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife."⁸⁶ Again a beginning that contains its own end—that promises a wedding. Expectations thus aroused, we happily proceed through sixty-one wryly observed and deliciously orchestrated chapters. We know we will be satisfied at the close by the celebration of a "marriage of true minds," a union that is ever in doubt but always certain—the wedding of Elizabeth Bennet and Fitzwilliam Darcy, scion of Pemberley. As the Clown in *Twelfth Night* sings, "Journeys end with lovers meeting"; proper comedies end in marriage.⁸⁷ And as Austen makes clear in her opening sentence, *Pride and Prejudice* is a proper comedy.

But that sentence is not just a statement about endings; it is also, if less obviously, a statement about the nature of the community that spawns, frustrates, guarantees, and requires those endings, and hence it instructs us further about the world we see in embryo in *La serva padrona*. "It is a truth universally acknowledged . . ." Austen's first words suppose a universe brimming with people who attend to the waxings and wanings of human affairs and draw conclusions about them. They note the circumstances of birth and luck—"the possession of a good fortune"; they note the promptings of desire—"must be in want of a wife." But there is an ironic tone in the authorial point of view (no surprise); the joke is in the connection of fortune and desire, the nature of the imperative of the "must," which is by no means in the control of the hapless bachelor. In that word "must" Austen means us to hear the emphatic tones of the provincial community, the agents and motors of society, who *will* find this man a wife. At its purest theirs is a benign desire for a natural completion, for a momentary reveling in the life-affirming vision of a man and woman coming

to live in harmony with one another. At its worst it is the determination of the busybodies, the conniving mothers, the sour old men, to work their cross-patch ways on nature. These are the “blockers” (Northrop Frye’s term); they cause the comic contretemps.⁸⁸ (In the miniaturized cosmos of *La serva padrona*, Uberto is both blocked and blocker.) Ultimately the efforts of the blockers also, indirectly of course, assure the final celebration.

Caught in the amiable web of Austen’s narrative, we pass through well nigh all the postures of the provinces and the passions of the soul before arriving at the happy ending. In an Austen novel the equivalent to the unanimous gigue duet is a blissful ritual dialogue in which the clicks of the long-expected falling into place are deliciously audible. We are persuaded of the rightness of the union by the lovers’ hasty but euphoric exchanges explaining apparent failures of affection in the past. Why resist the pleasure of recalling the scene between Elizabeth and Darcy?

[She:] Why, . . . when you called, did you look as if you did not care about me?

[He:] Because you were grave and silent, and gave me no encouragement . . .

[She:] You might have talked to me more when you came to dinner.

[He:] A man who had felt less, might.

[She:] How unlucky that you should have a reasonable answer to give, and that I should be so reasonable to admit it!

Elizabeth’s last line is one of the lively wry sallies that make her such a lovable heroine. Her mock deprecation of their obvious suitedness—“How unlucky!” she playfully exclaims—is actually a grateful and gracious acceptance of Darcy’s intensely understated declaration of passion—“A man who had felt less, might”—and a celebration of their deep “reasonableness” in being able mutually to recognize proper attraction.

This literary reconciliation scene has an operatic equivalent in *Le nozze di Figaro*, where Susanna in the fourth-act finale recognizes without missing a beat that Figaro, despite his seeming defection from her out of misplaced jealousy, is still her proper lover. She turns their tacit reconciliation into a mischievous reproof to an improper lover—the philandering Count, who blunders into their happy ending in search of his date. Da Ponte has the couple foreground the comic convention in their speech as they enact it, just in case we should fail to get the point:

La commedia, idol mio, terminiamo:
Consoliamo il bizzarro amator.

EXAMPLE 7. Mozart, *Le nozze di Figaro*, act 4, no. 28, mm. 306–13.

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Susanna

La com-me-dia, idol mio, ter-mi-nia - mo, con - so - liamo il biz-zar - ro ama - tor, con - so -

Figaro

La com-me-dia, idol mio, ter-mi-nia - mo, con - so - liamo il biz-zar - ro ama - tor, con - so -

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lia-moil biz-zar - ro ama - tor, con - so - lia-moil biz-zar-roa-ma - tor!

lia-moil biz-zar - ro ama - tor, con - so - lia-moil biz-zar-roa-ma - tor!

Let us end the comedy, my idol;
Let us console the peculiar lover.⁸⁹

Again, as in Serpina's and Uberto's ultimate duet, the rhythms of reconciliation are those of a gigue, but with a slower, more pastoral motion than the romping gigue of that other happy couple—we are, after all, in the darkened garden (example 7).⁹⁰ Common to both Elizabeth and Susanna is an absence of self-conscious, discursive analysis and of personal display. They express themselves instead in motion and in play, glorying in the tacit showing-forth of their natures.⁹¹ The deeply felt is left unsaid; *enargeia* is indeed achieved by *enargeia*. Susanna and Elizabeth are consummate creations of the comic fiction. And like Serpina in her gigue, they express their enargetic brilliance with greatest concentration at the moment of the happy ending.

The *lieto fine* also binds together the comic disparateness that audiences and nervous theorists saw as threatening instrumental music; this is how that

repertory holds its center, so to speak. In a third gigue, a textless, and hence seemingly “voiceless,” gigue, one can hear how the festive *virtù*—the celebratory power—of the operatic happy ending also plays itself out in instrumental music. At the close of the last movement of Mozart’s Violin Concerto in D Major, K. 218, a slow duple-metered gavotte-like movement gives way to a festal gigue in much the same way as in *La serva padrona* (example 8).⁹² In these examples the voiceless gigue assumes the celebratory function of the voiced gigue. In other words, the persistent use of giges and other lilting triple dances in operatic celebrations provides a semantic context for the sense of reconciliatory revelry we feel when these dances close instrumental movements, as they so often do. Eighteenth-century symphonies have happy endings too.⁹³

This is the explicatory progression I would like to suggest: from the sharply defined characters of all types in Dante’s *Commedia*, who play out a narrative of reconciliation and salvation, to the vivid characters in secular comedies who play out a narrative of love, conflict, and the accommodation of marriage, and finally, in instrumental music (slipping into a different mode of critical discourse), to a multiplicity of vivid, high-profile musical topoi, arranged in the shiftings of continual contrast and counterstatement to organize a whole with pronounced beginning, middle, and happy ending. In short, we arrive (happily) at the characteristics of the new instrumental music, so inscrutable to its eighteenth-century contemporaries, and, for entirely different reasons, to many of us today, or until recently.

I have enumerated the similarities between divine and profane happy endings, but there is also a crucial difference: there are too many ambiguities in the happy ending of the secular comedy for us to rest in it comfortably for long. Doubts are raised in *La serva padrona* by the questions remaining about Serpina and Uberto as a match, and in *Figaro* by the comparison of the happy reconciliation of the servant couple to the necessarily provisional accommodation between the noble spouses. Austen’s Darcy and Elizabeth have the most untroubled homecoming of these three, but in a world peopled as well by Lydias and Lydgates—Elizabeth’s wayward sister and the cad who ruins her—there always remains the possibility of seriously regrettable error. Unlike the ascent to Paradise, the secular happy ending is not a transcendent homecoming but a contingent, edgy, and short-lived adjustment. Nevertheless, at the time of its sounding, it is joyous and affirmative—a celebration in which we are all invited to join. The musical comedy of the buffi sacrificed exploratory

EXAMPLE 8. Mozart, Violin Concerto No. 4 in D Major, K. 218:III, mm. 210–end.

Andante grazioso.

Vln.

Andante grazioso.

pp

rit.

rit.

8 Allegro ma non troppo.

fp *fp* *fp* *fp*

Allegro ma non troppo.

fp *fp* *fp* *fp*

15

mf *p* *mf* *p*

21

cresc. *f* *cresc.* *f*

26

decresc. *pp* *p* *pp*

discursiveness, but it gained other powers. Its enargetic vitality, its vernacular mode, and its spirit of social reconciliation were new and compelling—so much so that it provided a paradigm that shaped the first flowering of the repertoire of instrumental music that we regard with such lofty seriousness today.

Comic Voice in the Late Mimetic Period

Voice is the sound produced by a creature possessing a soul.

—Aristotle, *De Anima*

Everything must sing properly.

—Johann Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*

How, then, to make explicit in theory and practice the rich social and artistic transaction I have just described? To summarize: the characteristic rhythmic pattern of a gigue—a lilting dance characteristically associated with rustic revels and sung as a lovers' duet at the end of a comic opera to celebrate the couple's nuptial rites—is used later in the century without a text to impart the same sense of celebratory close to an instrumental concerto. This transference of significance from vocal to instrumental music via the mediation of a familiar musical genre is as palpable and ingratiating to modern ears and bodies as it was to eighteenth-century ones. To ignore it is to allow our critical understanding of this precious repertoire to remain drastically impoverished. Yet the practice has gone unremarked—both in its own time and in later reception history: the late eighteenth-century instrumental repertoire has been steadily considered to be innocent of meaning, reprehensibly in its own time and gloriously a few decades later. Caught in a double bind, it was rejected or condescended to in its own era and admirably adopted in the next, in both cases for the wrong reasons—its apparent semiotic emptiness.

The notorious aesthetic transformation at the eighteenth-century *fin de siècle* was a latter-day battle of the ancients and the moderns, in which the sovereignty of the referential and mimetic—the *ars antiqua*—ceded to a vision of an autonomous New Art intended to transcend mere worldly

representation. Characterizing these warring paradigms were two different music-making arenas—the vocal and the instrumental, music texted and untexted. I have already discussed the romantic elevation of instrumental music in chapter 1, and it is so well known as to need no further amplification. But more needs to be said about the Old Art, the earlier paradigm connecting music with the voice and the word—that is, the *logos*, ancient bearer of truth and reason. Was its dominance over two centuries of thinking about music finally broken? Did it have no continuing influence over the new instrumental repertoire?

My task in the next two chapters is to rescue late eighteenth-century instrumental music from the high-minded austerity of the instrumental category as conceived by the nineteenth-century and modernist positions, and to reshelve it under the rubric of the old-fashioned vocal tradition, where, despite contemporaneous resistance, its strong mimetic content—its “polyp poetics”—suggests it still belongs. If one admits the proposition that “Classic” instrumental music is not the ideal and autonomous, nonreferential music mythologized by the early romantics (and rigidly theorized in modernist revisions), some reordering of our definitions will follow—a taxonomic overhaul, like the one that took place to accommodate Trembley’s little polyp. Abraham Trembley happened on an organism that looked like a plant and begat offspring like a plant, and yet he called it an animal. After all, he reasoned, plants don’t chase their food. Hence the “zoophyte,” or “animal-plant.”

The eighteenth-century instrumental repertoire manifests a similar hybridity: it is *musica vocalo-instrumentalis* (untexted vocal music), to coin a term that could have appeared in an eighteenth-century pedagogue’s taxonomy of musical types, inveterate classifiers that they were.¹ Their classifying habits were in fact quite flexible in their allowance for categorical mixture. My proposed nickname highlights the shifting, ambivalent nature of a period that has always been accused of a simplistic Enlightened clarity. While the late eighteenth century has been treated until recently as a time of musical consolidation and stability—what else does “Classic” signify?—it was in fact an unsettled, labile period of overlapping paradigms. Against the grain of popular assumption then and now, the word and the voice that sang it animated late eighteenth-century instrumental music as well as vocal; instrumental music too was a representational—mimetic—art.

An account of prior mimetic practices in music and of the particular shape they took in the late eighteenth century will help to bring this home. Rather

than chiding eighteenth-century writers for their conservatism in shunning this new music, I fancy “teaching” them a more useful “lesson”: that the newly burgeoning instrumental repertoire was not in fact alien to the aesthetic paradigm that had been bred in their bones. I would seek to reassure them that untexted music could have a comfortable home in an aesthetic that favors the word and the voice. And, on the other side of the divide, if they can be persuaded to revisit the concept of mimesis with new sympathy, absolutist moderns might benefit from an opportunity to reconsider the deeply sedimented notion that referentiality demeans music, and to ask whether the view of art as purely aesthetic might be less a lofty and noble perspective than a mandarin’s retreat from the things of this world.

A new paradigm does not obliterate its predecessors in one fell swoop. I am hardly the first post-Kuhnian writer on music to caution against developing too firm an attachment to the polarities that paradigm analysis conjures up. At the very least there will be periods in which old and new attitudes share the same space.² Attitudes toward the word were one measure of a writer’s predilections. An attack on the word had to be mounted before instrumental music could assume its transcendent status. In the 1790s, even as many writers under the sway of the old-fashioned poetics of the *logos* were still casting a cold eye on the new instrumental repertoire, the *Frühromantiker* were beginning to cast incantatory spells against the word in preparation for their unconditional leap toward the infinite and the ideal. These writers—those who, in the words of Daniel Chua, “spoke absolute music into existence”—demonstrated in their inspired enthusiasm a degree of contempt for verbal texts that had rarely before been seen.³ “Pure music” has the potential to be the truest poetry, “which is all the purer,” said one early nineteenth-century critic, “the less it is dragged down into the region of vulgar meaning by words (which are always laden with connotations).”⁴ At any earlier time the phrase “vulgar meaning” would have been an oxymoron. More violently, Wackenroder styled words as “the grave of the inner frenzy of the heart,” which it must “burst apart with *one* outcry.”⁵ A hierarchy was thus established: at the pinnacle inaudible, unattainable music (Keats’s unheard melodies), then instrumental music, the only worldly music untainted by the word, and finally vocal music, immured in the prison of its earthbound texts. This rejection of the word was an extraordinary reversal of a two-thousand-year predominance. And wordless music was not merely an artistic fad; some thought that it should become the new philosophy, because in its linguistic formlessness it could

explore the mysterious territories of the infinite where mere dialectic could never travel.⁶

It seemed only reasonable that the instrumental works of Mozart and Haydn should be included within the embrace of the new paradigm, as Hoffmann famously did when he dubbed Mozart and Haydn the first of the romantics, insofar as they were precursors and comrades of the “sublimest of composers”—Beethoven, of course.⁷ Their later nineteenth-century relabeling as “Classic” was a romantic designation assigned by romantics—in essence, romantic propaganda. “Classic” signified a style blessed with stability of intent and design, rooted in a past even deeper than its own, and offering a model for later music.⁸ By calling late eighteenth-century music “Classic,” the nineteenth century was not so much identifying the true nature of the previous style as manifesting its own need for paradigmatic precursors—its nostalgia for a timeless past to shore up the more elusive, amorphous present. What better name to give this newly formed canon of sacred musical texts than “Classic”? One wonders whether any composer consciously professes an *a priori* will to the classic and paradigmatic. Yet the romantics’ appropriation of it saddled the music of this period with a misnomer that has defined its reception for nearly two centuries.

Even though most nineteenth-century music reneged on the path of radical purification, the analytical paradigms of modernism were deeply influenced by the early break with the word—captured by the dream of the “empty sign.” For even as romantic enthusiasms faded, art music continued to mean instrumental music, despite the plenitude of vocal and program music consumed by eager audiences from 1800 to the present. Assuming that this “mainstream” model of Classical purity must have been dominant in its own time as well, twentieth-century writers read the last decades of the eighteenth century as a time when pure instrumental music reigned, having at last attained its majority.⁹ Recent accounts of music’s march toward autonomy display a certain testy impatience with the eighteenth-century incomprehension of the urgency of this goal. Viewed from the top of the Beethoven monument, eighteenth-century aesthetics could not escape the appearance of being unprogressive, lagging behind musical practice. Music *had*, after all, been emancipated. Why, then, did not more contemporaneous writers appreciate the fact?¹⁰ It was a compliment to treat voiced works as approaching the condition of nonvoiced music, preserving them for the cause of formalism. This ingenious construal had been suggested early on by Friedrich Rochlitz, a critic and admirer of

Beethoven, who in 1801 ventured the face-saving formulation that in the previous century “the vocal parts in music ‘were simply means to a general purpose—were instruments.’”¹¹ Nearly two hundred years later, the distinguished musicologist Leo Treitler could claim that for Mozart as well as the romantics, instrumental music was “the higher, prior form”; he saved Mozart’s operas for untexted music by dubbing them “symphonies with singers.”¹² Such determined efforts to erase the differences between Mozart’s music and our own precluded any countervailing effort to come to an understanding of what it might have been like to live in a period governed by a vocal aesthetic, in which instrumental music was regarded as a suspicious parvenu.¹³

For most eighteenth-century writers, however, to assert the symphonic nature of vocal music would have seemed merely bizarre—a theory from Mars. In his magisterial book on Mozart’s symphonies, Neal Zaslaw convincingly documents the service function that the symphony performed in the early stages of its development and well into the 1780s, barely a step away from that of the fanfares at court that announced the royal progress.¹⁴ The Italian term *sinfonia* applied equally to both symphonies and opera overtures, demonstrating their functional kinship: opera *sinfonias* introduced operas, and symphonies introduced plays, operas, cantatas, oratorios, and public concerts.¹⁵ Audiences assembled not to listen in awed silence to voiceless symphonies but to hear dramatic vocal performances and cliff-hanging improvisations by the virtuosi of the hour. In the Lenten subscription concerts of the early 1780s through which Mozart hoped to conquer Vienna, the legitimate entertainment of the evening was likely to be a vocal *scena* or (the *scena*’s surrogate) a solo concerto, whose soloist afforded comparable thrills, albeit singing without words.¹⁶ A symphony’s movements were usually pried apart and placed at the beginning and end of the concert, serving as an implicit curtain raiser for a theater that had no curtain, calling the restless public to attention. It took a powerfully attractive alarm to penetrate that dense smog of chat and smoking tallow. At a subscription concert Mozart prepared in Vienna in 1783, movements one through three and four of the “Haffner” Symphony were the outsides of a sandwich that included four concert arias, two piano concertos, a *sinfonia concertante*, and two sets of piano variations. Mozart was also known to lend out his symphonies to other composers and dramatists for the same purpose. In his early years, if he needed a symphony he would cobble it together from one of his opera *sinfonias*.¹⁷

March rhythms and trumpet-and-drums orchestration are now so fully identified with the trappings of the symphonic sublime that their

Gebrauchsmusik function in the most familiar Viennese symphonies is no longer recognized; listen to them with their original purpose in mind and these beloved works suffer a by no means unhealthy demystification. The brass and drums, the very opposite of a novelty, reflected the provenance of the symphony. They came from the court, not the composer's studio. The D- and C-major "trumpets and drums" symphonies that Haydn and Mozart wrote in their early years are the legitimate precursors of symphonies like the "Haffner," whose stirring opening is constructed out of relatively poverty-stricken materials—no distinctive themes or complex harmonies, just scales, trills, octaves, and triads presented in military dress, the stuff of courtly introductions. If Haydn was father of the symphony as we now conceive it, this title was not awarded him for his early works, written when composers in many European capitals were working out their own versions of these useful *introduzioni*, but for his last ones, the "Paris" and "London" sets, the first symphonies ever listened to the way we listen: by rapt audiences, as "art music."¹⁸ It is not known for certain for what occasion Mozart intended his last three symphonies, held in high veneration today; but one can be fairly sure that if they saw the light in their year of composition (1788), they were not played before an audience like the one assembled for Haydn by the London impresario Salomon in the 1790s. We have to entertain the possibility that the movements of the "sublime" symphony later dubbed the "Jupiter" were pressed into use as bookends for one of Mozart's subscription concert medleys.¹⁹

The humble status of the symphony reflects the enduring power of vocality in the waning decades of the eighteenth century. Late eighteenth-century writers venerated the voice with a passionate certainty fully equal to the romantic writers' ardor for "pure music," and consistently gave primacy to music "completed" by a text. One of the epigraphs for this chapter—Johann Mattheson's "Everything must sing properly"—was intended by the writer as "the universal axiom of all music, on which we build all other conclusions regarding this science and art." Later in the same massive tome on musicianship, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* (1739), Mattheson made the ringing claim, "All playing is only an imitation and accompaniment of singing," a sentiment he amplified in the more practical second part of the treatise: "It is much more difficult to compose something for instruments which would be in the proper style and would meet with full approval, i.e., would move the feelings of the hearers to this or that passion: because there are no words present, but merely

an empty musical discourse. When people hear a noise, or even a harmony, and cannot determine whether it be fish or fowl, nothing can result.”²⁰

It is rare to find a later eighteenth-century pedagogical text that does not contain some version of Mattheson’s dictum; examples could be multiplied endlessly, from French, Italian, and German authors.²¹ The philosophes were in firm agreement. In his *Dictionnaire de Musique* (1768) Rousseau defined the difference between a mere progression of chords and a melody (“suite d’Accords” and “suite de Chant”) as lying not only in the feeling, but also in the “interest” that song stirs in the heart, its ability to engage the listener’s attention:

Now the pleasure in harmony is only a pleasure of pure sensation, and the pleasure of the senses is always brief; satiety and tedium follow it quickly. But the pleasure of melody and song is a pleasure of interest and feeling that speaks to the heart. . . .

Music, therefore, must necessarily sing in order to move, to please, to sustain interest and attention. . . .

Any music that does not sing is wearisome.²²

In his article “Sonate,” Rousseau wittily railed against the meaninglessness of these “eternal symphonies.” Likening sonatas to bad paintings in their expressive incoherence, he ended by quoting Fontenelle’s raillery at the impertinence of instrumental music:

Purely harmonic music is a thing of little account. To please constantly, and to prevent tedium, it must be raised to the level of the imitative arts. But its imitation is not always immediate like that of poetry and painting. The word is the means by which music most often determines the object whose image it offers us, and it is by the touching sounds of the human voice that this image awakens in the depths of the heart the feeling that it means to produce there. . . . The symphony animates the melody, and adds to its expression, but it does not supply that expression. In order to understand the significance of all these jumbles of *sonatas* with which one is overwhelmed, it would be necessary to act like that clumsy painter who was obliged to write below his figures: *this is a tree, this is a man, this is a horse*. I will never forget the sally of the famous Fontenelle, who, finding himself worn out by these eternal symphonies, cried out loudly in a transport of impatience: *sonate, que me veux-tu*.²³

In short, instrumental works need descriptive titles—*logoi*—if they are to have any significance for the listener; words perform a necessary labeling function, which saves them from being, as Mattheson put it, “neither fish nor fowl.” In Berlin in the 1770s the influential encyclopedia *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste* (General theory of the fine arts), edited by the Swiss-born critic Johann Georg Sulzer, demonstrated in its articles on music some

openness to the new instrumental repertoire. Yet even here the author suggests that instruments were invented only in order to imitate the voice: "The whole art of music is an imitation of the art of singing. For singing originally occasioned the invention of instruments, on which people endeavored to imitate the tones of the voice. If we have now come so far with instruments that we can express so much that is passionate through these tones alone, how much more then cannot be expressed through singing, since it still makes use of words, and names the object that occasions the passionate tones?"²⁴ In his article "Instrumental Music," Sulzer (or his stand-in, Johann Abraham Peter Schulz) concedes that instrumental music must have powers of expression in itself or else the art of music would not much interest us, and yet he still considers it capable of expression only as dances and marches on social occasions, whose context implies a text.²⁵ Otherwise a text is necessary if music is to attain its goal, the full and proper expression of the feelings.²⁶

Such reflections became dogma in the energetic certitudes of the Italian vocal pedagogue and polemicist Vincenzo Manfredini, whose *Defense of Modern Music* (1788), a tract praising the expressive directness of the new aria styles, constituted yet another entry in the perennial dialogue between *musica antica* and *musica moderna*. Manfredini saw himself as a progressive, battling what he considered to be the antiquarian tenets of Arteaga, and yet he adamantly rejected the notion of an "emancipated" instrumental style: "It is simply true that instrumental music is for the most part a copy and imitation of the vocal. When it fails to sing, it fails to express—that is, it says nothing and it is worth nothing at all."²⁷ Just after the turn of the century, Koch, in his *Musikalisches Lexikon*, made an encouragingly up-to-date observation about instrumental music, acknowledging recent composers and granting (as did Rousseau and Sulzer) that textless music has some power to represent: "The possibility of injecting . . . a distinct [*bestimmt*] character into the sonata, as a pure piece of instrumental music, has long since been demonstrated by the sonatas of C. Ph. E. Bach, and in *Haydn's* and *Mozart's* works of this type one finds more recent evidence for this assertion."²⁸ Despite this new openness, Koch still found it necessary, in his article on instrumental music, to make the same ringing judgment as his predecessors did about the relative merits of the instrumental and the vocal: "It remains an absolute fact that song claims a most obvious and undeniable superiority over instrumental music."²⁹

The instrumental sonata presented a blank impenetrable façade because without language it could imitate no specific circumstances of shared human

experience; its means of painting were necessarily “indistinct” (*unbestimmt*—are there echoes in this favorite word of Descartes’s “clear and distinct ideas”?) Removed from a social context, music offered the listener only generic feelings without moral articulacy. The Berlin essayist Christian Friedrich Krause’s formulation of this common assumption compelled assent with a succinct example: “Try as hard as you may to persuade someone through tones that he ought to love his neighbor, you cannot do it.”³⁰ Untexted music cannot express propositions or make moral arguments. Feelings it can communicate, but in matters of doctrine it must fall short every time. E. T. A. Hoffmann turned the point on its head when he speculated that Beethoven was less successful in writing vocal music because that medium “excludes the character of indefinite longing”; since words must always signify, vocal music is too precise.³¹ But this very precision of reference to a shared context of human experience was the virtue that had moved eighteenth-century writers to maintain the vocal as their paradigm. The sphere of the word occupied the lowest rung in the romantic hierarchy, but in the late eighteenth century it was the world as far as the eye could see, the ear could hear.

Not only was voice the agent of meaning, it was also the controller of formal design. Koch’s concern for stirring the heart drove his description of the new instrumental music. The opening section of his composition treatise, entitled “On the Mechanical Rules of Melody,” teaches instrumental composition as a process of arranging the smallest melodic units into larger phrases, periods, and sections that are ordered by a hierarchy of punctuating cadences. “Melody” (*Gesang*) to Koch meant the leading voice; the organizing force of a sonata or symphony is not described as a formal architectonic structure, as it would be from the mid-nineteenth century on, but as a precisely articulated *melos*. This notion issues directly from the assumptions of the vocal culture, and Koch thus stands at the end of a long tradition. In his *Essay on the Origin of Languages* Rousseau concluded that in “modern music” melody is the equivalent of *dessein* (line) in painting, while instrumental harmony (as we have seen) is mere sensation—it provides the colors. *Dessein* is what makes painting an imitative art with moral force, and melody does the same for music.³² And *Gesang* signified both vocal and instrumental “melody.” As Sulzer/Kirnberger put it,

People give even a pure instrumental melody the name of song [*Gesang*], so that the words song [*Gesang*] and melody [*Melodie*] are usually synonymous. . . .

Indeed, the fundamental power of music lies only in song, for as Rousseau has most rightly remarked, the accompanying harmony has little power for

expression. . . . Melody alone possesses the animated tones with their irresistible power, which people recognize as utterances of a feeling soul. . . .

Drawing [*Zeichnung*] gives us recognition of shapes, and song directly arouses the feeling of the passion.³³

Sulzer follows Rousseau in his refusal to consider harmony capable of affect, and he seems also to be paraphrasing Rousseau in the last sentence, where he compares the function of what Rousseau called *dessein* in painting with that of *Gesang* in music. At the end of the century another important composition teacher, Francesco Galeazzi, termed the process of shaping a movement of instrumental music *la Condotta della Melodia*, “the treatment of the leading voice.”³⁴ The human voice implies expressive intent, and the cantilena guides the listener through the movement—a leading edge that controls the design with the projection of one or another passion. This strand of thought unites two important eighteenth-century othernesses: “form” as process rather than inanimate architecture and “form” as voice. Defined as the progress of a mimetic voice that stirs human passions as it moves, compositional process as conceptualized in the late eighteenth century provides a startling contrast to modern formalist austerities.

In their own reaction, perhaps, to the unquestioned primacy of nonvocal music over the past two hundred years, recent musicological studies have begun to reimagine an aesthetic that exalts the voice—although in an alien aspect—as finally “emancipated” from the word.³⁵ One can make out the obscure contours of a fresh paradigm, in which voice and song are the avatars of a new romanticism, regaining the cachet they ceded to instrumental music at the end of the 1700s. But these writers, modernist wolves in postmodern fleeces, still want to claim ineffability as the true condition of music. Whether figured in the Lacanian cry or in the uncanny irruptions into narrative famously theorized by Carolyn Abbate, this new transcendentalism focuses on moments when the voice is transformed into a “voice-object,” when its sheer power to penetrate the soul overwhelms the word and swallows up significance.³⁶ Rooted in recent opera studies, the freshly minted vocal aesthetic continues the nineteenth-century search for the transcendental, but under a new flag, the “noumenalism of the modern operatic voice.”³⁷ The paradox of the wordless voice becomes a new vehicle for the rejection of language and the celebration of music as the primal art of the ineffable. Again (as with Hoffmann) the eighteenth century

is plundered for precursors: alongside Kant's *Critique of Judgment* Gary Tomlinson positions a noumenal male voice, the voice of Don Giovanni, which "comes close to refuting metaphysics itself," not through its capacity for reason, but precisely because it is *alogos*—"steadfast, unself-conscious, unknowing, and unknowable."³⁸

This trope could conceivably have an analogue in the late eighteenth century. Then too writers were known to celebrate surrender to the sheer sensual power of the human voice. Recall Diderot's "animal cry of passion," but also north Germans like Johann Adam Hiller: "The tone that flows out of a living human breast with spirit and feeling has far more irresistible power than the tone of the most perfect instrument."³⁹ And an anecdote from that inveterate musical traveler, Dr. Charles Burney, in the journal of his musical field trip through France and Italy, tells of hearing several motets performed by the nuns in the Convent of Santa Maria Maddalena in Milan, one of whom possessed a voice "full, rich, sweet, and flexible, with a true shake, and exquisite expression." Grateful for the discreetly subdued accompaniment given this "heavenly voice" during the service, he reflects: "[A] single note from such a voice as that I heard this morning, penetrates deeper into the soul, than the same note from the most perfect instrument upon earth can do, which, at best, is but an imitation of the human voice."⁴⁰ Both Hiller and Burney might seem to be reporting an experience of that inarticulate but transcendent pleasure—*jouissance*—celebrated in the new noumenalism: the "irresistible power" of pure vocal tone to move us directly, circumventing the intellect. But context separates Burney's transport from the postmodern ravishment of the vocal. Resembling the coloratura-besotted operatic heroines about whom they so often write, these recent writers find in the inarticulate voice a means of escape from the iron grip of the instrumental aesthetic; ironically enough, they discover the very same transcendental qualities in the human voice that, two hundred years earlier, nineteenth-century writers had celebrated in instrumental music.⁴¹ The ruling paradigm became a tyranny when the early excitement of the instrumental aesthetic yielded to the arid analytical purities of modernism. One possible solution (by no means the only one) was to exalt the voices of operatic madness as the new divine unreason.

While Burney too had been made rapt by the penetrating power of a "heavenly voice," his narrative had its roots deep in the logocentric past. He begins this travel diary with an epigraph—a paraphrase of two lines from the second canto of Dante's *Purgatorio*—which offers a gloss on his response,

confirming the not unreasonable suspicion that the “trans-sensical” ecstasy of postmodern Lacanians is not at one with Burney’s bliss. Here is Burney’s epigraph:

Ei cantarono allor sì dolcemente
Che la dolcezza ancor dentro mi suona.

Then they sang so sweetly
that the sweetness sounds in me still.

The lines Burney truncates and paraphrases are these, from *Purgatorio*:

“*Amor che ne la mente mi ragiona*”
cominciò elli allor sì dolcemente
che la dolcezza ancor dentro mi sona.

Substituting “they sang” for “he began,” Burney turns the soloist into an ensemble and makes explicit its vocal nature (which in Dante is clear from the context). The singer at the foot of Mount Purgatory is Dante’s friend the Florentine composer Casella, and the text of the song he sings is an early poem of Dante’s, from his unfinished treatise *Il Convito* (The banquet): “*Amor che ne la mente ragiona*” (Love that discourses to me in my mind).⁴² The love that speaks in reasoned discourse (*ragiona*) is not erotic love, but the love of knowledge, of philosophy—or, as Dante carefully glosses his own poem in the *Convito*, erotic love transformed into the adoration of “Lady Philosophy.”⁴³ Both postmodern and eighteenth-century musical tones move one directly; they “penetrate deep into the soul,” bypassing the centers of thought and speech. But Burney’s reference to Dante makes clear that the voice he heeds is an agent of the intelligible and moral domain that “discourses in the mind” by means of the texts that grace it and make it fully determinate. The voice for Burney was powerful not as a representative of the uncannily penetrating powers that undermine significance, but as the most fully equipped representative of the signifying order, inextricably connected with that which distinguishes humans from animals—nothing other than *logos*, human speech. The notion of a voice without a *logos* would have been inconceivable to him.

Provocatively, the new vocal aesthetic comes in some versions with a historical narrative, akin to the Christian drama in that it supposes a “prelapsarian” condition and a fall from grace, bound up with mimesis or representation as the measure of modernity’s distance from the divine. For Michel Poizat innocence was destroyed by the “law of the word” in an atemporal garden.

Others also see the law of the word as executioner but fix the garden in time: the Arcadia of the Foucauldian Renaissance, where humankind was supposedly most at one with itself and with the cosmos. Foucault figures the Renaissance as functioning through a network of “resemblances”; all connections were made by similitudes, likenesses, rather than by the distancing mechanism of semiotic representation. Human beings were naturally in touch with the divine, the supersensible, and in their music “word and tone were always already joined in nature.”⁴⁴ In the Fall—early modernity—the world was “untuned,” “disenchanted” by the instrumental reason of science. Word and tone, previously bound together in “the spiritual powers of voice,” were severed by the dualistic ratiocinations of Descartes, and human beings were cast out of the garden.⁴⁵ Music too was alienated. No longer a substance that suffused—structured—the cosmos, it became a pawn of the new order, a tool with which to control the distanced world. The “early modern aria” (the *da capo* of opera seria, for example) was the serpent in the musical garden. Where Renaissance words and music had been joined in a “natural expression of the passions” (as if such a raw phenomenon were musically possible), Cartesian dualism caused the “separation of sonorous vocality from verbal meaning” through a “hardening of expressive categories” (presumably the conventions that accumulate as soon as one diverges from the simplest association of words and music).⁴⁶ Composers were sentenced to range vainly like the lovers in Aristophanes’ speech in Plato’s *Symposium*, their representation or mimesis a doomed striving to bring the separated halves of their being into one. Tomlinson musters Kant’s *Critique of Judgment* and the “brutal” yet “mellifluous” voice of Mozart’s Don as the advance guard of a new formalist order that will “bridge through willful, unmediated vocal assertiveness the abyss of representation,” that will reverse the tragic early modern Fall.⁴⁷

A Fall implies a sin, and there is a bullying, almost Calvinist exultation in those voices that charge us to come to terms with our fallen (separated) natures and take up this finally unachievable quest for the noumenal. It is not my particular task to challenge the claim that this separation persists into the nineteenth century, that the pure voice can only be represented disembodied in the inarticulate stirrings of madness. My argument requires me instead to look backward, to determine the eighteenth century’s antecedents, for which I have chosen Burney as my guide. Our Arcadias morph with our agendas; without contesting the significance of the “Cartesian fissure,” one can adopt a slight shift in perspective that allows the observation of long-term

similarities and continuities that have gone unnoticed in current narratives, in order to build at least a footbridge over the early modern abyss that suggests another, longer-spanned narrative of fullness and loss. To understand Burney's comment we relied on Dante's "gloss," and Dante himself looks back to his intellectual fathers—Saint Thomas, Virgil, and ultimately the Greeks—whence the poet first encountered Lady Philosophy. It is an anachronism to locate the onset of musical representation at the beginning of the early modern period. The rigid Foucauldian polarity between Renaissance and early modern world views tempts writers like Tomlinson to ignore the many similarities in artistic practice from the sixteenth to the seventeenth century.⁴⁸ The narrative that associates the voice with a *logos*, with moral signification, and with mimesis is, unsurprisingly, an ancient tale, reaching back at least 2,500 years. The history of mimesis in Western culture is coeval with the particular relation between art and philosophy that was born in the writings of Plato and Aristotle. And its continued presence can be traced through the following centuries, bridging the early modern abyss through to the next major reformation—at the end of the eighteenth century, when a highly developed and effective form of mimesis appeared just before the curtain abruptly came down on the tradition—with mimesis on the brink of demise.⁴⁹

In his formidable study of the mimetic tradition, an erudite and thoughtful reclamation of this "most long-lasting, widely held and intellectually accommodating of all theories of art in the West," Stephen Halliwell confirms the beginning and (to him only alleged) end points of the "mimetic period" in music: "Until the major shift of attitudes constituted by the romantic movement, mimesis had long been central to attempts to resolve the enigma of music. That music is . . . a mimetic art . . . was the prevailing, though not unquestioned, orthodoxy of the ancient tradition from at least the time of Plato onward."⁵⁰ Viewed across this trajectory from the Athens of fourth century BCE down to late eighteenth-century Europe, in the accounts of both philosophers and musicians, mimesis is no mere servant to the dead hand of the word but an active mode of representation that catches the essence of our humanity either in relation to an unvarying and omnipotent God or in terrestrial images ghosting human characters and passions. The vivid representational practice we observed in the previous chapter, involving the transference of the celebratory gigue gesture from texted to textless music, already indicates that the eighteenth-century instrumental repertoire still operated under a mimetic license. The following pages will attempt to return legitimacy

and nuance to this scorned aesthetic and credibility to its formative influence on one of the Western canon's most worshiped music repertoires.

As seriocomic evidence of *longue durée* I will offer two rather ill tempered statements that bracket this roughly 2,200-year arc—what I am tempted to call the “high mimetic period.” In the unanimity of their criticisms across the millennia, these two complaints make manifest the extraordinary continuity of the mimetic tradition. Each passage is a gripe about the “mimetic man,” and as we well know, complaints are often the best source of information about contemporaneous practice. In Book III of the *Republic* Plato has Socrates, after describing the wholesome narrations of the “gentleman poet,” imitator of the good, paint a vivid picture of the base man, who practices a promiscuous poetics: “He will imitate [*mimēsetai*] everything and consider nothing to be beneath him; so he’ll attempt seriously, and in the presence of many, to imitate . . . thunder, the noises of winds and hailstorms, axles and pulleys, the sounds of trumpets, flutes, and all the instruments, and even of dogs, sheep, and birds. And his style [*lexis*] will consist entirely of mimesis by voices and gestures, or will contain a minimum of narration.”⁵¹ If in reading this description of “mimetic man” thoughts of Rameau’s disreputable Nephew have not already sprung to mind, consider the Nephew’s troubling question to *Moi* (in the midst of his narration of a particularly despicable anecdote): “Can the style of a base man have any unity?”⁵² Reflecting on the jumble of imitations in the passage above, Socrates and his interlocutors agree: no matter how seductive the mixed style may be, its perpetrator would not be welcome in the city of the good; the only desirable citizen of that city will be the “unmixed imitator of the decent.”⁵³

Over two millennia later, in the preface to his 1751 violin treatise, the Italian virtuoso Francesco Geminiani indicts word painting as a poseur’s trick:

The Intention of Musick is not only to please the Ear, but to express Sentiments, strike the Imagination, affect the Mind, and command the Passions. . . . But as the imitating [of] the Cock, Cuckoo, Owl, and other Birds; or the Drum, French Horn, and the like; and also sudden Shifts of the Hand from one Extremity of the Finger-board to the other, accompanied with Contortions of the Head and Body, and all other such Tricks rather belong to the Professors of Legerdemain and Posture-masters than to the Art of Musick, the Lovers of that Art are not to expect to find any thing of that Sort in this Book.⁵⁴

Note that both writers assume the prevalence of mimetic practice as a matter of course, worthy of comment only if tastelessly variegated and exaggerated, Nephew-style. Toward the end of the *Republic* Plato will high-mindedly (and –handedly) expel the poets from the city; here he sounds refreshingly like any disgruntled critic of mere tasteless excess. Geminiani's pronouncement, although widely separated from Plato's in time and circumstance, shares its tone of high moral dudgeon at the chaos evoked by bad imitators. The two compile remarkably similar enemies' lists of common mimetic tropes: high on both is what they style the tedious predilection for imitating musical instruments, especially the brass. *Plus ça change* . . .

In their formative writings on mimesis, Plato and Aristotle, master and onetime student, had a fundamental disagreement about the worth of mimetic activity. The debased nature of the image in relation to its original was for Plato an essential philosophical theme. But Aristotle was more optimistic: having "shorn away the other world of criterion-Ideas" (the Platonic world of form-bearing originals), he could consider mimesis a valuable human activity that conduced to the making of art.⁵⁵ Nevertheless the two were united in their accounts of music's imitative powers.

All imitations are phantoms of the truth in Plato's eyes, whether they are mere shadows of sense objects, or the sense objects that generate the shadows even as they themselves are shadows—images of the transcendental forms or *eidē*.⁵⁶ All accounts of being must be morally measured against one another, the poet's against the lawgiver's and the lawgiver's against the philosopher's. For the purposes of this judgment, Plato divides *lexis* (style or diction) into three modes, which he values in proportion to their freedom from mimesis. The purest is unmixed narrative (*diēgēsis*), when the poet speaks in his own voice, without mimesis (this pinnacle of forms is limited to the dithyramb, lyric poetry). In narrative mixed with mimesis the poet speaks variously as himself and as his characters (epic poetry). Finally, in narrative by mimesis alone the poet speaks solely through the voices of his characters, which are represented without control or comment (the drama).

Of all of these, Plato most distrusts that sparkling, dangerous expression that takes place in the theater—direct, unmixed mimesis—where beings are allowed to speak unmediated, in their own voices and on their own behalf, without a controlling narrative.⁵⁷ The poet conceals himself, behaving as if he were someone else. In the mimetic cacophony Plato describes in the passage quoted above, "mimetic man" could be a farcical dramatist who has the cast do

everything in voices—the creaking of axles, the bleating of sheep, and the blare of the brass. Less anticly, he could be an epic rhapsodist, the sort of artist critiqued by Plato in his dialogue *Ion*, who, while mimicking the discords of this promiscuous soundscape, would bind it “with a minimum of narration.” The disordered speech of these basest of the mimeticists reflects the discord in their souls; their companions are surely keeping bad company. With their mixed narratives, Homer and the other poets constitute a more respectable tribe, who employ “a small scrap of mimesis in a great deal of speech” and stand at a second remove from the accounts of the philosophers.⁵⁸ Still, they are “imitators of phantoms of virtue. . . . They understand nothing of what *is*, but rather of what looks like it *is*.”⁵⁹ Hence their expulsion from the ideal city in Book X of the *Republic*. But when it comes to judging the representations of the philosopher, there is the inevitable Platonic irony: we are left to reflect on the actual narratives of the one philosopher we have before us—Plato—whose dialogues are *diēgēseis* distinguished by the mimesis of the good but belong nonetheless, at least technically, to the most debased category, the direct mimesis of the drama. They represent without narrative comment the actions of a main character, Socrates, and his interlocutors, whose dialogues are philosophical theater. Absent the controlling voice of the philosopher, these brilliant and subtle dramas are as elusive and ambiguous as any play one might witness in the Athenian theater—or in the paradoxical dialogues of that self-styled latter-day Socrates, Diderot. The moral status of the mixed mode was a plaguing question until the end of the mimetic era. It will haunt this book.

In contrast, Aristotle’s discussion of mimesis in the *Poetics* crisply dispels the circling shadows, describing mimesis as a natural activity of human beings and the cornerstone of a working theory of the arts:

The activity of imitating is implanted in human beings from childhood. Humans differ from other animals in being the most imitative of living creatures. Through imitation they learn their earliest lessons, and their delight in imitations is universal. . . . The cause of this is that not only to philosophers, but to humankind in general, to learn is the most pleasurable thing. . . . Human beings enjoy seeing likenesses because in contemplating likenesses they find themselves learning or inferring what each one is, and saying perhaps, “Ah, that is he.” For if you should happen not to have seen the original, the imitation as such will not be what causes the pleasure, but rather the workmanship, the coloring, or some such other cause.⁶⁰

There is, nevertheless, a central premise common to both thinkers’ conceptions of art as mimetic or referential—namely, the assumption of a world held in

common among human beings. It is a world external to us, the familiar configurations of which the artist will “catch in his mirror.”⁶¹ To find the form for his materials the artist looks outward to the originals in that world rather than inward, to the private chambers of the self, or beyond, to a transcendent spirit world. If you are unfamiliar with the original, as Aristotle points out in the last sentence above, when you encounter the copy you are not witnessing an act of mimesis but only enjoying its secondary and accidental qualities. This is not the pleasure that the maker intended.

A society that puts its trust in the possibility of communicating these eidetic representations will see art as serving a didactic as well as an entertaining purpose. The function of mimesis is to disclose something about our world; on the supposition that there are true and stable beings out there, mimesis is meant to produce accurate images of those beings. Such reportage, while giving pleasure, will also be instructive: the difference between the image and the truth is the condition of our learning, and because one has encountered the true thing in the world it is possible to make the comparison. In this doctrine art supports philosophy; one could call it an act of verification. And yet artists are not merely philosophy’s servants. A special task is reserved to them, one to which philosophy itself rarely (except perhaps in the ironic comedies that are Plato’s dialogues) aspires: artists produce singulars that image the universal, and from these luminous projections of the particular we learn as perhaps we cannot always learn from the generalizing propositions of philosophy.

For Aristotle the proper objects of imitation are human actions, as he states in the *Poetics*: “Imitators imitate people doing things.”⁶² An imitative art crafts images of human beings in action “by means of rhythm, speech, and melodic ordering [*harmonia*].”⁶³ Music has special capabilities in that regard, and it is here that Aristotle and Plato come together. Their crucial differences about the ultimate purpose of an imitation notwithstanding, they are in firm agreement that music has extraordinary and dangerous powers, but powers that can still be harnessed to educate the soul—to create that paradigm of decency, a “musical man.” In Book III of the *Republic*, where Plato is concerned with the power of music rather than its deficiencies, Socrates says to his interlocutor Glaucon (one of these musical men), “Isn’t a training in music *most* sovereign? because rhythm and harmony *most of all* steal into the inside of the soul and *most* vigorously lay hold of it, bringing a graceful bearing; they make a man graceful if he is correctly trained, but if not, the opposite.”⁶⁴ Plato’s insistent superlatives make it clear that he attributes to music of all the arts the

greatest power to shape the souls of the young. When in Book X of the *Republic* he makes his full condemnation of mimesis, he draws an oblique contrast between the mimetic powers of music and painting by having Socrates choose a painting (of a couch) as his example of the debased nature of mimesis.⁶⁵ The imitator here does not even have the status of a craftsman but stands at a third remove from the object he is representing; he merely captures the flat image of a partial perspective on the couch that itself is a shadow of the proper form (*eidos*) of a couch; its essence escapes him. The painting is only capable of an ugly distortion of a given object; the rhythms and tones of music, on the other hand, have the potential to “steal into our souls” and resonate for the Good.

In the *Politics*, where Aristotle makes his most extended study of musical mimesis, he further generalizes the workings of this choreography of the graced and the graceless, the good and the base. Rhythms and melodies, he states, project “likenesses of moral dispositions [*ēthē*]”—anger, gentleness, courage, temperance—and habituation to those likenesses will mold the individual soul for good or ill. “This is clear from their effects,” he asserts, “for when we hear these things we are changed in our souls.”⁶⁶ “On this model,” says Halliwell in his commentary, “responding to music means entering and becoming part of a world of musical feeling whose ethically charged pleasures and pains pass through, and have the capacity to shape, the hearer in the act of listening.”⁶⁷ Aristotle goes on to distinguish music from the other arts in its power to project images of character: “It happens that among the objects of the other senses—those of taste and touch, for example—there are no likenesses of character, and they scarcely exist among the objects of sight.”⁶⁸ Both Plato and Aristotle are claiming that music has a path to a true ethical likeness that the other arts cannot command. A person’s gestures—the mimetic matter of music—catch some essential quality of that person, while the single flattened perspective of a painting presents only a distortion. Neither philosopher offers a flurry of enlightening examples, but a passage in Aristotle’s *Nichomachean Ethics* offers a case study in the art of catching ethical likenesses in its description of the “great-souled man”: “Indeed a slow movement is thought to be characteristic of the great-souled man, and a deep voice, and a steady way of speaking; for the man who pursues few things zealously is not likely to be hurried, nor is the man who thinks nothing great likely to be impetuous. But a shrill voice and swiftness of movement result from haste and impetuosity.”⁶⁹ A slow and measured gait, a melody with deep pitches—these are the metonymic elements with which music creates its *mimēmata*.

They are given their verisimilitude from the connection between ways of moving and ways of being. Motion is character.

This judgment about music's power to convey likenesses turns on its head the conventional doctrine that dominated the arts after Horace—*ut pictura poesis*. Here painting is not, as it would be for the next millennia, the model of representation, against which the other arts are compared. In the late eighteenth century more questions were raised about music's mimetic powers than about those of either of its sister arts.⁷⁰ M.H. Abrams points out the progressive striking of music, in English texts after 1750, from the rolls of the mimetic arts: Lord Kames (1762), James Beattie (1776), Thomas Twining (1789).⁷¹ One could add to the list the essays of Chabanon in France.⁷² Music's options for direct mimesis seemed to these writers far more limited than those of the other arts: at best, the prescription for *ut pictura musica* was not an obvious one. Attempts to take nature's likeness directly in music—the infamous “imitation of nature”—were treated as special and usually held up for derision. There are only so many possibilities for literal “musical pictures”—water and storms, for example, and the birdcalls and animal noises disparaged in the comic images of “mimetic man.” But for Plato and Aristotle, music comes closer to verisimilitude precisely because it is suggestive rather than prescriptive and hence can represent a full spectrum of human actions. Avoiding the bathos of a one-to-one correspondence to an original, it takes its most revealing likenesses by seizing on a part of the whole, a “trace element” of the thing itself, thereby avoiding the snare of literal imitation. By representing human motions—our lively being—music is uniquely able to catch the likeness of character. And furthermore, if we practice these metonymic rhythms, they will “steal into” our souls, inculcating grace or gracelessness. The Greek words for this antithetical pair of qualities were *eu-* and *a-schēmosynē*, with the root word *schēma*—“figure” or “bearing”—stressing the close relation between carriage and character. Grace of character is, in effect, good posture; bearing reveals and shapes character. The notion that ways of moving both reveal and infuse ways of being persisted until the end of the eighteenth century, when the individual became “emancipated” from social definition. Up until then, human motions were ethical entities legible to all fellow citizens of the polis. Eighteenth-century dancing masters were the last true promulgators of mimesis as advanced by the Athenian philosophers.⁷³

The powerful directness of music's lack of prescription, however, meant that its uses needed to be carefully controlled, which led the two philosophers to another point of agreement—that a well-ordered government must pay

close attention to the kinds of music its citizens make and hear. In Athens, and for the rest of mimesis's long history, the controlling agent was the *logos*, the word. Semantically incomplete, music suggests character without prescribing circumstance and requires the word to bring it to fullness of meaning. Sounding the same note as the eighteenth-century pedagogues, Plato and Aristotle maintained that the surest way to control the effects of music was to make sure that it was principally vocal, that whatever instrumental music existed was joined with the music of the spoken word. It is a commonplace that the Greek word *mousikē* encompassed the arts of poetry, song, and instrumental music. In the *Laws*, Plato, ever deeply conservative, inveighs against the composers who "wrest rhythm and postures from melody, . . . setting melody and rhythm without words, and using the *kithara* and *aulos* [an oboe-like instrument] without the voice, a practice in which it is extremely difficult to understand what is intended by a rhythm and *harmonia* generated without the word, and which of the worthwhile representations [*mimēmata*] it resembles."⁷⁴ Aristotle found the *aulos* suspect in part because it stops the mouth and "prevents the performer from using words," which "militates against education."⁷⁵ Here the suspicion that spawned the two grumpy critiques of mimesis quoted earlier returns in a more reflective mode. Fifth-century philosophers and late eighteenth-century pedagogues were one on the subject of instrumental music's semantic incompleteness. They even denigrated it with similar onomatopoetic epithets: the eighteenth century's "ear-tickling nonsense" (*ohrkitzelndes Klingklang*) was the Epicurean Philodemus's "tickling of the senses" (*gargarlizein*).⁷⁶ Because music was so powerful, left to itself it had dangerous propensities that must be properly controlled by the word. At the end of the "late mimetic period," this lack of particularity was turned into a virtue—a guarantee of greater spirituality. But until that time mimetic art had been intended to instruct at the same time as it pleased, and rarely did anyone claim that music could make its appeal to the listener's cognitive and moral faculties without the aid of language. Without the aid of an instructive image or word, music would fail in its didactic function, remaining indeterminate, and hence deficient. Only with a text to supply a determinate context could music move, please, and wield its great educative power.

The notion that music was a reflector of the composer's cosmos dominated musical thinking from Greco-Roman antiquity until the very end of the

eighteenth century, its precise configuration varying with historical and cultural vicissitudes. Mimesis taken in various ways remained the primary way this meaning was delivered. The Romans provided many valuable recapitulations of Greek thought on the matter, one of which in particular served as a watchword for later generations having perhaps little Latin but unquestionably less Greek. A passage from Cicero's *De oratore* discussing the appropriate tone to use in the delivery (*actio*) of various rhetorical subject matters uses the image of the body as a lyre whose strings resound in characteristic ways when a particular motion of the hand/soul strokes them: "Every motion of the soul [*motus animi*] has by nature its own look and sound and gesture; one's entire frame and full countenance and entire capacity for sound resonate like strings in a lyre according as they are struck by a motion of the soul."⁷⁷ A practical descendant of the soul-as-tuning theory ultimately rejected by Socrates in Plato's *Phaedo*, Cicero's formulation specifies the pathways by which Aristotle's "likenesses of moral dispositions" steal into the soul. If the body is, like a musical instrument, tuned to give voice to the motions of the soul, then the body by giving back these characteristic musics can stir the same motions in others' souls. This passage became a locus classicus for eighteenth-century writers, who saw it as an argument for, in the words of the music historian Johann Nikolaus Forkel, the natural relation of "unmediated perception between tone, hearing, and the heart."⁷⁸

In the early Christian era, music's mirror was turned away from the nature of man to the glory of the Christian God. The image of a tuning arises fleetingly in Dante's *Paradiso*, but there the "sweet lyre" is no longer a human body but a Greek cross pricked out in the ruddy sphere of Mars by the corpus of the saints militant, aflame with the love of Christ. They sing a hymn that Dante only dimly apprehends before the stilling of the "sacred strings which the right hand of heaven tightens and relaxes."⁷⁹ No longer do the motions of the human soul control the strings; instead God's firm right hand elicits the praises of his soldier-martyrs, coaxing appropriate song from the serried ranks of the heavenly orders. That music was a mimetic art still went unquestioned. Christian piety, however, found its proper objects no longer in the *motus animi* but in the unheard (yet fully theorized) music of the Creator's cosmos. In the *Metaphysics* Aristotle had defined Pythagorean number theory as a type of mimesis: "The Pythagoreans say that beings exist by means of the mimesis of numbers."⁸⁰ Sacred vocal polyphony was essentially a Christianized Pythagoreanism, imitating the "sonorous numbers" that inform God's creation.

Cosmic music was the *discordia concors*, the uniter of the world's diversity. As proportions bound the world, so did they the human soul and body: the ratios were a guide and justification for contemporary habits of composition. The 1562 edict of the Council of Trent made explicit sacred vocal music's function as a mimesis of divine order: "The whole plan of singing in musical modes should be constituted not to give empty pleasure to the ear, but in such a way that the words may be clearly understood by all, and thus the hearts of the listeners be drawn to the desire of heavenly harmonies, in the contemplation of the joys of the blessed."⁸¹ Although the subject matter had been altered, a text-governed vocal music was still central: sacred music was a means through which, having been made flesh, the Word could do its worldly work.

But despite the certainties of modern epistemological archaeologies about the seamless relation Renaissance composers had to their cosmos and the materials of their art, composition still seems here to be the mortal struggle of the mimeticists to forge a sonic language that will suitably "catch in their mirrors" the sought-after object—here the distant serenity of the slowly revolving heavens. The path for their mimesis was no more a natural one than could be expected for artists whose concerns lay in the sublunary sphere. Conventions had to be established, and disagreements about the nature of the conventions were inevitable. Even with the physical reality of the sounding string and its ratios as a basis, disagreements emerged. Gioseffo Zarlino quarreled with the Pythagoreans about the size of the generative world-number, which for the Pythagoreans was an austere four. Zarlino upped the number to six (his *senario*), adding ratios that would justify the importance of thirds and sixths in Renaissance musical style. (That was not, of course, the reason he gave, but rather the fact that six, unlike the Pythagoreans' four, was a "perfect" number, the sum of its factors.) When it came to the crucial question of how to set the sacred texts, disciplining the musical modes so that they would properly turn the hearts of the congregation, Zarlino's source was classical (that is, pagan), and his considerations seem hardly to differ from those of a secular mimeticist: "If a text . . . deals with subjects that are cheerful or sad, grave or without gravity, and modest or lascivious, a choice of harmony and rhythm must be made in accordance with the nature of the subject matter contained in the text. . . . We should note what Horace says in the Epistle of the *Art of Poetry*: Versibus exponi Tragicis res Comica non vult."⁸²

The seventeenth century saw a dramatic resecularizing of mimetic content: the attention of music theorists returned abruptly from the numbers of the

cosmos to the numbers of the human body. What would have been to the ancients a truism now earned its markedness because it was contemplated in the Christian era. By 1649, when Descartes published his treatise *Les Passions de l'âme*, the mimetic enterprise again spoke to our souls in a newly rationalist world through representations of human nature.⁸³ But the term of art for the *motus animi* was now the passions—*pathē*—and the new expectation was that the motions of these passions could be codified for more efficient delivery. Descartes legitimized the passions, acquitting them of mere excess, and proposed them as an instrument whereby the body could be brought under some measure of control. “Even those who have the weakest souls,” he stated, “could acquire absolute mastery over all their passions if we employed sufficient ingenuity in training and guiding them.”⁸⁴ The philosopher identified six primary passions—wonder, love, hatred, desire, joy, and sadness—which when aroused in the soul were made material in the body and communicated to the visible surfaces by liquid currents known as “animal spirits.” The body was conceived as a Harvellian pump, a “hydraulic automaton.” This passional science was taken up by practitioners in all the arts as a mechanical means of guaranteeing successful expression.⁸⁵ There ensued a deluge of manuals on how to paint the passions, such as Charles Le Brun’s famous *Conférence sur l’expression*, a lecture delivered in 1688, first published ten years later, and ran to sixty-three different editions and translations. These various publications were illustrated guidebooks to the reflections of the passions of the soul on the human physiognomy: Le Brun’s contained as many as fifty-seven heads illustrating the *caractères des passions*.⁸⁶ His work was said to have assisted the great English actor David Garrick in his efforts to break away from the stiff posturing of the old heroic style of acting prevalent on the English stage.

Musical theorizing about the passions was no less confident but not nearly as detailed. Recent scholarship has rectified the impression that writers in the tradition of the baroque *Affektenlehre* (doctrine of the affections)—Marin Mersenne, Wolfgang Caspar Printz, Johann David Heinichen, Johann Mattheson, *et alia*—had in fact managed to codify a musical vocabulary for painting the passions. Like the earlier effort by Zarlino to make a catalogue of universal affects for the church modes, the confidence did not produce the cookbook. Although their texts contained extended sections discussing generalized means of projecting affect in music, attempts at an exhaustive catalogue were rare and necessarily idiosyncratic, providing no universal checklist of music’s mimetic devices to rival Le Brun’s.⁸⁷ Baroque opera was nonetheless

a Cartesian world, amalgamated out of passion and neoclassical unity dicta. Each aria offered a representation of a local emotional state—or passion—caused by immediate events in the narrative. The composer would develop a single passion by means of a consistent figure, chosen according to the teachings of convention and perhaps also after seeking expert opinions; and if he didn't quite hit the mark, text and context would keep the listener on track. The listener's own passions would be schooled by contact with these depictions of motions of the soul both noble and unruly, in an art form that insistently modeled the triumph of duty over erotic love—the proper behavior of subjects in an absolutist regime. Opera seria was a triumph of Cartesian doctrine.

The Cartesian legacy was enduring. One hundred years after Descartes, Johann Mattheson still seemed a devout Cartesian, referring the reader to Descartes's treatise early on in *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* and urging the composer to study the passions so that he can "represent the virtues and vices well in his tones, and . . . skillfully imbue the feelings of the listener with love for the one and disgust for the other." For, he says, "where one finds no passion, no affect, there is also no virtue. If our passions are sick, then we must heal them, not murder them."⁸⁸ The passions or affections were the central focus of Mattheson's compositional method, and he went so far as to classify their mimesis as part of "the natural theory of sound"—what we might call the physics of music. He introduces his affect theory not in part II, which is devoted to discussions of musical practice, but in chapter 3 of the "scientific" part I, "On Sound Itself and the Natural Theory of Music." An early apostle of the galant style, Mattheson was a pragmatist who insisted on the priority of the aural impact of music as opposed to a "pedantic" reliance on its construction "by the numbers." In this section he launches an attack against the "tricks of mathematical calculation and logical whims" (mentioning various ancients, but with Athanasius Kircher as the particular target), ruminates on the natural habits of sound, sympathetic vibrations, and music's healing powers, and then plunges directly into his affect theory: "The fifth aspect of the natural theory of sound . . . which is the noblest and most important of all . . . examines the effects of those well-ordered sounds that evince the constitution of the soul [*Gemüths-Beschaffenheit*] through the movements of the feelings and the passions of the soul."⁸⁹ He closes with the warning that compositions in which the "true natural theory of sound together with the pertinent science of human affections are completely absent," are, "according to Paul," mere

"sounding bells."⁹⁰ The status of music as a passional *science* is the rock on which Mattheson builds his compositional church.

But the eclectic vocabulary Mattheson uses when discussing the mimesis of human feelings reflects the murky period of musical ferment—the 1730s and '40s—during which he wrote. While both Mattheson and the eighteenth-century writers on music who succeeded him paid lip service to "painting the passions," their verbal specifications of music's mimetic task were all the while undergoing significant mutation. "Passions" (*Leidenschaften*) are by no means Mattheson's only or even most favored term. In the section of his treatise that introduces the subject (I, iii: 49–62)—a section only slightly over a page in length—this verbal prodigal uses ten different terms to denote the passion/affect/character complex.⁹¹ From evidence here and elsewhere in the treatise, it is apparent that "affections" was Mattheson's term of choice. As boundless as "the bottomless sea," the category of affections was much larger than that of passions, and logically disordered besides.⁹²

This distinction emerges most clearly in Mattheson's considerations of instrumental music. Despite—or (on second thought) because of—his absolute faith in the primacy of the vocal, he felt that instrumental music, vocal melody's "daughter," merited a separate teaching.⁹³ His boldface prescription that instrumental music should "*always have more fire and freedom than the vocal*" resounds with his fondness for the string writing of Italian concerti, but because he insisted that untexted, instrumental music must still project the affections, he turned to utilitarian music—social dance music—as his laboratory on the unspoken grounds that it was the one instrumental genre that established a clear tie between music and (not the passions, but) the universe of human gesture.⁹⁴

Mattheson puts together an idiosyncratic catalogue, identifying the affection appropriate to each dance. His summary paragraph peoples this social world with a flock of idiosyncratic human states: "For example, the affect is much more elevated and stately in a chaconne than in a passacaglia. In a courante the affect is turned toward tender longing. . . . In a sarabande nothing but dogged seriousness is to be encountered; in an entrée the goal is pomp and conceit; in a rigaudon agreeable joking; in a bourrée contentment and a pleasing manner; in a rondeau cheerfulness; in a passepied vacillation and instability; in a gigue ardor and verve; in a gavotte exulting or unrestrained joy; in a minuet temperate diversion, etc."⁹⁵ It is difficult to find anything in this oddly assorted list resembling the six Cartesian passions or even the ones in Mat-

theson's own original list. While "tender longing" and "cheerfulness" are gentler versions of the passions of love and joy, "elevated" describes a style, "stately" and "pomp" postures, "agreeable joking" a social activity, "contentment and pleasantness" and "instability" (or the later description for the passepied, "frivolity") states of being or character, and "dogged seriousness" lies in a category all its own (Mattheson later gifting the sarabande with the more passionate goal of "ambition").⁹⁶ Descartes's passions have been modified unto domestication—the galant domestication of the salon. Affects that fall short of the rigid Cartesian templates of opera seria seem fully suited to this self-styled *galant homme*, with his cosmopolite education and long experience at court.

There was a further drift of terminology in the second half of the century, one with a more clearly definable cause. Sulzer and Koch still pay allegiance to the passions, but their real comfort resides with feelings—*Empfindungen*.⁹⁷ While Sulzer does not include an independent article on *Leidenschaften* in his encyclopedia, Koch does (s.v. *Leidenschaft*, *Affect*), and he includes in it a brief guide containing examples of the motions appropriate to several given passions, a listing of a sort that can be found in many contemporaneous writings. But while he begins the article with the claim that "the expression of the passionate feelings [*leidenschaftlicher Empfindungen*] is the chief goal of music," in the actual discussion of four passions he uses the term *Leidenschaft* only once. It is found in an equal opportunity list that proceeds from *Empfindungen* (sad feelings), to *Affecten* (joyful affects), to a lone substantive ("the exalted"), and only at the last (with "the tender passions") to *Leidenschaften*. The lengthy articles on expression (*Ausdruck*) and the feelings (*Empfindungen*) rarely use the word *Leidenschaft*.⁹⁸

The new emphasis is on the feelings as entities that come with a train of "modifications" and are represented by a continuum of motion. "The expression of the feelings in their various modifications," Koch begins his article "Ausdruck," "is the proper aim of music, and . . . the principal requirement of every composition."⁹⁹ Music is a sequential art, he continues (rocking back and forth between the terms *Empfindungen* and *Gefühle* as apparent interchangeables):

The expression of our feelings [*Empfindungen*] with their modifications is not the work of a moment, but a consequence of the representation of those emotions as they are felt in the heart, a progressive outburst of feelings [*Gefühle*] that, waked from their slumber on certain occasions, master us. In the successive

representations of these feelings [*Gefühle*], certain motions can be perceived by which not only the different feelings [*Empfindungen*] themselves, but also the different modifications of each feeling in particular, can be differentiated from one another. For this reason we often describe these as *motions of the soul* [*Gemüthsbewegungen*].

Now quoting Sulzer, Koch goes on to describe the composer as possessing a “science” (*Wissenschaft*) for portraying these “motions of the soul” (Cicero’s *motus animi*): “Music is fully suited to portray all these types of movements, so as to make the movements of the soul perceptible to the ear, if they are only sufficiently familiar to the composer, and he sufficiently in possession of the science to imitate each movement through harmony and melody.”¹⁰⁰ Koch’s instructions for the successful mimesis of soul-movements are not particularly specific. There is no sign of the musical figures that a Heinichen might have prescribed; their invention is left to the science and taste of the individual composer, who is equipped with a collection of generalities about tempi, intervals, dissonances, and accents, placing the emphasis on types of motion:

The expression of sad feelings [*Empfindungen*] requires a slow tempo [*Bewegung*, literally “movement”], tones which are more low than high, more legato than staccato, with harsh and heavy melodic progressions, many dissonances in the harmony, which are strongly accentuated in performance, a less striking or perceptible rhythm, and so on.—The expression of joyful affects [*Affecten*] on the other hand is distinguished by a lively tempo, and tones that are higher rather than lower, more detached than legato, and more stepwise than disjunct. The rhythm is clear and requires that markedly unequal beats be avoided, but it is not strongly felt. The notes require a moderate accentuation, and these kinds of affects are contrary to heavy melodic progressions and to frequent use of dissonance.—The expression of the exalted [*Erhaben*] requires a moderately slow tempo, a very prominent and strongly marked rhythm, and tones that are more detached than legato. This affect is compatible with slow notes with broad but consonant leaps, and requires a full and powerful harmony, but one in no way overburdened with dissonances and extremely strong accents on the notes. Thus pieces of this character also use frequent dotted notes in moderate tempo.¹⁰¹—The tender passions [*Leidenschaften*] favor a moderately quick tempo, notes that are more gently legato than staccato and generally also more conjunct than disjunct, with fewer sharp accents in the whole, but with a stronger and more swelling stress on the appoggiaturas and other notes to be accented. The rhythm should thus be neither stressed too prominently nor pushed too deeply into the background, just as the harmony must consist of chords progressing smoothly one after the other, without the admixture of many dissonances.¹⁰²

What emerges from this description is that Koch's movements of the soul constitute a continuum rather than a set of hard-edged categories like the Cartesian templates. Those passional classes suited an earlier aesthetic, that of opera seria, where arias were out-of-time soliloquies presenting the character's reflection on the latest twist of the plot. As such, they required the extensive spinning-out of one passion counterstated by a brief contrasting section that served to set the primary affect in relief. One can chart a passional course through an opera seria by the progress through a sequence of arias expressing (for example) pride, then fear, then rage, then sadness, rage again, and finally exaltation. In his history of seventeenth-century music Lorenzo Bianconi makes the striking point that in seventeenth-century opera the aria is the "minimum 'semantic unit,'" because it projects "a single homogeneous concept or affection" (or two, counting the *da capo*).¹⁰³

By the late eighteenth century, music's minimum semantic unit has undergone spectacular shrinkage. Shaped by the "dialogued style" of opera buffa, a four-measure unit is standard and two quite common—the time it takes for a recognizable piece of expressive vocabulary to make its impression. Koch's "succession of representations" [*Folge von Darstellung*] is local and immediate; it suggests the fluid succession of affects in the exposition of the first movement of Haydn's "Feuer" Symphony, or Garrick's 1764 salon presentation of a rapid-fire series of passions.¹⁰⁴ The human body is no longer theorized as a machine with rigid settings but as vital matter responding to a continuum of stimulations. Buffa flux and buffa precision had subtly insinuated themselves even into the prescriptions of a humble German pedagogue.

Whatever the terminology, there was still agreement at this point that soul-movements were phenomena subject to the common perceptions of the human community. At the end of its trajectory, mimetic doctrine retained many of the same elements that had defined it in fourth-century Athens. Writing from the vantage point of 1802, Koch echoes Aristotle's conviction that rhythms and melodies project recognizable likenesses of human dispositions. The sober continuities of Koch's elevated style still befitted a music that accompanied the stride of Aristotle's great-souled man, low-voiced, steady, and unhurried.¹⁰⁵ In its emphasis on vocality, on the depiction of the likenesses of character, the importance of musical motion in the portrayal of soul-states, and the relation between gesture and meaning (the dancing master assuming the role of moral philosopher), mimetic doctrine would seem hardly to have changed in two thousand years. If the word "Classic" has any relevance at all

to this music, then, it has to do with the persistence of ancient models of representation: it is classic not in empty purity but in its insistence on the fullness of the musical sign.

Why, then, have so many modern accounts maintained that the practice of mimesis had disappeared before the end of the eighteenth century? For one thing, a further terminological slippage convinced some eighteenth-century writers and many modern commentators that mimesis had already been eclipsed in the late 1700s by the more inner-directed expression of the romantics. The Greek-derived “mimesis” was habitually translated with the Latin-derived term “imitation,” which already carried the pejorative connotation of “counterfeit” or “fake” and had been degraded in its musical context to connote only the direct depiction in tones of natural phenomena. The problematic history of this translation stirred Stephen Halliwell to assert that “no greater obstacle now stands in the way of a sophisticated understanding of all the varieties of mimeticism, both ancient and modern, than the negative associations that tend to color the still regrettably standard translation of mimesis as ‘imitation.’”¹⁰⁶

In order to avoid this negative perception, the term “expression” began to supplant “imitation” in some late eighteenth-century texts. The English critic James Beattie, for one, “strike[s music] off the list of the imitative arts,” with “no disrespect to Aristotle.”¹⁰⁷ It is no wonder he does, given his nightmarish view of musical imitation: while bird song or “the murmur of a stream” is ornamental and hence tolerable, he indicts a catalogue of “ridiculous” barnyard imitations surpassing the wildest complaints of Plato and Geminiani: “the crowing of cocks, the barking of dogs, the mewling of cats, the grunting of swine, the gabbling of geese, the cackling of a hen, the braying of an ass, the creaking of a saw, or the rumbling of a cart-wheel.”¹⁰⁸ “Imitation,” he states categorically, “is never tolerable . . . unless it promote and be subservient to Expression.”¹⁰⁹ Yet, despite this denunciation of imitation, Beattie remains a died-in-the-wool mimeticist: expression being “the chief excellence of music,” music must engage the affections, and this it does preeminently through the medium of the voice with its explanatory texts—a typical eighteenth-century opinion.¹¹⁰ André Morellet, French economist and contributor to the *Encyclopédie*, made explicit at the outset of his 1771 essay *De l’Expression en musique et de l’imitation dans les arts* his identification of the terms imitation and expression: “I regard as synonymous . . . the terms ‘to express’ and ‘to paint.’

. . . As all painting is an imitation, to ask if music has expression and in what this expression consists is to ask if music imitates, and in what manner."¹¹¹ The mimetic aesthetic is still strongly in force.

Yet some modern-day scholars assume that "expression" necessarily means "self-expression"—the venting or "pressing out" of the artist's private emotions—and they have been pleased to discover this notion arising earlier than had previously been suspected. They see the use of this term as a sign of an avant-garde beginning to infiltrate the aesthetic of absolute music and subvert mimetic concepts; and what is forward-looking is always admired.¹¹² But there is no reason to impute a revolutionary agenda to this terminological substitution. It in no way involved an early rejection of the mimetic aesthetic. Far from arising from discomfort with the view of art as a reflector of our common natures, the original switch reflected a simple prejudice against the overuse of "imitation" and a growing distaste for the narrowly mimetic effect, for "mad-rigalism" or overt "word-painting," to say nothing of asses or cartwheels—these being the excesses of "mimetic man."¹¹³ The word-painting in Renaissance and baroque vocal texts was all too *bestimmt*—too determinate—for the tastes of a galant age. Composers were repeatedly advised not to "paint" individual words. At the end of the century Koch reports a long-standing popular distaste for this rebus method of composition: "It has for a long time been considered a trivial play, and one running counter to good taste when the composer in setting a text seizes on every image of the poet borrowed from inanimate nature or every word accidentally giving rise to such painting, and starts a painting on it."¹¹⁴

In his 1780 essay on musical mimesis entitled "Über die musikalische Malerey" (On painting in music), the Berlin theorist Johann Jakob Engel articulates, in a formulation that was to attain some prominence after the turn of the century, a metonymic theory of musical representation similar to that put forth by Plato and Aristotle. He makes clear the distinction between the expression of feelings (*Empfindungen*) and the mere representation of an object: "The composer should always paint feelings rather than objects of feelings; always the state into which the soul and with it the body are conveyed through contemplation of a certain matter and event, rather than this matter and event itself. . . . It is always better to paint the inner movements of the soul in a storm than the storm that occasions these movements."¹¹⁵ Sometimes, as both Koch and Engel point out, the internal and the external will felicitously coincide: a musical figure that seems to paint the restless bobbing of a skiff on the sea is

really catching the notion of the soul torn between fear and hope. Koch uses this example in the article just cited, on “Malerey.” Absent the good fortune of this two-for-one representation, seizing on a single word and giving it an individual expression—“painting” it—is rarely successful; the local distraction will either trivialize the feeling as a whole or divert it in an inappropriate direction.

This advice to “paint feelings rather than objects of feelings” was hardly new; it was given as early as 1719 by the Abbé Dubos in his treatise on a comparative system of the arts, and Rousseau said much the same thing in the *Dictionnaire* in his article on imitation.¹¹⁶ By the end of the century it had become canonical, as in the inscription placed by Beethoven at the head of the Pastoral Symphony, “Mehr Ausdruck der Empfindung als Malerey,” which was connected with Engel’s formulation long ago by the German musicologist Adolf Sandberger. But as Sandberger pointed out in his article on Beethoven’s use of the phrase, the prescription was not a simple negative (“Not painting, but the expression of feeling”) but a comparative that left *Malerei* in play in the background: “More the expression of feeling than painting.”¹¹⁷ The composer *represents*, but without musical gimmickry. The desideratum is a music that, neither filled with fussy pictorialisms nor wholly abstract, will directly affect the heart with a representation drawn from the communal vocabulary of the passions.

The crux is not the meaning of the two verbs—to express and to imitate—but the status of the objects on which they work. As long as confidence lasted in a community of shared values, in which passions or feelings were common to all and hence codifiable, the composer was engaged in consulting these authoritative models whether he called it “imitating” or “expressing feelings.” And the audience responded in kind. The “inner movement of the soul” experienced by the passenger in the skiff is not a private and idiosyncratic impulse but the fear that we suffer as a commonality. Many writers were growing restive about the notion of imitation—among them Chabanon in France, and Beattie, Thomas Twining, and Adam Smith in the British Isles.¹¹⁸ But most musicians still trusted in the *consensus gentium*, the communal agreement G.E. Lessing had in mind when he remarked on the appropriateness of the passions expressed in a theater symphony composed by Johann Agricola (incidental music for Voltaire’s *Semiramis*): “To perceive the intentions of a musician means to admit to him that he has attained them. His work is not to be a riddle whose solution is as difficult as it is uncertain. . . . It is not

praiseworthy in me that I have heard aright, but it is the greater praise for Herr Agricola that in this, his composition, no one has heard anything different from that which I have heard."¹¹⁹ The *Frühromantiker* would welcome the notion of music as posing if not a riddle then at least an enigma, which would give up its meaning only to those who were willing to give it serious study, returning to a work again and again to make it yield its secrets. Lessing was content to praise Agricola's dramatic music for its accurate representation of some familiar facet of human behavior—an act of unequivocal communication in a shared language that ensured the communal comprehension of its audience—and in a single hearing. When on the Mozarts' 1765 trip to London the eminent lawyer and naturalist Daines Barrington staged an investigation of the notorious prodigy, challenging the nine-year-old Wolfgang to improvise on the keyboard a love song and a song of rage, "such as his friend Manzoli might choose in an opera," the boy "looked back with much archness" and rattled off pitch-perfect "symphonies" on the words *affetto* and *perfidio*. His archness arose, one presumes, from the easy confidence of someone who knows what is wanted and precisely how to deliver it. Such is the act of composition when one's models are clear—that is, when they are held in common.¹²⁰

Another ambiguity that prompted the premature styling of "expression" as "self-expression" was the fraught question of the state of mind of the composer or performer in the act. Many writers used some formulation resembling the well-known dictum of C. P. E. Bach, "one of the extreme 'expressionists' of the eighteenth century," as Carl Dahlhaus called him: "A musician cannot move others unless he too is moved."¹²¹ This late eighteenth-century commonplace has been frequently seized on as a pronouncement about self-expression. The source of feelings is to be found in the inner life of the artist, who to reproduce them has to tap depths of his soul of which even he is unaware, at least in a waking state, to "channel" the beyond. E. T. A. Hoffmann offers a classic formulation: "In order to move us, in order to stir us profoundly, the artist must be affected deeply within his own heart; and the art of composing effectively is to employ the highest possible skill to capture ideas unconsciously conceived in a state of ecstasy, and to write them down in the hieroglyphs of musical sound (notation)."¹²²

To Sulzer, to Koch, and to C. P. E. Bach, the notion of "ideas unconsciously conceived in a state of ecstasy" would have been unintelligible. In eighteenth-century usage the remark would sooner have been read as a pedestrian injunction to the composer to school himself in the passions—a revisitation of the

hoary Horatian *locus communis* from the *Ars poetica*: “Se vis me flere dolendum est / Primum ipse tibi.”¹²³ This sentence heads a passage of instructions on how to poeticize both human passions (“sad words befit the sad countenance”) and the spectrum of human types (god, hero, matron, trader, Assyrian), “for Nature first shapes us within for each of fortune’s conditions.”¹²⁴ There are echoes of Cicero here—our bodies and souls are fretted for the varieties of common human experience, and the poet plays on these susceptibilities as he will. Sulzer’s version of the motto—“Only that which [the composer] feels vividly will he express successfully” (echoed by Koch)—is prefaced by a statement that fixes it squarely within the mimetic aesthetic: “Nature must have laid the ground for this power in [the composer’s] soul, which must be able to attune itself to all the types of feelings and passions. For only that which he feels vividly will he express successfully.”¹²⁵ In this context, “being moved” was part of a musical discipline in which the subject matter was not one’s personal, interior emotions, but the shared feelings of human experience as they are recognized by persons of reason and taste. For Koch, grasping the anatomy of the passions is part of the final working-out of a composition’s “mechanical elements” (those not achieved by genius or inspiration); the composer must “study the theory of the feelings.”¹²⁶ To “feel [a passion] vividly” is to put oneself in the mode that the model codifies, to know how it might feel to experience that particular passion.

Diderot’s description of the consummate actor in his essay *Paradoxe sur le comédien* fits the mimetic composer like a glove: he must be an “attentive imitator and thoughtful disciple of nature,” a “cool and serene spectator” with “the art to imitate anything, or what amounts to the same thing, an equal aptitude for all kinds of characters and roles.”¹²⁷ A “mirror,” he must be “always ready to reflect objects and to reflect them with the same precision, the same power, and the same truth, . . . ceaselessly delving into the inexhaustible wealth of nature, whereas he would have soon seen the limit of his own resources.”¹²⁸ Put cynically, the injunction to be a dispassionate master of the passions could be read as a command to counterfeit the feelings, and although Diderot uses the essay to mock the *homme de sensibilité* as too neurasthenic and wracked by passion to be able to project the full range of passions on the stage, with characteristic irony he also hints in the essay at the cold, empty husk of the man without qualities. More generously understood, however, the injunction commands the composer and performer to enter in sympathy with all possible human feelings, even those that may seem alien to one’s nature. Sulzer

sees the composer as a Homer, called upon by his epic vocation to comprehend and become all characters, compatible or no; anything else would be a severe limitation of one's powers: "An epic poet must be able to place himself in all the contrasting feelings, in that he sometimes has to portray a peaceable or perhaps even cowardly character, and at others a bold one, and it is the same with the composer. In cases where nature offers him less support, he must rely on diligence and training."¹²⁹ While Plato would have wanted to preserve his performers from the negative effects that would be visited on their souls if they were to imitate the ways of a coward or other malformed and deforming character, Aristotle did not have the same reservations, nor did Horace. There was little new under the sun—at least from Augustan Rome until the turn out of the eighteenth century, when C. P. E. Bach's sentiment was suddenly taken up as the motto of the "self-expressionists."

Some space was in fact left for the development of a personal style that suited a composer's particular emotional physiognomy. Just before the passage quoted above, Sulzer gives the Berlin composers Johann Adolf Hasse and Carl Heinrich Graun "characters," reporting that while Graun's "tender, gentle, and obliging soul" was most comfortable portraying comparable expressions, nature had endowed Hasse—and hence his music—with "a loftier spirit, bolder feelings, and more ardent desires."¹³⁰ But the continuation makes it clear that these natural variances were *faute de mieux*, a shortcoming that could be remedied by proper application. Like Diderot's *comédiens*, composers should have command of all affective domains, bending their efforts toward bringing all their capabilities to the same level rather than nurturing temperamental idiosyncrasies. In the nineteenth century the will to originality would reverse this leveling impulse, and the development of a personal style would become the ruling passion. For the late eighteenth century, however, what distinguished the artist was not the expression of the self's inner feelings but the study of the common human language of the soul.

These transformations in expressive rhetoric in the latter half of the century responded to the proddings of social change. The needs of the evolving community were reflected in a changing attitude toward the social uses of music, and again these changes were manifested in the contrast between opera seria and the comic opera that was rapidly replacing it. Baroque opera was socially grounded, but (with the important exception of the more democratic city of

London) only in the life of a single institution, the court, and a single class, the nobility. In opera buffa, social identity was *the* pressing issue, and to resolve it the genre sought to represent a social world in toto, in a mode more schematic than discursive. In Vienna, opera buffa addressed a mixed urban audience of aristocrats and wealthy burghers, for whom anxieties of identity ran high. It was comforting to have the social schemata played out before one's eyes over and over, with all participants eventually put in their place.¹³¹

The new, communally defined *mimēmata* came embedded in this more inclusive social world; they were connected with class and associated with social institutions—the church, the court, the theater, and the dance hall. They suggest movement from a notion of emotions that seize us momentarily (*pathē*) to one of habits to which we are natively disposed (*ēthē*)—the difference between passions and character states.¹³² *Empfindungen*, “feelings,” because they now were used in a context of social comparison, came to be associated with moral characters. By moving in a certain conventional way, a character would display his or her character or *ēthos*. Action-stopping soliloquies gave way to images of characters performing actions in public and interactive arias and ensembles, which for this reason tended to reveal character rather than a particular driving passion. While a baroque aria in march rhythms would typically portray the hero in the momentary grip of pride or an angry passion for revenge, in a comic opera the march turned generic—ethical rather than (to coin a term) pathical. It suggested courtly habits and aristocratic postures, hence by (sometimes wishful) extension the motion of a noble temperament.¹³³ The aristocratic minuet functioned in the same manner, but in triple meter. By contrast the exuberant gigue—high society's image of a peasant dance—carried an *ēthos* of pastoral innocence; buffa's celebrations were painted with an Arcadian tint, which, as we have seen, was often transplanted to the finales of instrumental music.

Even the grand style of opera seria performance was absorbed as a topos, reserved for characters on loan from opera seria. These imposters continued to behave as though they were in their indigenous theatrical milieu while being held up for comparison with characters, literal and figurative, never to be encountered on the lofty heights of Metastasian moral terrain. They thus often came off very badly, their obsessive passions twisted into rant by comparison with the simple frankness of an Arcadian peasant heroine. And *ēthos* was a detachable currency: one of the most brilliant moments in Mozart's opere buffe occurs in *Le nozze di Figaro*, where Mozart uproots the noble

minuet gesture to apply it to a servant—Susanna—suggesting by this “misapplication” of the emblematic dance of the ancien régime that the ethos of nobility is transferable to those who have not come by it socially.¹³⁴ Opera buffa performs tasks resembling those of the novel, the eighteenth-century bourgeois’s testing ground for *ēthos*. Diderot in his paean to Richardson’s novels praised the verisimilitude of their representation of human society and claimed that he learned from them the art of discovering moral character: “To seek out honest folk and to avoid the wicked, . . . to recognize them by subtle, readily discernible clues.”¹³⁵ Although, as Mary Hunter argues, buffa’s sights may have been set lower—aimed at maintaining the status quo—the genre offered similar clues for sorting out the ignoble from the noble through musical images of *ēthē*.¹³⁶

While Sulzer and Koch tended to describe mimetic objects as “feelings,” they used the term *Charakter* as well, and often in sentences where one might have expected *Empfindung*. In his lexicon article “Charakter” Koch reiterates his musical “mission statement” but substitutes *Charakter* for *Empfindung*: “The retention or realization of a *Charakter* is one of the most important requirements of all musical compositions.”¹³⁷ And as previously noted, both writers grant the power of expression in instrumental music primarily to music for communal activities. In this recently domesticated and democratized galant and *empfindsam* world the question of what sort of person one was facing became critical. The degree to which social dance penetrated both vocal and instrumental music was a sign of the importance of self-presentation—of character as manner and hence as manners. Vocal and instrumental music became exercises in understanding not the emotions of the passionate character but the motions of ethical character. While the didacticism was somewhat muted compared with the assurance of earlier periods, late eighteenth-century music was an art that reflected back to its community images of human behavior for assessment, understanding, and judgment. *Prodesse et delectare*: the fine arts must benefit and please—or, in Koch’s words, “influence the education and ennoblement of the heart.”¹³⁸

Here again a modern blindness may blunt our sympathies—a distrust of the use of art for didactic purposes. This distrust has been engendered by longstanding assumptions about the necessary freedom of the aesthetic object, which generated a corresponding contempt for any estimation of music that gives off the slightest whiff of the occasional—of *Gebrauch*. Eduard Hanslick inveighed against the “decayed aesthetic of feeling,” derisively remarking that

"considering the heavy emphasis unremittingly placed upon music's capacity for mitigating the human passions, we are sometimes not sure whether a piece of music is supposed to be a police order, a teaching aid, or a medical prescription."¹³⁹ A waspish wisecrack attributed to the poet John Ashbery reflects the modernist distaste for usefulness in art: "There is a view that poetry should improve your life. I think people confuse it with the Salvation Army." But when thinking about eighteenth-century music one must take seriously the pervasive contemporaneous notion that music should and could instruct; it was not an antiquated piety.

Both the potential to instruct and the obligation to do so were reinforced by the eighteenth-century assumption of a community of tastes, in which the agreement of cultivated people about what is good and beautiful was a force for the political cohesion of the community. As the givens of a once thoroughly hierarchic society grew less stable, as its economic and cultural foundations broadened in a gradual but perceptible bourgeoisification, nongovernmental reinforcements of such a community became all the more urgent, both as a civilizing device and as a means of political control. Philosophers theorized about the possibility of forging political community at the level of the individual by an enshrining of personal sensibility as an ancillary lawgiver. The "moral sense" of British and Scottish thinkers in the early part of the century found a reflection in the midcentury *Empfindsamkeit* or "sensibility" of the Berlin artistic community, with its emphasis on communitarian sympathy. Morality was transmuted into aesthetic judgment.¹⁴⁰ By midcentury those passions that Descartes had hoped to master had lost their unruliness; they had been thoroughly domesticated into *sentiment* and harnessed as a civilizing instrument, compelling human beings to perceive and acknowledge their common bonds. As an epigraph to his *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* Schiller quoted Rousseau, in *La Nouvelle Héloïse*: "Si c'est la raison qui fait l'homme, c'est le sentiment qui le conduit."¹⁴¹

In the didactic vocabulary of the community of sensibility, "heart" was a cardinal term—the heart that Diderot in his Richardson mode claimed "was, is, and always will be the same."¹⁴² In this so-called rationalist age, the heart had become the organ whereby one could "know" moral feeling. Writers after the turn of the century—Rousseau, for instance, and later Sulzer (much influenced by Rousseau), C. P. E. Bach, and Koch—also saw music as using a different didactic method, for which they persistently use the locution to "touch," "stir," or "speak to the heart," or, as Koch sometimes phrases it, to

“interest the heart.” “The pleasure of melody and song is a pleasure of interest and feeling that *speaks to the heart*,” says Rousseau in the *Dictionnaire*.¹⁴³ “Music is written not for the mind or imagination, but for the *heart*,” says Sulzer, a man heavily influenced by Pietist thinking and with “unshakable faith in the moral integrity of the unmediated emotional response.”¹⁴⁴ In the final cadence of his autobiography (1773), C. P. E. Bach describes the goal of the keyboard player as *touching the heart* by means of an instrumental mimesis that combines the cantabile style—again the powerful influence of the vocal aesthetic—with the new galant simplicity:

My chief effort . . . has been directed towards both playing and composing as songfully as possible for the clavier [clavichord], notwithstanding its lack of sustaining power. This [challenge] is not at all easy if the ear is not to be left too empty and [if] the noble simplicity of the melody is not to be disturbed by too much bustle.

It seems to me that music primarily must *touch the heart*, and the clavierist never can accomplish that through mere bluster, drumming, and arpeggiating, at least not in my opinion.¹⁴⁵

In a striking mimesis of the motion from Old to New Testament, from the Old Law to the New, Rousseau had earlier judged the “most important” law to be that “which is graven neither on marble nor on brass, but in the hearts of the citizens, a law which creates the real constitution of the State . . . and imperceptibly substitutes the force of habit for that of authority. I speak of manners, customs, and above all of opinion.”¹⁴⁶ Platitudinous as they may now seem, in these assembled texts, and a myriad others like them, the phrase “to touch the heart” emerges as a term of art, a shorthand that summons up the doctrine of the community of sensibility. Once again, our hearts are touched and guided by imitations that represent human character and remind us of the commonality of human experience.

The law of the heart suggests instinctive and hence unconditional judgments acceptable as true by the community at large. “About taste there is no disputing”; every “man of sentiment” knows instinctively what is good.¹⁴⁷ For taste is simply the correct reading, on the part of both maker and receiver, of the *consensus gentium*. That all too often quoted remark in Mozart’s 1782 letter to his father about the piano concertos K. 413–15, intended for his new subscription series, has suffered many different—opposing—interpretations: “These concertos are a happy medium between what is too easy and too difficult. . . . There are passages here and there from which the connoisseurs alone

can derive satisfaction; but these passages are written in such a way that the less learned cannot fail to be pleased, though without knowing why."¹⁴⁸ Too often this remark is enjoyed for its exclusiveness; modern readers often claim that it registers Mozart's elitist delight at being able to satisfy the musically learned (the *Kenner*) by concealing hermetic touches in public works that must also have a broader appeal. But the remark can also be read as reflecting an earnest pride in *inclusiveness*—in the composer's ability to embrace the whole community in the reach of his works, to stir even the most naive and ill-educated in his audience (the *Nichtkenner*) to an unequivocal, unconscious comprehension and an appropriate response.¹⁴⁹ Of course this success is a commercial calculation as well as a moral one: the year is 1782, and Mozart, having just decisively turned his back on the old world of court patronage, is facing a "public" for the first time and attempting to seduce them to attend his subscription concerts with his suave new style. But sympathy is the cause of both types of success; the pleasures of taste are available to *Kenner* and *Nichtkenner* alike, and the challenge to the composer is not to exclude either.¹⁵⁰

There is a certain irony in the fact that theorizing about the aesthetic should have led to the formulation of the formalistic, nonrepresentational principles that have ruled aesthetics from the nineteenth century on. Common to both paradigms was the conviction that the aesthetic is the one domain in which human beings can recognize their connectedness in a community of ends. Mired in the sensuous or compelled by reason, we are divided; but in the domain of the aesthetic we are spontaneously brought together in an authentic bond. That this moment is one of pure disinterest, placing the citizen under no law but one that is voluntarily assumed, drives Kant in the *Critique of Judgment*, and Schiller after him, to the paradoxical position that for the aesthetic object to fulfill its central role in the moral education of humans as citizens (this being Schiller's avowed goal), it must not in itself be didactic. It must abide in a "mediatory zone," a zone of pre-cognitive play. Only then can human beings recognize what Terry Eagleton calls "the world's delightful conformity to our capacities" and thus participate in a community of ends. As Schiller puts it in Letter XXVII of *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, "Only the aesthetic mode of perception makes of [man] a whole, because both his natures [the sensuous and the spiritual] must be in harmony if he is to achieve it. . . . Only the aesthetic mode of communication unites society, because it relates to that which is common to all."¹⁵¹ The purpose of the beautiful is to raise a man "out of the restricted cycle of natural ends towards rational purposes," but, para-

doxically, to do so he must first be placed in a state where he is moved by no purpose or interest of any kind. Hence “beauty must surely be a question only of form”; in it one must see reflected a sense of “purposiveness without purpose”—the form of intentionality without any intentional content. Only in the free play of the faculties occasioned by the aesthetic object can one *sense* a rational *law* of being, hence healing at least momentarily the implacable division between reason and the senses. The tilt into formalism is hereby a philosophical necessity, confirming the philosophical position that exalts music as the model of the “empty sign.” In Schiller’s words, in the crucial Letter XXII: “In a truly successful work of art the contents should effect nothing, the form everything; for only through the form is the whole man affected, through the subject matter, by contrast, only one or other of his functions.”¹⁵² Condemned to this austere autonomy, “music, at its most sublime, must become sheer form.”¹⁵³ It must contain nothing that teaches or improves, nothing that represents; it must *not* “touch the heart” (or at least must not seek to do so).

But, as we have already seen, that phrase—“to touch the heart”—was rife in eighteenth-century writings on music. Its use sets off writers like Rousseau, Koch, Sulzer, and C. P. E. Bach, who, although committed to the community of sensibility, did not take the leap into a radical formalism. The locution marks the distance between the music pedagogues and the new philosophy of aesthetic autonomy: Kant in the *Critique of Judgment* uses the term “interest” for the element of subjective involvement that sullies pure aesthetic judgment and destroys the free play of the faculties so vital to the aesthetic experience. Interest to Kant is rather like bias or prejudice: “Every interest,” he wrote, “spoils the judgment of taste, and takes from [it] its impartiality.”¹⁵⁴ Meanwhile, music pedagogues like Koch are still angling to interest the heart—to arouse it through sympathy, to attract it into a recognition of human community through music’s moral mimesis. Even Rousseau, radical thinker though he surely was, accorded the heart full currency in his thinking about music; and with that persuasion came a thoroughgoing faith in mimesis, as when, in his famous *Essay on the Origin of Languages* (“which treats of melody and musical imitation,” as its title continues) he proclaims, “Just as painting is not the art of combining colors in a fashion agreeable to the eye, music is by no means the art of combining sounds in a fashion agreeable to the ear. If it were only that, both of them would stand in the ranks of the natural sciences and not the fine arts. Imitation alone raises them to this level.”¹⁵⁵ The musical artifact had not yet been assigned the austere function of an “empty sign,”

reflecting back to the lonely human subject the formal content of the faculties. Mimesis was still the crucial instrument for communication through the human community, moving that subject by a representation of common humanity.

The most poignant recognition of the “fullness” of the musical sign comes a little later in the *Essai*, when Rousseau describes how music, in contrast to painting,

does more to relate man to man, and always gives us some idea of our kind. . . . Painting is often dead and inanimate; it can transport you to the depths of a desert. But as soon as vocal signs strike your ear, they announce to you a being like yourself; they are, as it were, the organs of the soul, and if they also paint a wilderness, they tell you that you are not there alone. Birds whistle; man alone sings, and one cannot hear either singing or a symphony without immediately acknowledging that another feeling being is here.¹⁵⁶

Rousseau’s landscape is desolate, his auditor without the solace of human community, until the stillness is broken by a signifying sound—not meaningless noise (a bird’s whistle, the croaking of frogs), but ordered, meaning-laden song.¹⁵⁷ The topos of the meaningless of the empty landscape is taken up again by Sulzer (and later quoted twice by Koch) in a discussion of the emptiness of music that does not touch the feelings: “The kind of work that merely fills our imaginations with a row of harmonious tones without *engaging our hearts* resembles a painting of a sky beautifully tinted by the setting sun. The lovely mixture of various colors charms us; but in the patterns of the clouds we see nothing that can *engage the heart*.”¹⁵⁸ Sulzer’s musical analogue to the beautiful but vacant sky is a mere “perfect succession of notes,” lacking “a speech that seems to be the outpourings of a sensitive heart.” The vast and desolate perspective that became a trope of the sublime in the nineteenth century, as in the sky studies of Caspar David Friedrich, would have seemed arid, a mere desert to the eighteenth-century mimetic theorists. Unpeopled, unenlivened by the human voice, it is void of meaningful representations, and hence fails to speak to the heart. In works of music the *mimēmata* are the human figures, the human tropes in this “glimmering landscape” whose vast untenanted reaches have so long been considered the nursery of the sublime.

For human beings use music ceaselessly in daily life, and from that repeated use meanings inevitably accrete to music—even to so-called voiceless music. With this essential connection to human gesture it would be more surprising to discover in any era a truly pure and autonomous version of “absolute music”

than it would to find music that refers to human things. Hanslick, who is at pains to deny music's reference to anything outside the musical sphere, turns one memorable phrase that might seem with its blunt sarcasm to put an end to the question altogether. "The animal to which music is most indebted," he says, "is not the nightingale but the sheep."¹⁵⁹ The nightingale, the bird that Keats saw as a blessed visitor from the beyond, is to Hanslick merely the feathered singer of a siren song, a soloist of the pathetic fallacy. The song of the sheep is, of course, that of the gut, the taut string, and we are being reminded to turn our attention away from frivolous thoughts of connections between music and nature to the sober practicalities of the making of pure musical sound. But Hanslick's epigram contains an image that is its own undoing. It is, after all, the physics of the taut string that makes Aristotle say in the *Politics*, "There seems to be in us a sort of kinship to musical tunings [*harmoniai*] and rhythms, which makes many wise men say, either that the soul is a tuning, or that it possesses tuning."¹⁶⁰ And in Shakespeare's *Much Ado about Nothing* Benedick exclaims, "Now, divine air! now is his soul ravish'd! Is it not strange that sheeps' guts should hale souls out of men's bodies?"¹⁶¹ Certainly the instruments of late eighteenth-century music were taught to resonate with human fibers, human natures; I suspect that there were few in any era that were not.

The Comic Surface

So, note by note, bring music from your mind,
Deeper than ever e'en Beethoven dived . . .

—Robert Browning, *The Ring and the Book*, Book 12, 864–65

It is only shallow people who do not judge by appearances.
The mystery of the world is the visible, not the invisible.

—Oscar Wilde

It is time to sing the praises of superficiality. “Superficial” and “deep” are heavily sedimented judgment words: we reflexively degrade the one while exalting the other. We speak of “deep thinkers,” “deeply held convictions,” but “merely superficial knowledge of the subject.” I would like to restore the superficial to a respectable neutrality, at least in the context of the repertoire under discussion here. The word is derived from the Latin *superficies*, or “surface,” a concept to which no particular pejorative significance need be attached. Without surfaces there would be no appearances, no phenomena—*phainomena* in the Greek, or “things that appear.” Is it really so disturbing to think that music could have to do with surfaces? After all, surfaces are what catch the light.

It is in my view quite reasonable to ask of music analysis that it at least attempt an account of the palpable, of the *phainomena*. It is a task to which I suspect most eighteenth-century thinkers would have assented, assuming that they could have imagined an alternative. For the notion that music has depths is another hardy bequest of German romanticism that has persisted to this day, forcing the surface to surface as a metaphor in need of rehabilitation. In addition to habits of common parlance, most of the analytical methods used in the twentieth century have taught us to withdraw from the surface in the

belief that deeper truths lay concealed beneath. Leonard Meyer, a fellow theorizer of the superficial, tellingly summed up the persistence of “depth analysis,” which he saw as having infected many domains: “Theorists in more than one field have been beguiled into believing that replicated, classlike schemata, and comparable high-level abstractions (e.g., the Schenkerian *Ursatz* or Jung’s archetypes) were of special value and significance because such non-surface structures were apparently hidden and hence profound and ‘deep.’ Consequently, they should be considered more significant than the patent patterning of the phenomenal foreground—a consideration that appealed to academics who, like seers, could then reveal the ‘profound secrets’ of art.”¹ To true knowers the surface becomes transparent; and, as Meyer remarked elsewhere, a process of reification takes place: “The concealed principle [becomes] . . . what was real, while the sights and sounds of the world [a]re appearance—surface manifestations of a more fundamental principle.”² The mysteries of the visible—the palpable—are badly in need of rehabilitation.

It is hardly a coincidence that the metaphor of depth entered German writing about music at about the same time that the word and voice seemed to cede their priority to the new instrumental aesthetic. Wackenroder, it may be remembered, described the word as “the *grave* of the inner frenzy of the heart.”³ Interiority, *Innigkeit*—the study of the secret self—replaced the search for an external truth. As Holly Watkins has pointed out, the search was refigured as a journey not into light, but into the murky depths of the heart, where enlightenment was sonic, not visionary, musical, not verbal.⁴ In his 1800 novel *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* the geologist, poet, and philosopher Novalis worked a curious inversion of the image of Plato’s cave in which he imagined a seeker after truth descending into the subterranean caverns of a mine rather than rising toward the light, as in earlier convention. E. T. A. Hoffmann sounded much the same theme about twenty years later. In the mine’s profound darkness hearing necessarily becomes the operative sense; the time-honored organ of vision, for Plato intimately connected to the Good, is relegated to the shallows of the outer man along with the all too clearly representational word. Enlightenment, *le Siècle des Lumières*, *Aufklärung*: the metaphor at the core of these expressions was worse than dead. It was *démodé*.

Ironically, however, the crucial assumption about those musical depths—that being mysterious and unplumbable, they must remain wholly unarticulated—was not long endurable for musicians with an analytic bent, Hoffmann first among them. These depths wanted a shape. Hence the legacy of depth

metaphors that romanticism bequeathed to modern music theory. Forgetting or mistaking the initial impetus for the exaltation of music—that hungry yearning for the absolute—successive writers attempted rigorous mappings of these supposedly unchartable depths, and modern music analysis was invented. The original impulse became a critical embarrassment. It receded into the oblivion of a scientific modernism, and the once fluid, unknowable spaces of infinity spawned rigid systems. Modern theories of musical depth take for granted the existence of a surface, but only as the plane from which, paradoxically, one must immediately descend in order to transcend. Renouncing unruly appearance, the analyst reaches the deeper truths over which preside that trinity of stern values—unity, logic, and autonomy. In the grip of this “holistic and unitarian” preoccupation with music as crystalline pitch sets or collections of formal norms, Keats’s wistful unheard melodies were hardened into the Schenkerian *Ursatz*.⁵

Schenkerian analysis, which Meyer lists under the category of “high-level abstractions,” was (to continue the topsy-turvy metaphor) the apex of the “nationalistic rhetoric of ‘German depth,’” now assuming its most extreme abstracted form.⁶ For that reason it deserves at least a brief exposition here for those unfamiliar with its severe hierarchies. “Schenkerian” analysts probe beneath the “ornamental” surface of music, stripping away inessential notes and uncovering progressively simpler and more primal pitch strata until they lay bare the *Ursatz* or “fundamental structure”—the “primordial state, ‘the seed.’”⁷ This six-note skeleton—the first three notes of the major scale in descent, in counterpoint with fifth movement in the bass, I–V–I—is posited as the background structure of all healthy compositions; Schenker termed the bass movement the “sacred triangle,” for obvious reasons.⁸

The sounding surface, Schenker’s “foreground,” he allegorized in one aphorism as that “which men call chaos,” which “God derives from His cosmos—the background” (the *Ursatz*).⁹ To demonstrate a work’s claim to the title *Meisterwerk*—and to some its moral value—is to graph its relationship to the *Ursatz*.¹⁰ Rhythm is a serious casualty of Schenkerian graphing techniques, judged ancillary to pitch structures, and disappearing at the move to midlevel graphs. “Rhythm,” he declared, “can no more exist in the fundamental structure [*Ursatz*] than it can in a strict counterpoint *cantus-firmus* exercise.”¹¹ Troubling questions arise from Schenkerian practice as it has evolved and hardened over the decades: can a genuine understanding of a piece of music come by way of discovering the way it resembles every other one?¹²

What benefits accrue from detaching the musical art from what many consider its defining characteristic—motion in time? And finally, in the face of this retrenchment from the speaking surface, what of the contract that eighteenth-century music, at any rate, had made with its audience—an obligation to communicate? Although by the middle of the twentieth century Schenkerian analysis had taken up a foreground position, questions of the sort raised above were soon to arise, often voiced by musicologists working in music of the nineteenth century, where Schenkerian analysis had its roots.¹³

I do not intend to pursue a critique of the particular practices of Schenkerian analysis here.¹⁴ The theory stands at the opposite pole from the study of what Meyer, ever the Gilbert and Sullivan fan, alliteratively dubbed “the patent patterning of the phenomenal foreground.” Its proponents work in an alternative musical universe. A system so resolutely positioned outside both historical and musical time rarely beds down with historical musicology, nor does it pose a serious challenge to its values.¹⁵ More insidious is the work of those critics and scholars who pay lip service to the surface while retaining a lingering fondness for the chthonic secrets hidden in the depths—both reductionists, who seek to vitiate contrast and disjunction in the search for thematic unity, and sonata formalists, who confine every movement within a straitjacket of nineteenth-century *Formenlehre*. Charles Rosen’s influential writings, in particular, have reinforced the anachronistic assumptions that discourage performers and audiences alike from listening “in the moment” for the disjunctive pleasures of the surface.¹⁶ Modern performances, accordingly, tend to erase mimetic differences, and audiences obediently listen for the long lines of the structural imperative rather than the short topical haul. With structural coherence as a primary value, they have been conditioned to attend to major thematic nexuses and to relegate less prominent or formed material to the neutral domain of a structural “glue” attaching one highlight to another. My own intent is to describe life on the surface: the play of musical topoi, those flickering images of our own humanity, as they define the surface of late eighteenth-century instrumental music and constitute its expressive power.

Leonard G. Ratner was the first to postulate the existence of an expressive code for the late eighteenth-century repertoire represented in musical “topics” or expressive commonplaces. As Kofi Agawu points out in his 2007 stocktaking of this developing field, topics had been part of Ratner’s teaching since the 1950s, part of his “oral history of analysis, whose written supplement emerged most decisively in 1980 with the publication of his magnum opus, *Classic*

Music.”¹⁷ In keeping with the subtitle *Expression, Form, and Style*, Ratner devoted the crucial first section—a scant twenty-one pages—to the question of musical expression in the period, laying out the idea of “topics of musical discourse” as a shared expressive vocabulary. Though brief, the section was radical in its insistence on injecting expressive considerations into every facet of the late eighteenth-century compositional process, and it can serve as a suggestive and eloquent threshold to this study.¹⁸

Two of Ratner’s pupils—Allanbrook and Agawu—have continued Ratner’s work. In *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart: “Le nozze di Figaro” and “Don Giovanni”* (1983), I made a study of dance and other topoi and their play as social meanings in those operas, and in an extended article in a Festschrift for Ratner I made some preliminary suggestions about the development of topical discourse across an entire instrumental movement using two Mozart piano sonatas as examples.¹⁹ In *Playing with Signs: A Semiotic Interpretation of Classic Music*, Agawu took a crucial step by articulating the semiotic nature of eighteenth-century topics, proposing a linguistic model in which they operate as a set of dependent signs, referential or “extroversive” (“turning outward”), but without an independent syntax.²⁰ As Agawu explains, they are *signs* in that, according to Umberto Eco’s definition, “on the grounds of a previously established social convention, [they] can be taken as *something standing for something else*”; and they are *dependent* in that they are distinguished from the self-referential, introversive syntactical signs that direct the tonal grammar; they do not by themselves suggest a musical syntax.²¹ They are invested with meaning by their origin in a particular historical time and place, and they interact with the relatively independent signs of harmonic and formal syntax to shape complex, satisfying musical wholes.

Response to these claims for immanent expressive values in the late eighteenth-century repertoire was slow in coming at first: entrenched beliefs in deep structure, a distrust for loose talk about musical expression, and blindness to the communicative value of musical conventions (as opposed to the long prized prerogatives of originality or “self-expression”) stood in the way. But resistance gradually diminished, aided, perhaps, in the 1980s and ‘90s by the concerns of what was then called “new musicology” with musical meaning, and by the growing interest among eighteenth-century music historians in classical rhetoric and its employment of conventional figures in the interests of persuasion. Elaine Sisman mingled topical and rhetorical analyses in her work on Mozart’s “Jupiter” and “Prague” symphonies.²² Taking a different

tack, the semiotician Raymond Monelle responded to the work of Ratner and his progeny with his own articulation of the theory of musical topics and a cultural history of topoi like the hunt and the pastoral that expand into extensive fields across disciplinary boundaries.²³ In the growing field of gesture studies, Robert Hatten developed a theory of musical gesture and meaning in Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. (Incompletely historicized, it sits most comfortably with the music of Beethoven's heroic period.)²⁴ In his stocktaking *Agawu* lists many other sallies in the field, ranging from the cataloging of twentieth-century topoi to their application to musics as far from home as Balinese gamelan performance.²⁵ Recovering from its slow start, the notion of this late eighteenth-century expressive vocabulary has taken up a permanent place in musicological discourse. Twenty-five years after the publication of Ratner's book, the music theorist William E. Caplin, whose work focuses on a taxonomy of formal elements of late eighteenth-century style, nonetheless generously states, "The theory of musical . . . topics . . . has emerged . . . as a powerful tool for the analysis of musical expression within tonal repertoires. Indeed . . . [it] may well be considered one of the success stories of modern musicology."²⁶

The indispensability of topoi to modern analysis, however, has not been fully acknowledged, even by those who make most generous reference to this body of work. This book—and this chapter in particular—are my attempt to secure that acknowledgment. In the two previous chapters I have endeavored to establish the lineage of this kind of musical semiosis in historical poetics, locating it at the intersection of a long-established tradition and a newfangled genre—the encounter of the time-honored habits of musical mimesis with the tropes of eighteenth-century musical comedy. In chapter 1 I described the "mimetic units" of opera buffa discourse, pointed to a similar articulation of the musical surface of a Haydn symphony, and suggested a connection between operatic meaning and the semiotics of late eighteenth-century instrumental music via the gigue of reconciliation that celebrated both operatic marriages and many joyful instrumental closes. In chapter 2 I provided some historical backbone for that word "mimetic" in order to demonstrate that this supposedly antique and discarded teaching about musical meaning governed musical thinking until much later in the eighteenth century than has previously been supposed.

It is the burden of this chapter to make fully audible the ubiquity of these expressive hieroglyphs across the sounding surface of late eighteenth-century

instrumental music. Ubiquity is the keyword, and, as I have said, it has not yet been fully acknowledged. The surface is the site where musical mimesis plays itself out—the mirror, in Abrams’s famous metaphor, of the lush topology of the “full sign.” As argued in chapter 1, opera buffa’s stylistic heterogeneity provides a model: Northrop Frye called the comic society “a busy society,” and the exuberant thematic superfluidity of the comic surface reflects that busyness.²⁷ The development of these concise mimetic units in that volatile new rage, opera buffa, worked a radical alteration in the musical rhetoric that had characterized the high baroque. Via the galant style, dance architecture ($2 + 2 = 4$, $4 + 4 = 8$) migrated from the suites and partitas, where it had been explicit, to become the all-governing constructive element, offering the polyp-sized two-measure lengths of the *pas* as the rhythmic unit for the new dialogued style. The fluid entity that the nineteenth century termed “sonata form” is better described as a new way of construing tonality, one that reinforces dramatic continuity while admitting the galant delight in topical contrast and counterstatement. Indeed, as will be seen in the discussions of Burney and Daube below, the startling change from the baroque to the “Classic” style entailed no new modes of expression at all, but rather a move toward thematic multiplicity and contrast in the application of those expressive modes. Baroque music, both vocal and instrumental, had already employed topics, but singly. It tended to imitate one temperament, one passion, at a time as a way of unifying whole movements or larger sections (e.g., in the da capo aria). The instrumental music of the latter part of the century, with its “dialogued” style (to use Holbach’s word), could accommodate a swarm of topics in a single passage. No longer were single movements expressively monolithic; each one admitted the possibility of an entire universe of discourse, embracing all ranks and kinds of expressive gestures in their worldly variety. These gestures are made audible to us through the new habit of contrast and counterstatement—chiaroscuro, light and shadow.

Before pursuing the claims of the foregoing paragraph, it might be well to deal with a prior question: how did that all-purpose word *topic* become the term of art for such an important study? In formulating the notion of a late eighteenth-century expressive code, Ratner argued for a thesaurus of familiar gestures, which, in a manner not unlike harmonic progressions and cadential formulas, preexisted particular works and were the referents for those works.

In the introduction to his chapter on topics he slipped the word in without fanfare: "From its contacts with worship, poetry, drama, entertainment, dance, ceremony, the military, the hunt, and the life of the lower classes, music in the early eighteenth century developed a thesaurus of *characteristic figures*, which formed a rich legacy for classical composers. Some of these figures were associated with various feelings and affections; others had a picturesque flavor. They are designated here as *topics*—subjects for musical discourse."²⁸

Clearly "topic" signified for Ratner something more specific than its basic twentieth-century meaning of "theme" or "subject matter." His use of the phrase *musical discourse* makes it plain that he appropriated the word from rhetoric, as does his identification of topics as "characteristic figures." Indeed, in another place he explicitly identifies the source of his vocabulary.²⁹ He may well have been influenced in this choice by his mentor Manfred Bukofzer, who in his 1947 *Music in the Baroque Era* spoke of a "system of 'topics' . . . conceived as a 'guide to invention' or *ars inveniendi*," which Mattheson had expounded on under the term *loci topici*.³⁰ Unfortunately, Bukofzer harbored a fundamental confusion about the nature of these *loci topici*, which he identified with the treasure house of the *Affektenlehre*, that mythical mother lode of baroque affective devices that scholars have assumed must exist somewhere in the aether: "The wealth of baroque affections was stereotyped in an infinite number of 'figures' or *loci topici* which 'represented or depicted' the affections in music."³¹ George J. Buelow has clearly demonstrated that no such repository of strictly codified affective devices existed at any time during the seventeenth or early eighteenth centuries.³² Buelow's article on the figured-bass pedagogue Johann David Heinichen's discussion of the *loci topici*, "The *Loci Topici* and Affect in Late Baroque Music: Heinichen's Practical Demonstration," reintroduced that peculiar locution to students of baroque music, but unfortunately many who cite this well-known article seem not have read beyond the title.³³ For as Buelow makes clear, the *loci topici* were superordinate to music and to all other particular fields of human endeavor. They were an *ars inveniendi* of a far more comprehensive sort—a rhetorical finding device that was an enumeration of the abstract forms of universal inference, to be applied to the entire spectrum of specific subject matters.³⁴ Since no musicological study has properly defined the loci, let alone traced them back to their roots in antiquity, it is worth taking a little time to determine what Ratner's topics were not.

The very term *loci topici* may be partly responsible for modern confusions; it veils the theory's ancient origins. This "macaronic pleonasm" (dual-language

redundancy), combining the Latin *locus* and the Greek *topos*, both of which mean “place,” is a late humanist coinage (from the sixteenth century, as near as I can make out). It designates, however, a much older concept, advanced by Aristotle in a text entitled *Topica*, and neatly packaged for succeeding generations of rhetoricians by Cicero in his own *Topica*.³⁵ These topics were not “commonplaces”—were not a haphazard and additive collection of particular subjects for discourse—but a comprehensive set of “common places” (*koinoi topoi*)—*sedes argumentorum* or the “seats of arguments,” as Cicero terms them in his *Topica*.³⁶ The ancients counted a finite number of these places in which resided the set number of general arguments—arguments from the whole, from parts, from genus and species, similarities and contraries, and so on—that could be used to impose order on the fearsome array of individual cases instanced in all aspects of human activity. Constituting a “sound basis for all rational philosophy and science,” they were often termed “dialectical topoi” and were meant to be brought to bear on “questions of justice and physics and politics” in order to construct convincing forensic disputations.³⁷ Given the task of making an argument about a specific issue, an orator needed only to run through the general heads (sixteen in Cicero’s accounting) to see which one applied. They offered the very essence of a method—basic principles available for application to any particular subject matter. Forensic rhetoric was a primary theater of their operation.

For those with little Latin and less Greek, Cicero’s compressed version of Aristotle’s dialectical topoi became canonical, persisting in outline if not always in number in rhetorical textbooks into the eighteenth century. They were used as a guide to poetic invention in sixteenth-century Spanish and Italian rhetorical treatises and made the rounds of a number of rhetorical texts published by a group of poets and rhetoricians in and around Leipzig in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, some of whom wrote poetry for musical setting.³⁸ It was probably under the influence of these rhetors that Heinichen and Mattheson appropriated the *loci topici* as a heuristic tool for melodic composition. Mattheson’s *loci*, which form the core of his chapter “On Melodic Invention,” are a literal copy (less one substitution) of the list of fifteen laid down by the poet Erdmann Neumeister in a lecture given in 1695 at the University of Leipzig.³⁹ The origin of Neumeister’s list in Cicero’s *topica* is clear: the following list compares Cicero’s list of sixteen *loci communes*, translated from the Latin, with Mattheson’s fifteen *loci topici*, in the Latin of Neumeister/Hunold. There are superficial differences of presentation, but

the categories are essentially the same.⁴⁰ Whether maintained continuously or periodically renewed, the Ciceronian tradition was the principal source of later accounts. The degree of abstraction afforded by these universal categories (whole or part, greater or smaller, and so on) is vast. Cicero gives as examples arcane points of Roman law; it is hard to imagine what sort of compositional *inventio* they might supply.

CICERO, *TOPICA* 2 AND 3

Arguments from the Subject Itself

whole

part

meaning (*nota*—distinguishing mark, letter)

Arguments from Things Closely Connected to the Subject

conjugate (based on words of same family)

genus

species

similarity

difference

contraries

adjuncts (collateral circumstances)

antecedents

consequents

contradictions

cause

effect

comparison with greater, lesser, and equal

MATTHESON, *DER VOLLKOMMENE CAPELLMEISTER*,
II, II, 23–84

Locus Notationis

descriptionis

generis and *speciei*

totius and *partium*

causae efficientis
materialis
formalis
finalis
effectorus
adjunctorum
circumstantiarum
comparatorum
oppositorum
exemplorum
testimoniorum

But the desire to link music with rhetoric remained powerful in this early period. Heinichen and Mattheson struggled gamely to make use of the ancient loci, giving them ample space in their treatises. One can read their uneasiness in certain repeated demurrals. Both men are edgy about using concepts from “school” rhetoric, urging the method forward while scoffing at the thought that they themselves might find it useful. Heinichen claims merely to be providing a single example of a method that could help the weary composer whose invention flags. Mattheson allows that he makes “no great thing out of [the loci],” but they are better than “melodic thievery.”⁴¹ Heinichen uses only one locus, the *locus adjunctorum*, subdivided to include *antecedentia*, *concomitantia*, and *consequentia*, and attempts to translate them into musical terms. The principle is simple—so simple that one wonders why this fierce critic of pedantry bothered to invoke the *locus* at all, since the procedure he was advocating was one sensible composers must have made daily use of without the aid of Latin humbuggery: if the A section of the aria text (the concomitant) is too “dry” or abstract to offer a clear path to musical expression, inspect its textual surroundings (the antecedent, or previous recitative, and the consequent, or B section of the aria) for a more affect-laden word. Heinichen analyzes three aria texts and their adjuncts, composing sixteen exemplary arias to show how, for example, a passionate recitative can open up a window on an opaquely aphoristic aria text. His extensive discussion offers a valuable insight into the process by which a composer might have spun words into musical topics in the baroque (for these arias are no less topic-governed than music of the latter part of the century, the difference, as already

observed, being that one affect governs an entire section). But it stands on its own, with no need of the extra layer of terminology by way of rhetorical antiquity.

For Heinichen the *locus adjunctorum* offered a means for controlling the “bottomless ocean we still have before us merely in the expression of words and the affections in music.”⁴² Yet he makes no lists, offers no thesaurus; Buelow terms his explanation a “unique demonstration.”⁴³ Mattheson remarks on Heinichen’s selective use of the loci with barely concealed sarcasm. In his discussion of the *locus descriptionis*, he alludes to Heinichen’s “bottomless ocean” metaphor, countering that “the ‘bottomless ocean of human affections’ belongs *here*” (not in the *locus adjunctorum*, Heinichen’s single locus).⁴⁴ Yet although he himself goes through the loci one by one, providing examples for each, he strains to come up with enough appropriate musical practices to fill out the famous fifteen, and it is not at all clear what guide they could provide for the perplexed composer.⁴⁵ Like Heinichen, he has his favorites, primarily the *locus notationis*, which he interprets as treating of “the form and disposition of the notes, as musical letters.” Under that head he includes musical manipulations of notes *tout court*—same or different note values, inversion or permutation, repetition, and canon; he devotes eighteen paragraphs to the subject. The *locus descriptionis*, that infinite “*Affektmeer*,” comes second. “[It is], after the first, truly the richest source . . . , the most reliable and essential guide for invention.” But he offers no explanation or examples, referring the reader to chapter 3 of the first part of the treatise, where, he reminds us, affects have already been discussed, grounded on a “natural teaching of sound” (*Natur-Lehre des Klanges*). There, however, while he describes the human affections in all their complexity, he includes only a few musical suggestions, of the vaguest and most familiar sort (joy being an “expansion of our soul,” should be expressed in “large and expanded intervals”) and only for the first few passions in his list. He abandons the project with a Heinichen-like shrug about its impossibility: “After all, the affects especially are like the bottomless sea, so that as much trouble as one might take to produce something comprehensive on this matter here, still only very little could be committed to paper, but an infinite amount would remain unsaid and everyone would be left to his own natural inclination.”⁴⁶ As for rhetorical figures, he finds them useful, but “more for lengthening, amplification, embellishment, ornamentation or show than for real persuasion of the intellect.”⁴⁷ Notably—I will return to this later—it is only in his discussion of rhythmic feet and their natural extension into dance

melodies that Mattheson makes the sort of connection between tones and affects that could appear in an instruction book for composers with lagging imaginations.

The pedagogues' embarrassment about using "school" devices shows through constantly in their treatises. In their distaste for rigid and rote learning Heinichen and Mattheson were early Enlightenment modernists.⁴⁸ Hypothesizing a method satisfied Mattheson's desire for a "passional science," as well as the concerns of Heinichen, who like Mattheson was contemptuous of rules, pedants, counterpoint (except in its place), and musical mathematics, desiring to streamline music education so that the young were not held back from early flowering by having to learn "a few hundred antiquated and unnecessary rules."⁴⁹ Yet the scholastic past presses heavily on both of them; the linkage of music with rhetoric is still such a crucial guarantor of its importance and effectiveness that they cannot resist systems with Latin words ending in *-tio*. Heinichen argued a neat—perhaps too neat—proportion: just as the loci in speech provide "all possible topics of argumentation existing in nature for a philosophical or oratorical thesis," in music they offer "all the *genera* of musical invention and expression existing in nature for a given text or musical thesis."⁵⁰ Neither man made good on that promise. Yet while Heinichen and Mattheson vigilantly nursed suspicions of Greeks bearing gifts, neither was fully prepared to make the break from a rhetoric-based music theory that occurred in the latter part of the century.

As already implied, Ratner's "subjects of musical discourse" had nothing to do with these natural categories of argument. According to Ratner, *topoi* were not essential categories but random accumulations of musical commonplaces. And the word *topos* does not arise in connection with them in any eighteenth-century sources. Instead the concept that led to Ratner's usage was articulated first for modern literary scholarship by the German scholar Ernst Robert Curtius in his *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, published in 1953. Unlike Aristotle's *topoi*, Curtius's were not universal and dialectical; they are items in a collection rather than the collection method. Curtius called them "intellectual themes, suitable for development and modification at the orator's pleasure." Common as in "universal" can also signify common as in "shared" or "received": common cultural tropes like the *locus amoenus* or "the world upside down" (or, although Curtius does not stray into music, the characteristic style of a pathetic aria or a French overture). "In Greek," he continues, making a false identification with Aristotle's and Cicero's dialectical *topoi*,

"they are called *koinoi topoi*; in Latin *loci communes*; in earlier German, *Gemeinörter*. Lessing and Kant still use the word. About 1770, *Gemeinplatz* was formed after the English 'commonplace.'" "In the antique system of rhetoric," he states a few pages later and again inaccurately, "topics is the stockroom."⁵¹

But while they were expressive commonplaces rather than epistemological categories, to the rhetorician or poet Curtius's *topoi* were anything but meanly conventional. Like "commonplace," the word "stock" in this compound—because it means "ready-made," "kept on tap"—has taken on an extended meaning of "trite" or "banal" ("stock character" or "stock gesture") that has all but eclipsed the earlier usage. But the goods on this stockroom's shelves are particulars that constitute an infinitely extensible list of familiar tropes connected with aspects of human behavior. Resembling Diderot's hieroglyphs, or the "two-stroke" character depictions described in chapter 1, these efficiently packaged stereotypes provided a fertile source of literary invention. Curtius connects the use of *topoi* in the art of persuasion to a phrase that echoes the familiar "mission statement" of late eighteenth-century poetics—to "engage the heart": "Every oration . . . must make some proposition or thing plausible. It must adduce in its favor arguments which address themselves to the hearer's mind or heart."⁵² Gently reproving those uncritical admirers of originality who find topical studies pedantic, Curtius promises that "things human and divine lie hidden even there."⁵³

In connecting his literary *topoi* with the dialectical *topoi* of Aristotle and Cicero Curtius claimed too much, and he has been roundly taken to task for it since.⁵⁴ Common places and commonplaces are not the same; in fact, they define two ends of a spectrum. But Curtius nevertheless made an important step forward by bringing to respectability the notion of the commonplace as a unit of rhetorical or poetic discourse, a point that could not be made so emphatically, perhaps, until the weariness aroused by the passing of a century given over to the worship of originality had set in. Curtius's *topos* is not a theme, at least not in the sense that we use the word "theme" today. A literary theme is a general subject awaiting elaboration, a musical theme a neutral pitch set that allows the same. The *topos* exists on a lower organizational level than a theme but is more immediately and broadly fungible: if a theme is a currency system for a movement or work, a *topos* is a piece of common coin; for example, under the general theme of "old age" belonged Curtius's classical *topos puer senex*, where youths possessing the wisdom of a much older man deserve high praise.⁵⁵ In the early days of moveable type, the word "cliché" was

coined to denote pieces of type bearing frequently used word combinations that could be dropped in place automatically; it was at this level that Curtius's topoi did their work. In the same way compact but significant musical topoi fit neatly into the periods of the new galant style.

As it happens, despite his concentration on the *loci topici*, Mattheson is not wholly silent on the humble collecting of commonplaces à la Curtius. Melodic invention can go two ways, he argues: one can move from the general premise to the particular case, as with the logical categories, or one can rest in the particular. In paragraphs 15 to 19 of his chapter "On Melodic Invention," just before the introduction of the *loci topici*, Mattheson slips in a brief commentary on the utility of particular cases. Here he speaks simply, in a more "composely" manner than in the discussion of *loci topici*, without the rigid rubrics of an antiquarian system—only a composer using his head (again revealing his uneasiness about the machines of school learning). These paragraphs are worth quoting in full:

15. With the theme or *Haupt-Satz*, which in the science of melody represents, as it were, that which for an orator is the text or subject, certain particular formulae must be in stock [*im Vorrath*], which can be used in general expression. That is to say: the composer must have collected, by means of solid experience and attentive listening to good works, a fair number of modulations, little turns, apt episodes, pleasant passages, and disjunctions. These findings, even if they consist merely of single items, should still by means of appropriate combination make it possible to produce something familiar and complete. If, for example, I had the following three different and discontinuous passages in mind and wanted to construct from them one cohesive phrase, it could rather resemble this:

The orators say *Specialia ad generalia ducenda* [Particulars should be led back to generals].

16. For although one or another of these episodes and turns may already have been used by different masters, and would come to me again without my thinking about the first authors or knowing them, the combination still gives the whole phrase a new character and style, so that it can certainly be taken as an individual invention. One does not need to do this by design; it can come about by happenstance.
17. But these particulars need not be so rigidly collected that one must record, for instance, an inventory of such fragments, and in a fine pedantic manner construct of them an ordered invention-box [*Erfindungs-Kasten*]. Instead we should collect them in the same way as we lay up for ourselves a stock [*Vorrath*] of words and expressions in speech, not necessarily on paper or in a book, but in our heads and memory, a stock that allows our thoughts,

- whether spoken or written, to be brought to light most appropriately later on, without always asking the advice of a lexicon.
18. Certainly if it suits a person and the need impels, he may still provide himself with a written collection in which everything is to be found that he encounters or that pleases him in fine passages and modulations, filed neatly under certain headings and labels, so that if necessary he can find advice and comfort there. Only it will likely prove a lame and patchy creation, if in a calculated and laborious manner one wanted to stitch together one's sorry effort from such rags, even if they were scraps of gold and silver.
 19. Indeed, such stock [*vorräthige*] and special *moduli* are very helpful in the formation of a general main theme, which is the *subject* here. But also, on the other hand, certain *general* things in the art of invention lead us to *particulars*. For, that is, a distinctive application can be made out of many common and familiar phrases. For example, cadences are something *general*, and appear in any musical composition. But they can occur right at the beginning in *particular* *Haupt-Sätze*, although they usually belong at the close.⁵⁶

In other words, just as we store up stock phrases in speech whose meaning is clear to our particular community and makes communication possible, so in seeking a similar result does the composer store up and keep "in stock" compositional commonplaces or *moduli*, which he can recombine at will. Mattheson calls on the same metaphor as Curtius, citing Erdmann Neumeister, his rhetor-mentor: the commercial cliché of "stocked shelves."⁵⁷ The composer will naturally draw on a stock of turns familiar to him from other music, innocently or knowingly piecing them together into new musical fabrics. If one is looking for a musical system, one can resort to an "invention-box." But the best results will be obtained by the composer to whom such manipulations are second nature and who can rely on his own well-stocked brain.

Animating the prose of these paragraphs are two historical precursors: the *ars combinatoria* and the Renaissance commonplace book. The term *invention-box* summons up images of Athanasius Kircher's *arca musarithmica*, an actual "composition box"—a device giving a nonmusician the mechanical means to set a hymn text to music in four parts, in simple or florid counterpoint. Prearranged musical fragments inscribed in wands are arranged in columns inside the box. Each type of wand corresponds to a particular metrical unit, with examples of florid counterpoint on one side and simpler note-against-note settings on the other. In the process the words to be set are analyzed into their meters and set to a block of counterpoint taken from the appropriate wand.⁵⁸ The novice had some tedious work to do, transcribing the combinatorial numbers from Kircher's wands; if Mattheson had this creation in mind, no

wonder he was wary of it. A composer caught up in the eighteenth-century enthusiasm for the mathematical *ars combinatoria*—the study of the permutation and combination of musical notes and phrases that reached back to the logical theories of Gottfried Leibniz—might construct his own two-dimensional invention-box that laid out, say, the twenty-four permutations (arrangements) of the four notes of a tetrachord, as Joseph Riepel did in his *Grundregeln zur Tonordnung* of 1755. This panoply of possible choices was intended to “unlock” the imagination of the student struggling with melodic invention, as Ratner pointed out in his well-known article on the *ars combinatoria*.⁵⁹ The result resembled earlier means of obtaining a *prius factus* on which to invent a melody, but one now secularized and modularized.⁶⁰

The more important influence is perhaps the Renaissance commonplace book. Mattheson composed his *Haupt-Satz* by drawing three separate musical commonplaces out of his memory stock and compounding of them something with “a new character and style.” He mentions the possibility (for the diffident composer only, of course) of filing such fragments or *moduli* away under “headings and labels,” in a transparent allusion to the commonplace technique that was such an important component of Renaissance educational practices. In this routine of private reading, which united memory and invention, students copied pregnant passages from their reading into a notebook or “commonplace book” under headings or “places,” usually prescribed, for varying uses, ecclesiastical or individual. The result was “a memory-store of quotations, which could be activated to verbalize present experience in the language of familiar moral paradigms and with reference to a cultural history shared by writer and reader.”⁶¹ “Every Latin-speaking individual” would begin such a book at an early age, setting up those “headings and labels” and copying out under them passages from their reading that they wished to retain and draw upon.⁶² The Roman philosopher Seneca’s remarks on “the fruits of reading,” in Epistle 84, “On Gathering Ideas,” were a well-worn common place for instructing commonplacers (one scholar fondly calls it “the floating bee passage”):⁶³

We should follow . . . the example of the bees, who flit about and cull the flowers that are suitable for producing honey, and then arrange and assort in their cells all that they have brought in. . . . We . . . ought to copy these bees, and sift whatever we have gathered from a varied course of reading, for such things are better preserved if they are kept separate; then . . . we should so blend those several flavours into one delicious compound that, even though it betrays its origin, yet it nevertheless is clearly a different thing from that whence it came.⁶⁴

Textual fragments are filed away just as the bees sequester various types of nectars in the compartments of their honeycomb, the separation of these commonplaces from their original context being a precondition for constructing something new and idiosyncratic. In the sixteenth century, with the information explosion associated with the spread of printed books, commonplace books functioned like a CD-ROM in a modern data storage base: they became “the crucial tool for storing and retrieving the increasingly unwieldy quantity of textual and personal knowledge that guaranteed copiousness in speech and writing.”⁶⁵ This educational practice informed the thought processes of writers and rhetors, and although it had waned as a teaching practice by the early eighteenth century, its habits clearly left their mark on the minds of eighteenth-century pedagogues.⁶⁶

The theme Mattheson crafts from three different musical fragments or *moduli*, as he calls them, is one of Seneca’s “delicious compounds.” All three of the *moduli* he draws on begin on the downbeat, but otherwise they show variant provenances—three different meters, three different keys (G major, E minor, and A minor; example 9A). But they are identifiable by function: a) is sequential (middle or “traveling” material), b) shapes a half cadence, and c) is opening material, with its clear key-defining traverse and subsequent leap from 1 to 5. Cast in $\frac{3}{8}$, c) could be the beginning of a passepied. The composer crafts a three-measure phrase with half cadence plus the beginning of a sequential motion, all now in $\frac{4}{4}$, and with a) and c) transferred from downbeat to upbeat—a theme that suggests the beginning of a concerto grosso (example 9B). The *moduli* have been taken out of context, but because they once did possess one, it is still recognizable: significant formations endowed with syntactic meanings make them fungible musical currency—make them *topoi*. At the end of the passage quoted, Mattheson’s second example of this mix-and-match—using a cadence figure to open a *Haupt-Satz*—foreshadows a clever permutation of Mozart’s that Ratner was fond of citing: the reversal of cadence and opening material at the beginning of the Trio of the “Jupiter” Symphony Minuet (example 10).⁶⁷ Mattheson’s first example works by nudging the fragments with their characteristic syntactic styles of beginning, middle, and end into their proper places in a new *Haupt-Satz*. The second adds the pleasing element of surprise—a cadence placed improperly, in a charming example of topical play. In the “Jupiter” example the substitution is possible because each module is four measures long, and because galant harmonic syntax is simple and clear. But because the cadence is not allowed to behave properly, it is a “cadence out of countenance”

EXAMPLE 9A. Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, II, iv, 15.



EXAMPLE 9B. Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, II, iv, 15.



EXAMPLE 10. Mozart, Symphony No. 41 in C Major, "Jupiter," K. 551:III, mm. 60–67.

Trio

Musical score for the Trio section of Mozart's Symphony No. 41 in C Major, "Jupiter," K. 551, measures 60–67. The score is for a woodwind and string ensemble. The instruments shown are Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Bassoon (Bsn.), Horn (Hn. (F)), Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vc.). The score is in common time (C) and features a variety of rhythmic patterns and dynamics (p, p).

as Ratner wittily puts it—a cliché purposefully slipped into the wrong position on the printing press.⁶⁸

I linger over these paragraphs in Mattheson's discussion of the *ars inveniendi* because no other writer of this period, and few later, illustrated so succinctly what Ratner termed "the interchangeability of melodic components," and what I have likened to a fungible musical currency.⁶⁹ In a period when composition was gradually becoming the intelligent manipulation of conventions,

Mattheson was a composer on the cusp, Janus-faced. Daniel Hertz speculates that he invented the term “galant style,” a phrase that more than any other would characterize the stylistic alterations in the music of the latter half of the century.⁷⁰ Yet as I remarked earlier, the weight of the scholastic past pressed heavily on Mattheson, prompting his lengthy exposition of the *loci topici* and also his strained comparison of the aria to an oration later in the chapter. In his survey of the German baroque attachment to rhetoric, Dietrich Bartel could be thinking of this bifurcation in Mattheson’s thinking when he described the stubborn hold that the habits of “school music” had on German musicians of the early eighteenth century and their slow eclipse by an encroaching emphasis on natural affect later in the century:

While rhetorical influences are evident in Italian, English, and French Baroque music, only the *musica poetica* tradition developed a systematic albeit disparate concept of musical-rhetorical figures. This was the result of the German predilection to rank the rhetorical structure of a composition above its affective delivery. Instead of looking to the actor or orator for inspiration and guidance, the *musicus poeticus* turned to classical rhetorical structures. Rhetoric’s structuring steps, *inventio*, *dispositio*, and *elocutio*, provided *musica poetica* with the necessary framework. *Inventio*’s *loci topici*, *dispositio*’s methodical precepts, and *elocutio*’s expressive devices, the rhetorical figures, all familiar to *Lateinschule* and university students and teachers, contributed the necessary methodology and terminology.⁷¹

The Italians put their emphasis on *actio actio actio*—“Delivery, delivery, delivery.”⁷² This precluded the discussion of a systematic application of rhetorical compositional techniques. Natural, affection-directed speech and its delivery rather than studied, rhetorical theory was to be the compositional model. Only toward the end of the German baroque did this approach make inroads into German musical thought, championed by writers such as Mattheson, Scheibe, and Forkel.⁷³ Mattheson still felt it necessary to couch musical composition in the rhetoricians’ terms, appropriating the *loci* as the official way to teach melodic invention, and later, in his chapter on the shape of the larger whole, fitting a da capo aria into the procrustean bed of the traditional six parts of a rhetorical *dispositio*.⁷⁴ His examples also tended to be conservative. Unlike the phrases of late eighteenth-century practice, with their constant affective shifts, the newly compounded theme he presents in paragraph 15 was intended as a *Haupt-Satz*, providing the material for an entire monoaffective *Satz* or large section, the A section in a da capo aria, for example. Contrast would be worked out on a broad canvas, in the second or B section.

But in this brief series of paragraphs about the permutations of musical commonplaces Mattheson, speaking as a composer rather than a schoolman, in language unmarked by bombastic Latin, discusses composition with examples not strained to fit a borrowed system but that emphasize his modern, galant leanings. His *topoi* are syntactical rather than affective because the choice of the single affect that will animate the section would already have been made. *Topoi* will begin to carry affective qualities up front when they rub shoulders with each other in the constant roil of local dialogic contrast—when the unit changes from the aria (or, more properly, the *A* or *da capo* section) to the two- and four-measure constituent phrase. For Mattheson periodic phrase structure—the deployment of two- and four-measure phrases, offering positions into which modules from the “ocean of affects” can be slipped—remains closeted in dance music, as his *Haupt-Satz* with its 3–1 division of the four measures makes clear. Strikingly, as mentioned earlier, his only informative discussion of affect occurs in his enumeration of the expressive meanings of dances, whence the two- and four-measure phrases originated. Nonetheless, in these few paragraphs one can see dimly adumbrated the beginnings of the topical manipulation that became a crucial compositional habit of late eighteenth-century style.

Musically the *loci topici* had but a brief efflorescence. After Heinichen and Mattheson, only Meinrad Spiess paid them any mind. Like Mattheson and Heinichen, Spiess was a musician teetering between old and new. A priest at the Benedictine Abbey of Irsee and a composer of church music, he persisted in composing in the church modes. Yet for all his isolation he maintained connections with the important musicians of his time, displaying in his treatise *Tractatus musicus compositorio-practicus* (1745) a broad knowledge of contemporaneous writings on music and a serious commitment to the expression of affect. In the conventionally titled chapter “About Invention, Elaboration, and Decoration,” he invokes Heinichen’s discussion of the *loci topici* as an aid for the invention-challenged composer, whom he characterizes, in what seems like a true galant judgment, as the mingy *melancholicus*; for those with a “clever, merry, passionate spirit [who] have a superfluidity of invention, and are very blessed, since they know how to temper their ardor,” the cup of invention overfloweth.⁷⁵ Spiess understands the nature of the *loci*: “*Topica*, or *Topice*, signified an art of inventing *Argumenta* or grounds for proof; thus *Loci*

Topici are the place and the means, whereby inventions are derived." And he approves of Heinichen's use of them to animate arias: "The particulars manifesting themselves *ex Locis Topicis* will already guide the *Phantasie* to good *Idees* and sufficient inventions."⁷⁶ But he turns abruptly from the grand loci to a simpler method that provides the student with an acid test for stylistic appropriateness: "And truly if many a thoughtless composition student were just to take up the single familiar school verse: *Quis? quid? ubi? quibus auxiliis? cur? quomodo? quando?* the *Quis, quid, ubi?* would immediately forbid him to set the *Kyrie Eleison* or *HERR! Erbarme dich unser!* in the church before the Holy Sacrament *in dance style*. It is regrettable that spiritual overseers and church directors do not straightaway drive such thoughtless composerasters and church bandsmen out of the temple with whips of braided cord." The familiar "who, what, where, with what, why, how, when"—interrogatives from a reporter's notebook about the circumstances and consequences of a personal action—are social, not logical (whole versus part). We are now in the world of ethical postures described in chapter 2, and the "Quis, quid" jingle is an aid for investigating the social and affective appropriateness of a topos.⁷⁷ For example, in the eighteenth century the appropriate answer to the question *ubi?* (where?) would probably be couched as one of the three canonical sites for music performance—church, chamber, or theater; Spiess wants the wanton dancers driven out of the temple and returned to the worldly theater where they belong.⁷⁸

In the latter part of the century complaints like Spiess's about inappropriate expressive choices are a rare window onto the employment of musical topoi in vocal as well as instrumental music.⁷⁹ Just as *Affektenlehre* was a term invented by twentieth-century scholars, there was no *Toposlehre*—no thoroughgoing teaching about the uses of musical commonplaces—to be found in late eighteenth-century pedagogical or critical texts, probably because the practice was too ingrained to occasion comment. Here one must confront the limits of the surviving texts. An understanding of the particular style of mimesis that shaped the late eighteenth-century repertoire cannot be ferreted out of these writings alone.⁸⁰ Not only did the pedagogues keep their instructions about expression disappointingly general; they often failed as well to recognize the new stylistic tropes that were taking shape right under their noses. (I have already pointed out the stubborn resistance to the new comic style among various late eighteenth-century writers, but by the same token their complaints offer firm evidence of the recognition of disparate styles.)⁸¹

The simplest statement I have found by an eighteenth-century writer on music that construes topical composition as referential rather than abstract comes from a complainer of another stripe. Its attitude toward mimesis is a grudging one; it has the advantage of having been written from a posture of complaint like the remarks of Plato and Geminiani discussed in chapter 2—in this case by a critic in the 1780s who was in principle opposed to the notion of imitation in music.⁸² Michel-Paul-Guy de Chabanon is often cited as one of the first writers to argue for music's autonomy, its independence from mimetic constraints. Music was to him in essence nonrepresentational, and imitation an unnatural conjuring trick. Thus in this passage he was being a representationalist *malgré lui*; he grudgingly grants just one way in which music might imitate, and that, in his opinion, fairly negligible: "Imitation in music is perceptibly genuine only when it has songs for its object. In melodies one truthfully imitates military fanfares, hunting airs, rustic songs, etc. It is only a question of giving one melody the character of another melody. In that case, art suffers no violence."⁸³ One can hear reverberations of Chabanon's deep suspicion of imitation in that last sentence: in his experience efforts to imitate "nature" directly in music were generally risible, and art *did* suffer violence. But when music is made of music—music that has its origins in "worship, poetry, drama, entertainment, dance, ceremony, the military, the hunt, and the life of the lower classes" to quote Ratner—there is no violation; music reaches into its own resources to forge connections with human behavior and human habits. I suspect that Chabanon did not realize (nor, until recently, did we) how powerful was this ostensibly small concession he granted to musical imitation.

After Chabanon, Heinrich Christoph Koch came as close as anyone to formulating a principle for such a teaching, delving more deeply into the cause for the relationship between signifier and signified but strictly limiting the domain of its effectiveness. In his lexicon article on instrumental music he invented a pseudohistory for its development, one of those anthropological myths that took the place of creation stories in Enlightenment mythology.⁸⁴ Koch speculated that it was in ancient Greece that instruments first performed separately from voices—at the time of the Pythian games in honor of Apollo. This separation could take place because the content of the text of the five-sectioned song describing the victory of Apollo over the monster Pytho was already entirely familiar to the spectators.

The entire substance of such a composition . . . was consequently for everyone not only a well-known subject, but also an engaging [*interessanter*] one. The feelings it

was supposed to express were all but aroused in the spectators already; *their hearts were . . . opened up solely for these feelings*. It is thus quite understandable that music in these circumstances *could have a very specific effect on the hearts of the spectators* even without song, that is, without being united with poetry, by means of its inarticulate but passionate tones, which in their sequence and movement bore certain similarities with the natural utterances of these feelings. Such were the circumstances in which at this time the remarkable separation of song from instrumental music took place, one that in later times had such a great influence on music. On the one hand it gave rise to the high degree of development that instrumental music has now attained, but on the other hand it ensured that [instrumental music] would be used on those occasions and circumstances in which *it must necessarily work a specific effect on our hearts*.

If instrumental music . . . is meant to awaken and maintain specific feelings, then it must be involved in such political, religious, or domestic circumstances and actions *as are of pronounced interest for us, and in which our heart is predisposed to the expression of the feelings that [the music] is supposed to awaken and maintain*.⁸⁵

Koch concedes that textless music can “*work directly on our hearts* and . . . arouse in us pleasant or unpleasant feelings.” “If, however,” he continues,

it should undertake to stimulate in us feelings for which the situation in which we find ourselves offers no occasion, *feelings to which our hearts are not open, . . . it lacks the means to make these feelings engaging [interessant] to our hearts*. It cannot make intelligible to us in these circumstances why it wants to transport us into gentle or sad, exalted or happy, feelings; it cannot awaken in us either the images of that good whose enjoyment is to delight us, or the images of that evil that is to cause fear or distress. . . . In vocal music, on the other hand, the text prepares the spectator, helps him to the intended frame of mind, and gives interest to the feelings to be expressed.⁸⁶

I have discussed Koch’s valuing of vocal over instrumental music in chapter 2. For Koch, instrumental music, for all its power to evoke affections, nonetheless remained purely utilitarian, “occasional music.” Successfully expressive instrumental music was to be found only in close connection with specific occasions, which provide the particularity of identity that the medium lacks in itself. With this observation Koch unwittingly identifies the source of the efficacy of the topoi. He fails to realize that the “political, religious, or domestic” associations that topoi carry with them will complement the indeterminate feelings aroused naturally by the textless music alone, supplying a context out of context. The minuet was the favorite dance of the ancien régime, fugues were properly used in church music, and these topoi bear their contexts with them like a snail traveling in its shell. Hence the characteristic

styles of occasional music can be imported from their religious or social rituals into nonoccasional instrumental music to provide that music with the particularity—the referentiality—that mimesis requires. There was no reason why instrumental music, granted the direct reference due to its intimate connection with human occasions, could not provide its particular blend of instruction and pleasure for audiences outside the venues that originally supplied it with these meanings. It was this form that mimesis took on for a brief and extraordinarily effective period toward the end of the eighteenth century. Even out of occasional context, so to speak, its mimetic gestures still engaged the heart.

Yet Koch's hesitation to grant instrumental music full referential power leaves us to a large extent on our own. His ringing statement (quoted in chapter 2) about the primacy of vocal music—"It remains an absolute fact that song claims a most obvious and undeniable superiority over instrumental music"—provides the unyielding conclusion to his article on instrumental music.⁸⁷ And yet the inevitable gap between teachings and practice was recognized even in the late eighteenth century. Johann Jakob Engel closed his essay "On Painting in Music" by warning "The relation that prevails between theory and practice in most of the arts is still the following: theory is far less useful for perfecting works than are works useful for correcting theory."⁸⁸ If one's goal is to understand musical practice in this period, one must take Engel's advice and work back and forth between the words of the critics and pedagogues and the real presences of the musical works. The observations of Chabanon and Koch, taken together, finally offer an answer to the anxious question posed by eighteenth-century writers: how can instrumental music be mimetic without invoking a text?

The answer is that such music invokes many *musical* texts, or rather contexts, that is, musical gestures that qualify as texts because they come already colored by rhythmic and melodic associations with the ordinary lives of human beings, their dancing, their music making, their worship, their protocol; the motions of daily human activities have stamped these gestures with meanings. Once one grants this humble occasional music the status of a text, late eighteenth-century instrumental music stands as a model of what we now call intertextuality. And their works make it clear that late eighteenth-century composers were equipped with a rich store of coded and codified musical gestures. The contents of the musical stockroom—its lexical units, to invoke the semantic metaphor—were the clichés of the late eighteenth-century musi-

cal cosmos, the styles of music characteristically associated with the activities of eighteenth-century society, whether popular or highbrow. All social domains made a contribution: court and country life, worship, the dance hall, the operatic stage, and instrumental music itself. The particular profile of a movement of late eighteenth-century instrumental music, formed by chains of such topoi—these referential but not propositional units—takes the shape of a narrative without a plot, of oratory without a message, presenting a dialectical image of “how the world moves.”⁸⁹ Late eighteenth-century instrumental music was a mimetic report, as it were, on the configurations of the composer’s social cosmos.

With the help of several other students of this capacious stockroom and its contents, I have drawn up a provisional list of musical commonplaces found in late eighteenth-century compositions. This map of the known topical cosmos is provisional because it is amenable to infinite extension as our greater awareness of the habit allows us to identify other examples; it aspires, like the commonplace books, to plenitude, not completeness. The list as presented here is higgledy-piggledy, not a rational, hierarchical array but an accretion, over a long period of music making, of gestures that vibrated in a familiar fashion in people’s ears and pulses; it observes only one organizing criterion—alphabetical order. Jumbled together are characteristic styles, social dances, vocal and instrumental effects, textures, and so on. Some categories overlap or are even coextensive. Efforts to organize the list by broader headings, like the perennial eighteenth-century breakdown into church, theater, and chamber styles, quickly run into trouble. Where, for instance, does the mechanical (clockwork) style belong? But attempts at presorting are beside the point. The list reflects the helter-skelter way in which we meet these topoi in life and in the works themselves. While such expressive profusion may be difficult to organize and theorize, it is nevertheless what is most immediately palpable to the listener—on the surface, where listening takes place.⁹⁰

agitato	aria (<i>d’agilità, di</i>	berceuse (cradle song,
alla breve	<i>bravura, cantabile,</i>	lullaby)
<i>alla zoppa</i> (limping)	<i>parlante, di</i>	bound style (<i>stile</i>
allemande (Souave,	<i>strepito)</i>	<i>legato)</i>
Swabian)	arioso	bourrée
amoroso	barcarolle	bravura style

brilliant style	galant style	military style
cadenza	(free style)	minuet
canon	galanterie	murky bass
<i>canzona francese</i>	gavotte	musette
chaconne bass	gigue (<i>giga, canarie, forlane, loure</i>)	<i>ombra</i>
chamber style	grotesque	opera buffa style
chant (plainsong)	guitar style	opera seria style
chorale (hymn)	<i>Harmonie</i>	passepied
church style	high style	pastoral
(ecclesiastical)	horn fifths (horn motion)	pathetic
clockwork	hornpipe	patter
coloratura	hunt (<i>chasse, Die Jagd</i>)	plagal (valedictory)
concerto style	hunt calls (horn calls)	polonaise
concitato, stile	hurdy-gurdy	recitative (<i>secco, accompagnato</i>)
contredanse	imitation of natural phenomena	romanza, romance
(<i>angloise</i>)	Italian style	rustic
declamation	lament	sarabande
declamatory style	Ländler	serenade
drum roll	learned style	siciliano
drum tattoo	Lied	sigh motive
echo	Lombard rhythms	(<i>Seufzer</i>)
<i>Empfindsamkeit</i>	(Scotch snap)	singing allegro
(sensibility)	low style	singing style
entrée	madrigalism	(cantabile)
exalted march	Mannheim <i>Bebung</i>	solo
exalted style	Mannheim rocket	species counterpoint
fandango	march	stile antico
fanfare	mechanical	strict style
fantasia	<i>mezzo carattere</i>	Sturm und Drang
folksong, folkish	(middle style)	(storm and stress)
French overture		tarantella
fugato		theater style
funeral march		

tragic style	Turkish music	walzer
<i>Trommelbass</i> (drum	(Janissary)	wind band
bass)	unison	word painting
tune	virtuoso style	

Eighteenth-century listeners were fully familiar with this musical vocabulary. They encountered it in its basic forms daily, so recognition would have been instant and enjoyable when it moved from the dance floor to the string quartet, from the church to the theater. For modern audiences, of course, recognition (conscious articulation, as opposed to the basic kinetic and aural perception of rhythmic and melodic types, which happens willy-nilly) cannot be similarly automatic. Opera is the easier case, because in a texted medium the meanings of these gestures can be inferred from or confirmed by the words that they set. The listener's imagination is already programmed to discover in the music of an aria a reflection of its text. But in the case of instrumental music as well, awareness of topoi only increases the precision of the discovery; and precision only increases the pleasure that it causes.

An example of the way this remarkable mimetic art works in instrumental music may be helpful at this point for those who come new to the discussion. It would be coy not to offer the paradigm piece for topical analysts, namely, the opening section of Mozart's Piano Sonata in F Major, K. 332 (example 11).⁹¹ It was this sonata that first weaned me from my early Hanslickian certainties: it incontrovertibly demonstrated to me this repertoire's failure as an incarnation of absolute music. Few pieces of late eighteenth-century instrumental music are as extravagant a celebration of topicality. A *commedia dell'arte* parade, it overflows with the very mimetic excesses of which Plato and Geminiani acidly complained. Its surface is articulated as a promiscuous projection of mimetically distinct representations, bits and snatches of the public music Mozart heard daily—dances, fanfares, even composition exercises. One needs only a fragment of each to recognize it. It is enough for the moment to enumerate the pell-mell succession of "mimetic units" that inhabit this Protean exposition.

The first four measures are cast in a simple singing style—a pathetic aria performed by a soprano accompanied by an Alberti bass. Her yearning solo is interrupted halfway through by a counterstatement fronting a wholly unrelated topic, a robust and authoritarian gesture: a four-measure parody of learned counterpoint, *allegro pomposo*, which, because its two entries fill up

EXAMPLE 11. Mozart, Piano Sonata in F Major, K. 332:I, mm. 1–93.

1 **Allegro**

p

cresc.

sf

sf

p

p

p

cresc.

EXAMPLE II. (continued)

55

55

f *p* *f* *p*

The musical score for measures 55-60 of 'The Swan' from 'The Nutcracker' is presented. The score is in 3/4 time and features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The dynamics are marked as *f* (forte) and *p* (piano). The melody in the right hand consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, while the bass line consists of quarter and eighth notes. The score is divided into measures 55 through 60.

61

Example 61 shows measures 1 through 6. The right hand continues with a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. The left hand plays a bass line with various dynamics: *f* (forte), *p* (piano), and *mf* (mezzo-forte). The measures are marked with *f* and *p* dynamics, indicating a strong contrast in volume.

67

67

cresc.

p

74

Musical score for measures 74-75. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The melody in the treble clef consists of eighth and quarter notes, with some beamed sixteenth notes. The bass line in the bass clef provides a simple accompaniment with quarter and eighth notes. Measure 74 ends with a double bar line.

[illegible]

the normal four-measure consequent without coming to a cadence, necessitates a third four-measure cadential phrase to bring it to completion (the “aria” phrase would have cadenced at the end of m. 8). This already compound period (mm. 1–12) is further compounded by a little coda to assure full closure: across the minuet rhythms the keyboard mimics hunting horns, their nostalgic quality increased by the distancing effect of the higher register—a graceful evocation of the country at cadence. (The characteristic harmonies of brass instruments and their nostalgic evocation of country life are two undying musical tropes, Plato and Geminiani notwithstanding.) But sixteenth-note ornaments on the repeat of the phrase (mm. 16–19) are more idiomatic for keyboard than for horn, reminding listeners briefly of the medium of the imitations, returning them to the salon. An iambic fading effect (mm. 20–22) provides the transition to yet another gesture, turning the iamb from a cadential sigh into a peremptory announcement of a passage in a dark tragic style (mm. 23–40).⁹² The minor tonality and agitated arpeggios of this purple patch initiate the habitual move to a new harmonic plateau on the dominant that provides the drama of the formal process. Arrival in the new place is affirmed by a bright and symmetrical minuet tune (mm. 41–48), whose regular periods stabilize the harmonic motion of the piece. Interrupted by another passage in agitato style, punctuated by an athletic bass (m. 49), the minuet gesture then reasserts itself (m. 53), rejoining the action in the subdominant of the new key to emphasize the fact of the interruption (the subdominant suggesting the final phrase of a sixteen-measure dance period).⁹³ This first half of the movement ends with opera buffa-style cadences (mm. 71–86), all voices combining for an emphatic unison at the close.

Chabanon could have been describing the first movement of K. 332, constructed of “music made out of music”—a mobile mosaic of familiar musical types. Two kinds of minuets, horn calls, the act of singing, imitative counterpoint: the movement’s particular profile is formed by strings of these referential units, which are functional as well as expressive—functional in that the dark and restless music dramatizes the motion to the new plateau, the rounded minuet consolidates arrival at that plateau, and so on. The first movement of K. 332 could be seen as a chapter in Mozart’s own commonplace book, recombining musical commonplaces into fresh juxtapositions—a pathetic aria morphing into pomposo counterpoint, emerging in a country landscape as imagined in the salon (with the difference that late eighteenth-century compositional procedures introduce additionally the notion of “reading for the

plot," in the resolution of the powerful harmonic polarity that drives almost every movement). These expressive gestures form the contours of the surface, which consists of contiguous expressive gestures, one yielding to the next, each time with a moment of pleasant shock at the distance traveled over a single bar line. They are all properly musical allusions, every one of them a reference to a definite musical genre, and therefore escape Chabanon's strictures against the violence done to art by mimesis. Little did Chabanon suspect that, by exempting "imitation of songs" and allowing the practice of "giving one melody the character of another melody," he was letting the whole world back in, for the whole world could be conjured up in musical gestures.

Yet as remarked earlier, many modern critics have found it difficult to recognize the ubiquity of these gestures. At next to worst (after acute formalism, which does not even grant the need for an account of expression), *topoi* are understood as an ancillary compositional device employed on certain special occasions, just one step away from local color. Themes are still analyzed for their pitches and intervals alone, with *topoi* acknowledged as occasional picturesque vignettes dotting an otherwise monochrome thematic landscape—haunting horn calls, crude peasant drones, fierce Turkish marches, points of interest for tourists, more apt for the nationalist codes of romanticism.

One is no longer trained to expect the musical material that accompanies the transition from the tonic to the dominant in the exposition to amount to anything more than neutral figuration, mere musical noodling.⁹⁴ For evidence to the contrary, one has only to consider the unequivocally expressive agitato music that provides the transition from the first "theme group" of K. 332:I to the minuet period that acts as "second theme" (see example 11, mm. 23–40). Because, given its function, the material is open-ended rather than rounded off into a period like the material surrounding it, in a modern analysis it would be passed over as "transitional," as not participating in the major thematic activity of the movement. On the contrary, this passionate flight of diminished sevenths is indeed a *topos*, by no means neutral, whose affect allows it to function also as an agent of mobility—as "traveling music." The long-cherished notion that sonata forms have two theme groups linked by transitions leaves analysts, performers, and listeners deaf to the motivic luxury—the prolix expressive mutations—of the Protean unpredictable surface.

Once performers are made aware of this dazzling sequence of gestures and their relations, their imperatives change. They begin to shape each gesture

distinctly—in K. 332:I the cantabile melody, the allegro pomposo counterpoint, the nostalgic hunting horns. Such dramatically separate postures ought not be smoothed out into a long lyric line. Flattening occurs most predictably in performances on the modern piano, with its seductive evenness of touch; on fortepiano it happens less often, since even when the pianist is ignorant of these expressive gestures, the instrument's strongly contrasting registers and weaker pedal apparatus do not allow the lyrical wash that a modern piano imposes as a matter of course. It is crucial to delineate both the clearly profiled expressive units and their brazen mutations and disjunctions. And the varying dynamic characters of the *topoi* help in themselves to sculpt musical time. Attention to their individual qualities is more than enough to give shape to the temporal trajectory. *Buffa* flux and *buffa* precision speak through the mimetic exuberance of these sonatas and string quartets, where polyps swarm and breed.

The breadth of the spectrum between rejection and acceptance can be measured by comparing two equally uncompromising opinions advanced by musical thinkers of comparable prominence: Charles Rosen's complaint that "expression is a word that tends to corrupt thought" and Susan McClary's diagnosis of a pathology akin to autism in the "inability to comprehend human gesture" (or its analogue in musicology, the refusal to "impose affective significance onto musical patterns").⁹⁵ Even those more open to considering *topoi* are unwilling to accept topical analysis as an integral component of the period's musical language.⁹⁶ In his book on Haydn's "Farewell" Symphony, for example, James Webster makes a determined effort to attend to expressive values but persistently terms them "extra-musical associations." Topics are listed in his index under that heading. And Elaine Sisman asks pointedly in her 1993 companion to the "Jupiter" Symphony, "What is a topic and what is not? Is every tremolo passage in a minor key a reference to *Sturm und Drang*? or every imitative passage 'learned style?'"⁹⁷ Later, in an essay on Mozart's "Prague" Symphony, she asks, "Were frequent surface contrasts in texture, rhythm, and melody perceived as rapidly changing topics or as more general gestures producing an aesthetically desirable variety?"⁹⁸ The category "more general gestures" introduces a forest of possible categories Sisman considers equivalent to topics—rhetorical figures, rhetorical gestures, musical gestures, rhetorical topics, topics of difficulty, emblems, generic signs, expressive genres, controlling topics—but unfortunately she never manages to distinguish them clearly from each other or from the overarching category of *topoi*. Invoking Occam's

razor, I shall subsume all these additional categories under the trusty umbrella of *topoi* until a need for them has been demonstrated.

Some writers have tried to tame the wild polyphony of “voices” that replaced the single affect of, say, a baroque concerto movement by invoking more decorous or civilized metaphors of “dialogue” and “conversation” to account for the near-cacophonous profusion of contrasts that roiled the surface of later eighteenth-century music.⁹⁹ The impulse to posit a single guiding voice behind this expressive polyphony or to assign personae to the expression of the disjunct *mimēmata* creates a superfluous layer of reference—an extraneous anthropomorphizing that enables analysts to overlook the often radically variegated mimetic content of the representations or the disparate points of view from which they are made in order to imagine a conversation between recognizably consistent participants. In the parade of images opening K. 332—a singer followed by learned-style counterpoint followed by the sounds of faraway hunting horns—the first involves the actual representation of a voice while the other two are imitations of instrumental tropes. How to assign these gestures consistent embodied voices, either as solo or in dialogue? An instrumental movement in this style rather resembles Plato’s lowest form of mimesis, the drama: a polyglot mix of characters crosses the stage, bound not by a narrator’s controlling commentary nor by the civilities of the salon, but by the syntactical “out and back” created by the simple dance period and the strong tonic-dominant polarization of “Classic” harmony.

For if one accepts the premise that expression is always a value in this music, and that topical references are precise, it follows that no moment is ever expressively neutral, or a mere “general gesture” introduced to induce variety (read: avert monotony). When a musical gesture or style ceases to be A, it must be B, or C, or D. *Topoi* identify themselves by their interrelations and distinctions: a sarabande is not a minuet; a singing allegro is not a military march. In the Dantean, encyclopedic model proposed in the first chapter, I spoke of this phenomenon of self-definition as “high, middle, and low styles jostling each other about.” This is much the same way modern linguists understand phonic units as delimiting each other by juxtaposition and opposition—“rubbing shoulders.” Expression is relational, a comparison to what’s next door. Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, the “inventor” of modern aesthetics, had already described the cognitive process of differentiation in his *Aesthetica* (1750): “All differences, dissimilarities, and inequalities are relations.

Accordingly, if one thinks at the same time of two things opposite to each other, he thinks not merely of each one in itself, but also at the same time of the relations of a thing. Consequently the thought becomes thereby very clear and can accordingly become also vivid."¹⁰⁰ It is often easier for the performer to execute and the listener to respond to such differences than it is for the critic to capture and analyze them. This problem is articulated for language by the linguist Ferdinand de Saussure in his *Course in General Linguistics*: "Doubtless speakers are unaware of the practical difficulties of delimiting units. . . . It is one thing to *feel* the quick, delicate interplay of units and quite another to *account* for them through methodical analysis."¹⁰¹ Substitute "performers" or "listeners" for "speakers" in this quotation and the problem is restated in terms of the expressive codes of late eighteenth-century music. Nonetheless, the articulation of these differentiations—the identification and description of the mimetic units out of which this larger-scale music is constructed—should be a primary analytical task.

Modern scholars and audiences have long been trained to listen for long-term contrast—a contrast personified analytically by the redoubtable "second theme," enthroned at the arrival on the dominant, which, because in many cases it is an ordered cantabile, provides a distant and stabilizing contrast with the more urgent suasions of the first key area. (In many cases but far from all: a sharply profiled second theme is as much an idiosyncrasy of a particular movement as is the choice of a meter or the number and order of topoi presented.) Contrast was a ubiquitous value of "modern" taste in the late eighteenth century, but it was short-term: chiaroscuro, light and shadow—the "dialogued style" so admired by the Baron d'Holbach in its operatic manifestations. It emerges not from long-term structural memory but from the immediate aural comparison of things side-by-side. While in the first chapter I recounted some eighteenth-century anxieties about the mixed style, contrast was nonetheless a much sought-after quality, prized especially by critics who were seriously into the business of listening.¹⁰² For Charles Burney, the tireless musical traveler, hence insatiable listener, local contrast was a hallmark of modernity in both composition and performance. His writings in the 1770s and '80s amount to a small treatise on the instilling and expansion of the habit into instrumental writing. In *A General History of Music* (1789), Burney credited contrast with generating the "modern" style:

The late Mr. Avison attributed the corruption and decay of Music to the torrent of modern symphonies with which we were overwhelmed from foreign countries.

But though I can readily subscribe to many of the opinions of that ingenious writer, we differ so widely on this subject, that it has long seemed to me as if the variety, taste, spirit, and new effects produced by contrast and the use of *crescendo* and *diminuendo* in these symphonies, had been of more service to instrumental Music in a few years, than all the dull and servile imitations of Corelli, Geminiani, and Handel, had been in half a century.¹⁰³

Burney attributed contrast as a conscious innovation to J. C. Bach, “who seems to have been the first composer who observed the law of *contrast*, as a *principle*. Before his time, contrast there frequently was, in the works of others; but it seems to have been accidental. Bach in his symphonies and other instrumental pieces, as well as his songs, seldom failed, after a rapid and noisy passage to introduce one that was slow and soothing.”¹⁰⁴ Clearly Burney’s concern is with local contrast—with the expressive effect of the immediate juxtaposition of passages in different musical styles or dynamics. And his contrasting passages are not just empty (or “general”) gestures, supplying mere variety in loudness. Here the brilliant style is contrasted with the cantabile. And elsewhere he classified such contrasting passages by descriptive adjectives, terming them “brilliant, pathetic, and graceful,” or “the graceful, . . . the pathetic, . . . and even noise and fury.”¹⁰⁵ Belief in the importance of local contrast was an opinion Burney had long held. In his musical tours, published nearly twenty years earlier, he had leapt to the praise of contrast wherever he found it—in works by the little known as well as the great. In the *Dixit* of the Bolognese abbot Giancalisto Zanotti one could discern, in “the language of painters, . . . not only light and shade but even mezzotints.” A choral piece by the Neapolitan composer Gennaro Manni boasted “several airs and a duet” that “pleased me extremely; there was fancy and contrivance, light and shade.”¹⁰⁶ In his German tour in 1772 Burney praised “the late celebrated Stamitz, from whose fire and genius the present style of *Sinfonies*, so full of great effects, of light and shade, may in a considerable degree be derived.”¹⁰⁷ He was also sensitive to the degree that bad performances could obscure this modern innovation. He lamented the “ancient and coarse” performances of Berlin musicians, who played contrasting passages with the same degree of “unremitting fury,” turning them to mere “noise,” and enjoined the Berliners to join their European colleagues in marking the light and shadow in their performances.¹⁰⁸ He had in 1773 already considered the expressively flexible forte-piano to be the instrument of choice for budding keyboardists rather than the “monotonous harpsichord”: “Children should learn upon [a Clavichord], or a

Piano Forte, very early, and be obliged to give an expression to lady Coventry's Minuet, or whatever is their first tune."¹⁰⁹ The importance of contrast was strikingly reflected in the very name of this "modern" keyboard instrument, then called either the *forte piano* or *piano forte* (the contrast was the point of the term), which by advertising its ability to project the new musical value made clear how central that value was to late eighteenth-century taste.

Yet not all topoi are equally marked or profiled. This difficulty leads analysts to notice only the most distinctive figures, assuming that they are emerging from a neutral ground. They let the neutrality of that ground go unquestioned, whereas usually it is itself a topos—a literal ground, for instance, like a drum bass, or an Alberti bass supporting a singing allegro, or, to extend the concept of ground, the composer's chosen time signature.¹¹⁰ The $\frac{4}{4}$ in which most first movements of symphonies are cast is habitually considered a default setting, but it is in fact a march with all its military or courtly accoutrements—dotted rhythms, trumpets, and drums—and it evokes the courtly setting of so much of this music. Hence it is a topos, and when a composer happens to choose another meter to open a symphony— $\frac{3}{4}$ perhaps—he is consciously choosing over it another mode of expression, as Haydn does in the first movement of the "Farewell" Symphony or Beethoven in the first movement of the "Eroica," in both cases a choice that invites speculation.

The first movement of the Piano Sonata in F Major is set in $\frac{3}{4}$, a meter more appropriate to the playful cascade of topoi than would have been $\frac{4}{4}$. Filling out a "Classic" version of the baroque dance suite, minuets and contredanses are the usual topical grounds of symphonic third and fourth movements, except when the composer decides to use them for other sorts of topical play: among the minuets of Mozart's six "Haydn" quartets not one begins with a bass in the minuet's characteristic even quarter-note motion. And slow movements start from the ground of the Adagio, which, as described by Quantz, is itself a recognizable topical complex with its own conventions.¹¹¹ I have as yet found no reason to temper a statement I made at the outset of *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart*: "[A] meter is the first choice a composer makes, and all signs indicate that in the late eighteenth century that choice amounted to the demarcation of an expressive limit."¹¹² From basic constitutive elements to the refinements of ornament, topical expression saturates this music. It should always be an analytical parameter, even though its vehicle, the characteristic styles or topoi, may be less marked or profiled at one moment than another—even if a particular topos lacks a convenient style name or obvious historical association.

Hence one should attend to the expression of the work as constantly and consciously as to its tonal plan, formal nodes, or structural dissonances. Attention to the mimetic gestures of the surface should be embraced as a (literally) primary analytical principle. In Raymond Monelle's succinct formulation, "The odor of topicality permeates our music, extending into every aspect."¹¹³

Mindful, however, of Sisman's skeptical question, and fully alert to the possibility of arguments that the promiscuous mimesis one so easily finds in the first movement of K. 332 is a conspicuous exception to late eighteenth-century practice (or even an embarrassment to the modest self-containment of the "Classical" style), I gladly cross the aisle to Haydn for a fresh example. The work I now propose to examine—the String Quartet op. 50, No. 1—is no less richly enlightening (example 12). I thought of this movement for its relatively unmarked yet still ubiquitous topoi and then remembered that it had already undergone not a few analyses, including two particularly extensive and perspicacious ones by Janet M. Levy and Dean Sutcliffe.¹¹⁴

Levy points out that the opening theme of this "monothematic" movement is in fact a conventional closing gesture (the 4–3 *appoggiatura* is a linear version of a plagal cadence), a violation of syntactical propriety that is not fully set right until the very end. (The reader may remember Mattheson's remark about using closing gestures as openers cited earlier in this chapter; Levy also mentions it.)¹¹⁵ To be finally at home, she argues, not only does this closing gesture have to occur at the end of the movement (mm. 150–55), but its two parts—two-measure phrases ornamenting first 4–3 and then 2–1—have to be contiguous, an event that is withheld until the final cadence. As if to prove this, Haydn lets the conceit play itself out, inventing what surely must be one of the oddest recapitulations in his oeuvre, in which from the first measure until the final fifteen the opening material is absent. He downplays the moment of return, slipping into it only with the second member of the opening phrase (compare mm. 5–6 with 110–11), and Sutcliffe neatly styles the first 40 of the recapitulation's fifty-five measures as a "cadenza or fantasy" on the triplet material that had entered first in measure 6.¹¹⁶

Their concentration on the opening gesture of the movement causes both Levy and Sutcliffe to consider the movement monothematic; for Sutcliffe it constitutes an extreme in that category, in an opus that is Haydn's "most hermetic set of quartets."¹¹⁷ It is the search for "themes" that renders the diagnosis of monothematicism, and hence hermeticism, inevitable. The question of topoi is never raised. Had it been, it would have led to the discovery

EXAMPLE 12. Haydn, String Quartet op. 50, no. 1, Hob. III:44, I, mm. 1–12.

The musical score for Haydn's String Quartet op. 50, no. 1, measures 1–12, is presented in a standard musical notation format. The score is in B-flat major, 3/4 time, and marked 'Allegro'. It features four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello. The Violin I and II parts are marked 'dolce' and feature triplet figures. The Viola part is marked 'p' and features a triplet figure. The Cello part is marked 'p' and features a repeated B-flat quarter note. The score includes dynamic markings such as 'p', 'f', and 'fz'.

that the opening gesture has expressive as well as grammatical consequence, and that the roughly 75 percent of the notes that critics relegate to a level of background or filler—the triplet material—has substantial topical significance. A topical account negates nothing in these two analyses; it merely adds another layer of convention—the expressive—that brings to consciousness the life drawing that one had always heard but not yet named. For the opening “closing” gesture is an *empfindsam* sigh motive (the ornamented appoggiatura E♭–D), hence not only valedictory but also throbbing with sensitivity in its dolce introduction. It is set against a repeated B♭ quarter note in the cello, which, while treated in Levy’s and Sutcliffe’s analyses as a neutral ground, forms a topical complex with the sigh: the mechanical counting bass projects a ticking clock or a human pulse—or perhaps its composite, the clock of the human pulse. Whether ticktock or lub-dub, the bass’s duple groupings are organically mechanical—“something mechanical that measures out the living” to upend Henri Bergson—the pulse that supports the sigh.¹¹⁸

This topical complex ends abruptly in measure 6, after the sigh motive moves in sequence up a third to 6–5 (a downward motion to 2–1 would have

prematurely delivered the final cadence). The cello pulse ceases on the first beat and paired triplet figures enter on the fourth. Free of the cello's pulse, marked staccato (in contrast to the sighs' heavy legato), phrased over the bar line in quick half-measure pairings preserving only a fleeting hint of a decorated appoggiatura (the C–B♭ and E♭–D on the downbeat of m. 7), the dolce dynamic raised to *mf*, in string style rather than cantabile, harmonic rhythm halved, these flighty triplets provide a direct contrast to the pensive sigh motives; shared tonic harmony provides the only connective tissue. The triplets lead into a brilliant-style run that ends in a deceptive cadence (m. 10), stressed by a sforzando on a sensitive-style appoggiatura; but the brilliant style returns after this brief affective pause to deliver a strong tonic cadence (mm. 11–12). Measure 6 constitutes a distinct expressive break: rhythm, texture, voice leading, dynamics, medium—all are new and disjunct. This third topic, the brilliant style, stars in roughly 74 of the movement's 148 measures, in particular appearing solo in all but 18 of the 55 measures of the recapitulation. It is important to keep in mind that a topos is not necessarily a theme. The movement's cascading triplets do not offer a fixed pitch set whose manipulations can be observed and catalogued. But as a characteristic style they carry their own identity; they are not filler. What can make them seem so to those who rely on typologies and taxonomies to tell them what they have heard, is—once again—the absence of a ready generic label with which to catalogue them. Their character is as pronounced as the others, nevertheless. To call them “brilliant” may be arbitrary, but it will suffice to characterize them in relation to their neighboring topoi. All topical identities are relational. “Legato” and “lyrical” are topoi by virtue of being juxtaposed to and hence differentiated from passages that are staccato, or that clearly mimic orchestral rather than vocal idioms. The mercurial gestural shifts of the style delimit one another in a variegated web across the surface, and the absence of a fortunate name for a particular gesture does not mean that it is not differentiated from its neighbor in the topical thread of the piece. (And, as we shall see, the writers of the time thought the *willkürlich*, or arbitrary, a positive value.)

In fact the brilliant topos has come to the rescue here, saving the movement from total shutdown. The galant voice leading and rhythmic protocols of the closing-phrase opening offer both an opportunity and a straitjacket. The phrase *must* be completed, but something must prevent it from being completed *now*. The normal expectation after these two iterations of the sigh motive would be that the answering phrase would take a turn toward an authentic cadence—

E ♭–D–G–F answered by E ♭–D–C–B ♭—to form a complete eight-measure phrase. To prevent the formation of the premature period, the new topos enters on the last beat of measure 6. This moment parallels the opening of K. 332:I. There, the half cadence of the diva's aria is answered not by four more measures and a normal full cadence (compare the first four measures of example 3), but by a phrase that both is and is not a consequent. The answering phrase features two contrapuntal entries, the one in the treble in measures 5–6 yielding to the bass entry in measures 7–8. Although the treble subject could constitute the consequent of the aria, its angular intervals also suggest the allegro pomposo posture that often marks evocations of the learned style in the later eighteenth century. In addition, in measure 5 the texture changes from voice and Alberti accompaniment to solo, with the treble voice abruptly—after the first beat—doing its high-wire act without a net. These events are unmistakable cues of topical metamorphosis.¹¹⁹ The aria fades from memory in the face of the new topos. The bass imitates the treble, turning the line into a “subject,” which requires an extra four measures for completion. The architectural norm of antecedent-consequent phrases of equal lengths ($2 + 2 = 4$; $4 + 4 = 8$) was a great gift to this style, but it must be thwarted at all costs when the goal is to compose a movement of more than eight measures. Contrast brings not only light and shade but also extension. Mozart's “counterpoint” offers it, as do the triplets of the brilliant style, which confound the seemingly irresistible implications of galant voice leading to initiate a lengthy movement.

The topoi in the two works I have examined are highly profiled, and each movement develops its own sort of topical unfolding as it progresses.¹²⁰ But, to repeat a caveat already entered, topoi are not always employed as markedly as they are in K. 332 or opus 50, No. 1. The degree of markedness does not so much vary from movement to movement as it is a function of genre and venue, or, as Sulzer sagely puts it, “the various uses which human beings make of music.”¹²¹ The tripartite stylistic taxonomy of venue (church, chamber, and theater), developed as early as the mid-seventeenth century, involved one sacred venue and two secular ones, the latter contrasted as to social status (public versus private, grand versus intimate), ensemble (large versus small), and intent (morality versus pleasure). Theater and church both employed the grand style, but issues of morality in the one turned to explorations of piety in the other.¹²²

The most highly profiled topoi are to be found in music for the chamber because their surfaces were the most effective reflectors of the nuances of topical play. Chamber works (the *Kammerstyl*), originally intended, as Koch

comments in his *Lexikon*, “to serve the private pleasure of the regent or the court,” became intimate entertainments for the connoisseur. Due to their smaller venues and smaller and more agile ensembles they could support “more development and finer nuance” than could the more public monuments.¹²³ Making a point of chamber music’s more minute and concentrated engagement with surfaces, Koch compares its composers to the painter of miniatures, leaving to the symphonist the less refined but more grandly energetic ceiling fresco.¹²⁴ While chamber surfaces must be highly and artfully worked, compositions for less intimate settings achieved their effects in broad brushstrokes and were effectively sustained by a less careful working out. The chamber style provided neither moral precepts nor religious wisdom—nothing but pleasure: disinterested, yes, but also promiscuous.

For the primary trait of the chamber style was its expressive openness. Meinrad Spiess characterized it as the “flowing, wooing, *affetuoso*, love-provoking, and self-possessed style,” and later writers—Schulz, Türk, Koch—upheld the thought, if not Spiess’s exuberant voice and vocabulary.¹²⁵ Schulz distinguishes the sonata from the more expressively restricted symphony and the show-off concerto as the only form in instrumental music that “may assume any character and every expression,” a phrase that Koch repeats in his *Versuch*.¹²⁶ Türk compares the sonata to the ode, whose subjects are “uncommonly diverse.” “Thus as far as character is concerned, the composer is in no instrumental composition less limited than in the sonata, for every feeling and passion can be expressed in it.”¹²⁷ Koch goes so far as to introduce the word *arbitrary* (*willkürlich*) into the definition of chamber music, as in “the expression of happy, charming, sad, or lofty emotions following arbitrarily one after the other” (certainly an uncomfortable notion for critics convinced of the critical importance of unity in this repertoire).¹²⁸ The highly polished surfaces of the chamber style made it the most effective *speculum mundi*, reflecting back to its auditors in scrupulous detail the ceaseless comedy of human *ethē* and *pathē*.

I have allowed to pass unremarked thus far the telling disparity in usage between present-day and eighteenth-century accounts of the sonata that has surely become obvious to all readers of these pages. For most eighteenth-century writers the term “sonata” meant not merely keyboard solos (and occasional duos, like sonatas for keyboard and violin or cello), as in modern terminology, but chamber music *tout court*: “the solo, duo, trio, quartet, etc., along with pieces for several obbligato instruments.”¹²⁹ The solo keyboard sonata, and the keyboard sonata with an obbligato partner, the genres that in

the nineteenth century would become the only sonatas properly so-called, were still treated in these texts alongside many other possibilities. The accompanied keyboard sonata, incidentally, was a genre quite distinct from the duo.¹³⁰ Common usage nowadays often excludes the solo piano repertoire from the class of chamber music, perhaps because our modern notion of the solo pianist as the bardic poet or gypsy virtuoso (again a romantic invention) aided in his ascent to star status by a new, more powerful keyboard instrument. Not for him the cerebral regimen of the chamber, where his former colleagues have come to be regarded as the highbrows of the profession, engaged in an austere egalitarian ensemble playing, one intellect to a part, no unnecessary notes. There was no such cult of personality for the eighteenth-century keyboard sonata; the solo pianist was still to a large extent the gentle (female) amateur among chamber players.¹³¹ Nor had the phrase “sonata style” yet suffered the purification that would reduce it to a less rule-bound substitute for the abstract “sonata form.” Charles Rosen’s use of the term epitomizes the purifying effort, which played to the formalist abyss: “The forms created by sonata style conveyed their meaning through the *structure*. . . . Sonata style represented the triumph of *pure* instrumental music over vocal music.”¹³² To Sulzer and Koch, by starkest contrast, sonata style remained the *Kammerstyl*—a zone reserved for the pleasures of the free promiscuous play of the imagination. The topical interactions in K. 332 and opus 50, No. 1 bear witness to that play. Far from monuments of pure structure, the fortepiano sonata and the string quartet possessed in fullest measure the chameleon facility to refer and evoke, to imitate what they are not, and (as Burney might have said) the more vivid and bizarre the surface contrast, the better.

Even as Burney was praising local contrast in his Italian and German tours, in Vienna Johann Friedrich Daube made local contrast a crucial teaching in his *Musikalische Dilettant*, a treatise for the composition of galant instrumental music written for the elite circles of Viennese musical amateurs. Daube urges composition by topical contrast on his pupils, advising them to alternate the “brilliant or rushing” and the singing style. For example:

- In large scores such as symphonies, concertos, etc., this alternation of the singing and the brilliant styles can be introduced very beneficially. In opera arias also it is quite often heard and wins much approval. Moreover, the ear likes something new and unexpected. Therefore the melody must necessarily possess a beautiful continuity, but it cer-

tainly ought to be constructed so that the listener could not tell what to expect from one passage to the next.

- The alternation of the brilliant and the singing styles should also appear in this type of three-part composition. The alternation of these two styles, together with a good execution of *forte* and *piano*, contributes much to the enhancement of a piece. The effect is remarkably distinctive.¹³³

The topical complex of singing style plus rushing (brilliant, concerto, virtuoso), Daube's galant recipe for compositional success, was not his invention but a distillation of practices praised by critics like Burney. It is, as I recognize in retrospect, the opposition I once described in an analysis of Mozart's K. 333:I, where the interchange between a singing-style *empfindsam* motive in music-box register and a brilliant-style topos informs the movement.¹³⁴ And it is the opposition Haydn exploited so fruitfully in the first movement of opus 50. Like the others, this movement features nested topical complexes. The *empfindsam* sigh is bound up with the pulsing bass, and this complex is in turn one of the elements in a larger topical commonplace consisting of the interplay of the sensitive with the "rushing" style.¹³⁵

If, as I hope I have shown, shared expressive commonplaces were a precious means of communication between late eighteenth-century composer and listeners, and if historical studies can help us to understand these stylistic conventions, we will do well to remain alert to them. These entities are the denizens of the expressive surface, the focal point of meticulous composer-naturalists for whom subterranean arcana—impalpables—did not yet exist.

Comic Finitude and Comic Closure

In the first act of *Le nozze di Figaro*, the Count, standing by impotent as Figaro deftly stages a public ceremony intended to force him into benevolence, finally bursts out querulously, “Cos’è questa commedia!”—literally, “What is this comedy!” I’ve sometimes had the uneasy feeling that my readers might confront me with the same question, perhaps even in the same querulous voice. So what is this *commedia* you’ve been parading in front of us? What does it amount to in the end? Fair enough. Here at the cadence I should try to tell you what I think it is, and what I think it amounts to. I might begin modestly, by hinting that my comic narrative was just a “likely story,” in the fine tradition of Plato, another modest story teller, who termed the constitutive myth of the cosmos in his *Timaeus* a “likely story.” But that word “story” prompts me to think about the difference between an analysis and a “story.” For, technically, an analysis is the opposite of a story. It is the breaking down of wholes into parts.

Storytelling, and not analysis, is what is called for at this time in our discipline, for we are storyless. With the death of organicism, we have lost our covert constitutive myth. While it prevailed, our accounts could attend happily to detail in an endless “mopping-up” operation. All we needed was clarification of the tricky bits. But now we need new *muthoi*—our own likely stories—to replace the one we once lived by so comfortably. Hence not only my work but that of many others these days has become an attempt to find a convincing narrative to give order to the detail—to build the parts up into new wholes. Some of us have even sought professional help, calling in experts from narrative theory to suggest ways to go about putting up these new constructions;

others have just gone on blithely, perhaps unconsciously, spinning their yarns. Accordingly, I now propose not only to give an account of my own attempt at *muthos*, but also to take a look at a few of the others that have been constructed around Classic music to see how they hold up.

The *muthos* of the present book is an attempted return to a preorganicist, preinteriorist state by way of reflection on some of the new habits or tropes ("turns") that began to take their direction early in the eighteenth century—tropes that shaped the music we call "Classic." One of the most striking new tropes in this music is its stylistic heterogeneity—the teeming multiplicity of affects, gestures, and motives it employed. These gestures defined one another by their differences, not merely alterations in pitch content, but differences of a stylistic kind, which had clear and precise referents in the musical habits of the social world. Here again we were talking about new tropes on old habits. Baroque music made use of the same sort of mimetic vocabulary, but the gestures of the new style were honed to greater precision by their proximity to other gestures. This music gave off a strong whiff of drama—a sense of beginning, middle, and end—that was theatrical, and that other musics did not necessarily afford.

All of these new features, as I hope I have demonstrated beyond a reasonable doubt, stem from opera, and opera buffa in particular. These comic-opera values, I concluded—an interminably varied, all-inclusive image of a peopled topological space given a strong dramatic impetus by a powerful thrust toward closure—transferred themselves to instrumental music, but without the precise story-bound meanings that a text provides. Always a narrative, never a plot; always a discourse, never a moral. There is an echo here of Kant's dictum in the *Critique of Judgment* that the beautiful displays "purposiveness without purpose." But the model that helped me the most was Dante's *Commedia*—in the first place because its maker had so carefully voiced two cardinal principles of the generic comic fiction, namely, its use of vernacular modes and its progress to a *lieto fine*, but also because I came to see how the many representations of Classic music amount to Dante's encyclopedic vision of all the orders—saints jostling sinners—vouchsafed in the beatific revelation at the end. I concluded that an eighteenth-century instrumental work should be heard as a report on the composer's cosmos, a mirror of being, its polished surface reflecting all categories of human experience.

It also manifests the same powerful historicity as the *Divine Comedy*. Just as Dante wove his narrative of universal salvation around tales of the

miscreants and heroes of fourteenth-century Florence, unconcerned about their ephemeral particularity, Haydn and Mozart never hesitated to engage in what Kofi Agawu has called their “uniquely historicist discourse,” constructing their imitations out of local and temporal social particulars such as minuets and horn calls.¹ (Tragedy aims at a less time-bound manner.) There are of course crucial differences between a sacred and a secular comedy. Secular comedy provides nothing so everlasting as salvation, hence no permanent homecoming or reconciliation, only edgy, contingent accommodation, brave brushing aside of doubts, the casting of a blind eye—read it as you will. Perhaps in pre-Terror Josephine Vienna, with its emphasis on social amelioration and reform, it was still possible to place the accent on the brave optimism of this vision rather than on its willed, blinkered denial.

In this final chapter, then, I will consider the comic basis of instrumental music from the broadest angle, to lay at last the vexed question of syntax, the principles according to which the *topoi* inherited from opera buffa are combined and sequenced in extended instrumental movements. To attempt this means to take seriously the rhetoric of endings, which are so often neglected or taken for granted in analyses of this music. Neither closing gestures nor final movements have received enough scrutiny from scholars of eighteenth-century music. I will assay a progression from micro to macro, to consider first the periodic and gestural rhetoric of concluding gestures in some movements from Mozart’s piano concertos, and, finally, to construe an entire finale—and a very famous one—as comic narrative.

The investigation begins, appropriately enough, with an ending, one that will be familiar to many. It would be only a slight simplification to say that many of my thoughts about the model to the *commedia* have arisen from efforts to explain the appropriateness of this particular ending, the close of Mozart’s Piano Concerto in D Minor. For me, this passage is to endings as K. 332 is for beginnings—a paradigm piece. The concerto’s first movement is gripping in its forceful tragic stance. It was particularly beloved of the romantics, who took its tragic mode as the voice of the “true Mozart.” It was this concerto that inspired Otto Jahn, the great nineteenth-century biographer of Mozart, to state baldly, if tautologically, that “Mozart’s compositions in the minor keys are his deepest and most important.”² In the light of this reputation, the closing section has often seemed incommensurate with the movement’s begin-

nings. It opens with a turbulent D-minor theme but ends in D *major*, with a gay penultimate tune and a sassy trumpet call. Both the affect and the modality of this close offend. Arthur Hutchings captured the mood of almost two centuries of criticism when he wrote, "Extreme classicists have wished that this rondo ended symmetrically in D minor; extreme romanticists have wished that the heart be kept bleeding to the last drop."³ Before closing this chapter, I hope to show why both wishes are wrong.

"Endings," wrote Frank Kermode, although "denied by the physicist Aristotle to the world," were "humanly acceptable (and allowed by him to plots). . . . The End is . . . a fact of the imagination, working out from the middle, the human crisis. As the theologians say, we 'live from the End,' even if the world should be endless. . . . Ends . . . become a matter of images, figures, for what does not exist humanly. . . . In the midst, we look for a fullness of time, for beginning, middle, and end in concord."⁴ As Kermode says, ends are human figures, human fictions, and deeply necessary for creatures whose true habitation is the bleak endlessness of "the midst." Makers of fictions choose their ends and then reach back to find beginnings and middles in concord with them. The instrumental music that arose in the late eighteenth century was a new trope—a powerful new way of calibrating tone and apportioning time—that nonetheless developed out of old and familiar habits. The result of this reshaping was a uniting of beginnings, middles, and ends in a harmoniousness of dramatic effect traditionally extolled as unprecedented, which won for this music that convenient misnomer, the "Classic style." The refashioning of endings was critical to this new trope, as their sheer proportions will indicate. Cadential syntax was no longer perfunctory, a brief reminder of the earthly nature of this "moving image of eternity." Instead it reached back to saturate the phrase. Areas of arrival were carefully planned and achieved serious proportions.

Too often we hold these ends—these apparently neutral signs of closure—to be self-evident, forgetting that they are fictive, that they do not have to be as they are. If the new habit of contrast and counterstatement in late eighteenth-century instrumental music did not blossom out of nowhere, nor did the powerful cadential thrusts that ring down the curtain on every minidrama that is a Classic movement. They developed from the habits of the new comic style, with its need to do the opposite of taking for granted, that is, to celebrate the way things are, to affirm the social contract. The accommodations necessary to achieve these cadences were those urged by the comic style. Northrop Frye observes, "The resolution of comedy comes . . . from the audience's side

of the stage; in a tragedy it comes from some mysterious world on the opposite side."⁵ Comic closure reaches out to the listener in a major expansion of the rhetorical art, the art of persuasion.

To explore these comic endings that "do not have to be as they are," it may be helpful to look at the habits of closure in comedy's evil twin, tragedy. Compared with comedies, tragedies don't even *have* endings. That is to say, they do not seem to require the construction of a mechanism to effect a definitive, emphatic close. The crux of a tragedy comes earlier, in the peripeteia, the awful moment of recognition, and its actual terminal moments are generally stale, flat, and unprofitable. In Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, to pick the most obvious example, the monstrous resolution of Oedipus's self-blinding with his dead wife's brooch leaves us awestruck, reflective, in the grip of pity and fear. It is not yet the end but it might as well be. The actual ending of *Oedipus* is anticlimactic, like the endings of so many Greek tragedies—the briefest of verses intoned by the chorus, tame advice about not sticking your neck out the way the hero did—and (the greatest oddity) nearly interchangeable from tragedy to tragedy. After Oedipus's blinding, the chorus chants:

Look upon that last day always. Count no man happy until
He has passed the final limit of his life secure from pain.

And after the dire offstage carnage in the *Antigone*, the chorus says pretty much the same thing using different clichés:

Our happiness depends
On wisdom all the way.
The gods must have their due.
Great words by men of pride
Bring greater blows upon them.
So wisdom comes to the old.

The same is true of Shakespeare's tragedies. Consider *King Lear*, where after the heartbreaking death of Cordelia in the daft king's arms, all that the so-called good son of Gloucester, Edgar, can come up with for closure are two pairs of stilted rhyming couplets whose anodyne message is curiously incomprehensible:

The weight of this sad time we must obey;
Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say.
The oldest has borne most: we that are young
Shall never see so much, nor live so long.

The curtain must be brought down, but (apparently) the more perfunctorily the better. It is perhaps the closest dramatic equivalent to a hush. Everything important has already happened. Reflection, purgation, what you will—they have already taken effect, with widening reverberations unto infinity. Tragedy leaves us to our private, midnight reflections; it has no patent and public point of view to which it wants to persuade us. All that remains is observed from the perspective of the groundlings, left huddled just as we are, and it's wise not to dwell on that.

The endings of opera seria are just as perfunctory, but for a different reason: the genre is a hybrid, presenting a tragic action but bound to a resolutely optimistic end, no matter what the cost in nonsense. I used to be amazed that its composers had never caught on to the value of a long rousing chorus to mark that different resolution. Instead they feature, in the words of Winton Dean, "the statutory happy end with its coro for the soloists nearly always a quatrain or two of perfunctory and platitudinous rejoicing."⁶ Those meaningless maxims again—meaningless in this case not only because they reduce greatness to platitude, but because they contradict everything that had gone before.

The ending apparatus of a comic fiction, on the contrary, is elaborate and emphatic. Not because its conclusions are obvious, but because the end is both inevitable and up for question. As spectators, we know that we will be celebrating at least one marriage at the end, and with it the birth of the new world that accommodates that marriage; but we also need to be convinced that such an accommodation is possible. We need to be coaxed into full participation in the restoration of the proper orders. This is why comedy is so solicitous of its audience and bends all its energies to crafting a restorative celebration. In musical comedy it is the job of cadences to persuade us to take part in the celebration.

Comedy leaves us in little doubt as to what is at stake. Unlike tragedy, it is cheerfully aware of its own conventions and can bring them to the surface without disturbing the comic contract. In *Northanger Abbey* Jane Austen comments two pages before the close that her readers can clearly sense in "the tell-tale compression of the pages before them, that we are all hastening together to perfect felicity." Figaro too is fully aware of the conventions of the proscenium arch, invoking in the second-act finale the inevitability of the *lieto fine* to hasten his wedding. In the C-major gavotte movement, buying time against the Count's latest threat, Figaro tries turning formal, making a hopeful mock-public announcement:

EXAMPLE 13. Mozart, *Le nozze di Figaro*, act 2, no. 15, mm. 441–56.

440 Susanna, La Contessa
nir, la bur-letta ha da fi - nir. Per fi - nir - la lie - ta men - te e al-l'u san - za te - a -

Figaro

445 tra - le u-n'a - zion ma - tri - mo - nia - le le fa - re - mo o - ra se - guir

Per finirla lietamente
E all'usanza teatrale,
Un azion matrimoniale
Le faremo ora seguir.

To finish (the farce) happily,
And in the custom of the theater,
Let's perform for them now
A matrimonial tableau.

Mozart underlines the moment with proper panoply, supporting Figaro's words with two horns in courtly fanfare harmonies that add the flavor of the ceremonial to the moment.

A fiction in which the very characters remind us of its conventions is delightfully cocksure. But Figaro's announcement may also be meant to draw attention to the serious moment that follows. The conspirators join in a pastoral hymn, a veritably transcendent happy ending embedded in the middle of the opera. A secret pastoral enclosure like this, tucked away in the midst of the bustle of the finale, is the nearest thing to a tragic crux that comedy affords. Because it is a hymn to a higher social order, to an ideal community consisting of free equals in virtue and reason, instead of the accommodations

we are forced to make in the here and now, it must be buried in the middle of the work. We pass right on. The socially accommodated end of the opera is its actual end, when the Countess and the Count have a brief, circumspect, public reconciliation that no one believes will stick. Will the Count always philander? At what price the Countess's forgiveness? Never mind. The reconciliation satisfies all the formal requirements for an ending, allowing the festivity of a jubilant march as the curtain falls.

Likewise, the epilogue at the end of *Don Giovanni* is the celebration of the social man that has happily rid itself of the threat of No-Man, the Don. But the troubled reception history of this epilogue suggests that nothing is quite so simple. A libertine has been justly punished, but what life is left to the survivors in their diminished universe? Precisely because we have some doubts about the fullness of the end, hard work must take place at the close of a comedy in order to persuade us from nagging unease. Hence one of buffa's most striking habits, that of reaching out past the footlights to the audience at the close. The final celebration often consists of calling attention to music as music, meanwhile dissolving the proscenium arch and drawing the audience into communal song. Most often this is accomplished by grafting into the operatic setting music usually used for a social or ritual purpose. Carried away by rejoicing, the singers self-consciously sing, and hearing them, we the spectators are meant to surrender our doubts about the events on stage, compelled by the sheer exuberance of their choral song. In the final *Figaro* finale, the participants cry out that a band is approaching, playing a march; they gaily call out to each other to join in the revels that end the crazy day. In *Don Giovanni* the survivors propose an *antichissima canzona*—"a most ancient song"—that will pronounce the moral of the story; they then proceed to unwind a wildly fake fugue.

Among the less familiar opere buffe, my favorite is Gazzaniga and Bertati's *Don Giovanni Tenorio*, where the women dance and the men each imitate the sound of a musical instrument, joining in a cacophonous chorus of nonsense syllables. Amid the onomatopoeic din the characters enjoin each other, and the audience, to celebrate:

Tutti: Più non facciasi parola
 Del terribile successo;
 Ma pensiamo in vece adesso
 Di poterci rallegrar. . . .
 Che potressimo mai far?

Donne: A, a, a, io vò cantare:

Io vò mettermi a saltar.

Duca Ottavio: La Chitarra io vò suonare.

Lanterna: Io suonar vò il Contrabasso.

Pasquariello: Ancor io per far del chiasso

Il Fagotto vò suonar.

Duca Ottavio: Tren, tren, trinchete trinchete trè.

Lanterna: Flon, flon, flon, flon, flon, flon.

Pasquariello: Pu, pu, pu, pu, pu, pu, pu, pu.

Tutti: Che bellissima pazzia!

Che stranissima armonia!

Così allegri si va a star.

[*All:* Let us no longer speak of this dreadful event. Now let us think instead about rejoicing. . . . What shall we do? *Women:* A a a. I want to sing. I want to leap. *Duca Ottavio:* I want to play the guitar. *Lanterna* [the cook]: I want to play the bass. *Pasquariello* [the Leporello figure]: And I, to add to the fracas, want to play the bassoon. *Duca Ottavio:* Tren, tren trinchete trinchete trè. *Lanterna:* Flon, flon, flon, flon, flon, flon. *Pasquariello:* Pu, pu, pu, pu, pu, pu, pu, pu. *All:* What beautiful madness! What strange harmony! And so we shall all be happy.]

But *Don Giovanni Tenorio* is only the most pleasingly excessive of many buffa finales that employ onomatopoeia or metamusical effects to animate their closing celebrations. In Pasquale Anfossi's *La finta giardiniera* (1774), the lovers in their closing duet imitate bird songs to celebrate their happiness, commenting on this in the text. In Haydn's *L'incontro improvviso* (1775), another seraglio opera, the delivered lovers enjoin each other to rejoice by singing happy tunes, at which point the texture turns conspicuously imitative to suit actions to words. In Cimarosa's *Giannina e Bernardone* (1781) the entire last-act finale is framed by occasional music, rendered by a military band that is onstage throughout. The characters comment on the beauties of the music at the opening, and at the close of the finale they command the band to play again so that they can dance. Then, in antiphonal choruses the men and women sing nonsense syllables such as "Laira, laira, lallallera" and so on. Cimarosa's once famous *Il matrimonio segreto* (1792) closes on a brilliant chorus, full of extravagant vocal excursions in imitative and concerto style, on the text "Che si suoni, che si canti, tutti quanti ha da brillar" (Let there be music, let there be singing; everyone must shine). Martin y Soler's *Una cosa rara* (1786), one of the operas quoted in the last-act finale of *Don Giovanni*,

concludes with the two female leads dancing and singing a *seghidilla* in honor of their queen Isabella.

Domestic comedy is startlingly consistent in its conventions: this habit of frenetic comic celebration has its predecessors in Greek and Roman comedy, where the audience was sometimes invited to an imaginary banquet or had bits of food actually thrown to them; all society should share in the wedding feast.⁷ In *Don Giovanni Tenorio* the communal feast is a musical banquet afforded by the power of song to bring about a euphoria of unity. The *lieto fine* is not a glib claim for an earthly utopia but an assertion of the virtues of community and equilibrium in the face of disorder and despair. Comedy and tragedy are two different perspectives on the same mixture of pain, suffering, and felicity in the world. It is not as though “real life” dictates one or the other, or that the proportion of ills to goods tips the scale in one or the other direction. Rather, the dramatist makes a decision for one or the other fiction, and structural consequences follow. It is precisely because the *lieto fine* is contingent and uneasy that comic rhetoric must be busiest at the cadence.

The buffa aria requires as strong a closure as a finale, and there is no better example than the aria already exhibited in chapter 1, Uberto’s “Aspettare e non venire” from *La serva padrona*. Everything that comes after the initial statement of the text is the sound of persuasion: first the dramatic half-cadence on the dominant followed by a grand pause to give the greatest weight to what follows (see example 14, m. 32), and then wave after wave of cadences in syllabic patter, all bent on getting the point across. This complex—Uberto’s half cadence and grand pause on the dominant—was the first of many, vocal and instrumental alike. The moment of silence before a harmonic resolution lends moral *gravitas* to whatever follows. It was a gesture that grew to enormous consequence when it was taken up and refined in instrumental music. (Haydn was especially fond of grand pauses that lent gravity to gestures of false return, a choice component of his art of misdirection.) But *au fond*, as a means of focusing and directing attention, it originated as part of the mechanism of comic persuasion devised for opera buffa.

As buffa habits solidified, characters often ended their arias with a pithy epigram, an envoi, sung to a cadence figure repeated to the point of obsession: recall the cadences of Masetto’s sally on the sexual habits of cavaliers in “Ho capito”: “Faccia il nostro cavaliere / Cavaliere ancora te!” (Let our gentleman make you a gentlewoman!). Arias of Figaro and Leporello provide other examples: Leporello’s merciless cadences closing the “Catalogue” aria (*Don*

EXAMPLE 14. Giovanni Battista Pergolesi, "Aspettare e non venire," mm. 24–48, from *La serva padrona*, act 1.

24 **Uberto**

As - pet - ta - re, sta - re a let - to, ben ser - vi - re, e non ve-ni-re e non dor-

28

mi-re, e non gra-di - re, son tre co - se da mo - ri - re, da mo - ri -

32

re. A-spet-ta-re e non ve - ni - re, sta-re a let-to e non dor - mi - re, ben ser-vi-re e non gra-

35

di-re, e non ve - ni - re e nondor mi-re, e non gradi - re e non gra-di - re, son tre, tre, tre co - se,

39

co - se, co-se da mo - ri - re, da mo - ri - re.

43

Giovanni, act 1, scene 4)—“Purchè porti la gonnella, / Voi sapete quel che fa” (As long as she wears a skirt, you know what he’ll do); Figaro repeats his leering “già ognuno lo sa” (everybody already knows it) for the obsessive cadences of his aria of jealous anger, “Aprite un po’ quegli occhi” (*Figaro*, act 4, scene 26), accompanied by the cuckolding horns. These are classics of buffa efficiency: obsession yields closure; the comic and the syntactical act are one. Each character in the grip of a buffa cadence is possessed by his own nature, and obsession is completion, or, to appropriate a morsel of psychobabble, a “self-fulfillment.” Every aria is a mini-commedia with its own *lieto fine*.

Contemporaneous instrumental music too is emphatically end-oriented; perhaps at no other time before or since has closure been such a significant musical issue. Its powerful cadential thrusts are an enormous part of its appeal. They give this music its sense of dramatic coherence, of something having been seen through to an end. Closure is already a strong value in the sixteen-measure minuet paradigm that Joseph Riepel claimed as the generating matrix of all more extended movement types. *Ouvert* and *clos* endings of symmetrical phrases had been a feature of dance music since the Middle Ages, but those trim symmetries could never support a longer movement. Mere symmetry will not suffice to achieve firm closure in an art that moves in time. To wrest the movement away from the home key area came to require considerably more time and effort than it took to establish that tonic, and arrival on this new plateau, the dominant, necessitated waves of cadences to close the exposition. The same waves of repeated cadences, as an end rhyme, and frequently with an additional wave in a coda, were required to close the movement. What in a simple spatially oriented diagram would appear as distensions of symmetry are experientially just what it takes to achieve a convincing close. And so it is not, after all, surprising that at these cadential nodes instrumental music should borrow the buffa voice, with its persuasive urgency, to enhance the cadential drive. Cadences in instrumental music often sound like direct translations—wordless performances—of buffa closes.

A favorite critical game is to trace such cadences in Mozart’s piano concertos. Tovey likens the final cadence of the first movement of the Concerto in B-Flat Major, K. 450, to “a ribald gesture addressed to deluded husbands” and finds its original in Figaro’s cadence in “Aprite quegli occhi.” Hutchings compares

the cadence at the very close of the Concerto in E-Flat Major, K. 482, to this same cadence, characterizing it as “tally-ho noises”; and Rosen finds such cadences in K. 453 and 459.⁸ The concertos are an especially fertile source partly because many cadences in them are constructed as detachable from their themes, which because of the solo-tutti dialogue must be interchangeable to an extent not necessary in other types of movements.

One persistent model I have elsewhere dubbed the “Ho capito” paradigm.⁹ In buffa arias the tonic return is often almost completely constituted of cadences, since full thematic return is not a particular virtue when a text is in progress. If the opening material returns, it is often truncated—merely an upbeat to the cadences to follow—whereas if the return entails new material, it will usually be brief in order to reserve energy for the cadences. Hence an aria may close with a long succession of cadences with neutral figuration that are by no means structurally superfluous. When Masetto comes to his first tonic cadence (see example 15, m. 55), the aria is harmonically complete in a technical sense, but the truncation of the opening material robs the tonic of conviction: we (and, evidently, Masetto) feel the need for at least “one more time.” And so, after making that first cadence, Masetto repeats the whole retransition passage, slightly varied, and the material of the tonic return. But surely one has not gone through all that just to end with the same cadence: the repetition itself occasions twelve further measures of dominant-tonic alternation, firmly putting a full stop to the piece. The “Ho capito” recipe—the repetition of a broad cadential phrase followed by subdivision of the phrase “beat” and a more urgent dominant-tonic alternation—is a reliable strategy for a convincing buffa close.

The cadences of the last movement of the Piano Concerto in F Major, K. 459, show the “Ho capito” paradigm at work (see example 16). Rosen calls this Rondo “a work of unimaginable brilliance and gaiety,” and the encomium is utterly deserved.¹⁰ In the fifty-three measures following the cadenza, which provide the movement’s scintillating comedic close, the players in the game are the rondo couplet, a cadence theme from the first important F-major cadence, with which the final cadence is a partial end rhyme, and the cadential envoi, a little wind band tattoo that first appears in counterpoint with the consequent phrase of the cadence motive; it detaches itself to put a five-measure period to the cadence.

The final cadence begins with the rondo couplet (mm. 454–62), rendered powerfully cadential by the fact that it has been withheld until now from the

40

D Giov

Ven - go, ven- go! Re - sta, re- sta! È u - na co - sa mol - to o - ne- sta:

cresc. *f* *p* Archi.

48

fac - cia il no- stro ca - va - lie - re ca - va - lie ra an- co - ra te, ca - va -

f *p* Tutti

54

lie - ra an- co - ra te Bric- co - nac - cia, ma - lan - dri - na, fo - sti o - gnor la mia ru - i - na, fo - sti o -

cresc.

60

gnor la mia ru - i - na Van - go, ven- go! Re - sta, re- sta! È u - na

f *p* *cresc.*

67

co - sa mol - to o - ne- sta: fac - cia il no- stro - ca - va -

f *p* Archi *simile*

(continued)

EXAMPLE 15. (continued)

73

lie - re ca - va - lie - ra an - co - ra te, ca - va - lie - ra an - co - ra te, ten fac - cia il no - stro ca - va -

79

lie - re ca - va - lie - ra an - co - ra te, fac - cia il no - stro ca - va - lie - re ca - va - lie - ra an - co - ra

85

te, ca - va - lie - ra an - co - ra te, ca - va - lie - ra an - co - ta te

91 *simile*

tonic return, and by its condensation into a new eight-measure antecedent-consequent phrase, complete in itself.¹¹ The couplet then passes through a series of cadential waves, each engendering the next one. First it is repeated, with one of Mozart's delightful descants—a new and utterly superfluous long-breathed “tune,” rhythmically elided with the end of the previous phrase and rising over the top of the repetition (mm. 442–70). But not enough time has elapsed. Surely one can't stop here! Next comes the cadence theme and its accompanying tattoo, but now in the winds and piano (m. 471) rather than

EXAMPLE 16. Mozart, Piano Concerto No. 19 in F Major, K. 459:III, mm. 454–506.

454

fl ob

462

bsns

hns

vlns

vla, vc, cb

470

(bsn+hns)

(continued)

EXAMPLE 16. (continued)

479

487

ob
hns
p

f

496

hns
p

f

f

strings and winds as it was voiced in the exposition. This variation on the more normative arrangement introduces a tension in orchestral color. On repetition the piano ornaments the closing theme and the tattoo is back in the winds. In addition, throughout these sixteen measures (mm. 470–86) the strings have held a chordal pedal underneath.

Neither is this a stopping place. Each piece of strong cadential material is nevertheless cadentially deficient in some crucial aspect, and in addition the eight-measure lengths, combined on a broader scale into groups of sixteen, are too symmetrical to provide a compelling close. They still need the asymmetrical but delicately equilibrated handful of measures that shapes the final period—the extension that sends the end rhyme home. The remainder of the cadence poses Zeno's paradox in the form of *petites reprises*, buffa's version of infinity: if you keep subdividing by half, can you ever reach the end? Now the piano emerges with the envoi tattoo (mm. 486–87), made into a four-measure phrase, an urgent halving of the rhythmic unit that energizes the close: three of these four-measure units follow (mm. 486–90, mm. 490–94, mm. 494–98), replete with ornaments and increasingly full orchestration. The last one is answered by halving again, in progressive subdivision (mm. 498 ff.). Underneath, finally the strings contribute cadential notes for a climactic downbeat, and the tattoo turns into a cadential trill to add that asymmetrical gesture that lets Achilles finally leap the ever-narrowing gap and overtake the tortoise.

If my account of these waves of cadences has taken on a slightly polemical tone, it is because cadential arrays like these are frequently considered to be much ado about nothing, mere comic dither. Cuthbert Girdlestone calls them “chattering, busy about nothing, brainless,” a “council of magpies,” the implication being that far from the comic and the syntactic working together, the comic is so by virtue of being in marked excess of the requirements of syntax.¹² The interminable cadential formula has often been the butt of musical caricature; but in K. 459, as I have tried to show, the first tonic cadence is by no means sufficient syntactically to make a full close. If one conceives syntax broadly as all that pertains to the processive mode of organization, then the just amount of cadential formulas required to gain the period is still a function of syntax, and that first clear tonic is only “the beginning of the ending”; it is not where the fat lady sings. Furthermore, the “chattering” envoi tattoo of the final cadence actually crowns the long-term development of an important rhythmic motto and is a most necessary part of the cadential apparatus for the movement. It is an outcropping of the repeated-note upbeat that opens

the movement. Far from mere “dither” after the fact, the buffa cadence is syntactically and affectively indispensable to the “happy ending” of a bold and brilliantly constructed rondo movement.

In the conclusions I have discussed so far, the “buffa sound” is unmistakable, if a wide scholarly consensus may be trusted. But buffa cadences do not only grace the ends of darting buffa-like finales: they also inform the rhetoric of movements whose topoi do not necessarily suggest buffa origins. Think, for example, of the powerful cadential thrusts in the first movement of Mozart’s “Prague” Symphony, followed by shorter syllabic calls (example 17). The cadences in the last movement of Haydn’s Symphony No. 104 (example 18) likewise add an insistent buffa note to the cadential action already begun with the pastoral and its stabilizing drone.

This sequence of examples risks suggesting that comic closure in instrumental music is all about repetition, overkill, and the (consequent) negation of meaning. In fact, the achievement of judicious proportion and balance among various sharply characterized topoi is at least as important to the syntactical operation and comic pacing of topical composition. As an example of the way topoi and pacing can work together, consider the downsizing worked on certain topoi by comic finitude, or the need to have a comic concord—a commensurability—among beginnings, middles, and ends. To begin with the most striking case, for almost everyone *except* musicians of the late eighteenth century, the pastoral is often the locus of infinite desire for the absent, the inaccessible ideal. In its $\frac{6}{8}$ form its two-tiered, static rhythms can indeed suggest the limitless—infinity. In sharp distinction, however, Mozart and Haydn treat the pastoral with great control as kind of *hortus conclusus*—a secret garden—and do not let its endless lengths and tendency to a languid melancholy become an independent stance. (Mozart parodies its air of doleful desire in *Figaro*, when Barbarina weeps for the missing pin from the Count’s letter to Susanna, singing over and over to the languid $\frac{6}{8}$ minor-key pastoral rhythms, “I have lost it, I have lost it.”)

The trios of minuet movements often provide a pastoral enclosure, as do slow movements. Recall, for example, the Minuet of Haydn’s String Quartet in D Minor, op. 76, No. 2 (“Quinten”), or that of Mozart’s Quartet in E-Flat Major, K. 428. Among slow movements there is the haunting minor-mode Siciliano in Mozart’s Concerto in A Major, K. 488. Or we may be given a fleeting glimpse into the garden in the midst of other topoi, as in the slow movement of Haydn’s D-Minor Quartet, where the grave siciliano rhythms suddenly give way to a flowing drone and skirl (mm. 28–47). The pastoral gavotte from the

EXAMPLE 17. Mozart, Symphony No. 38 in D Major, "Prague," K. 504:I, mm. 282–302.

282 Fl
Ob
Bsn
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc

a 2

This system contains measures 282 through 288. The woodwinds (Flute, Oboe, Bassoon) play a complex, multi-measure rest in measure 282, followed by a series of chords and moving lines. The strings (Violins I and II, Viola, and Cello) play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in measure 282, which then transitions into a more melodic line in measure 283. A dynamic marking of *a 2* is present in measure 284.



289
Vlns

This system contains measures 289 through 294. The woodwinds continue their complex patterns. The strings play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in measure 289, which then transitions into a more melodic line in measure 290. A dynamic marking of *a 2* is present in measure 291.



295

This system contains measures 295 through 302. The woodwinds continue their complex patterns. The strings play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in measure 295, which then transitions into a more melodic line in measure 296. A dynamic marking of *a 2* is present in measure 297.

(continued)

EXAMPLE 17. (continued)

The musical score for Example 17 (continued) spans measures 299 to 304. It is written in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. The score is arranged in four staves: two for the vocal line (treble and bass clef) and two for the piano accompaniment (treble and bass clef). The vocal line features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, and a lower line with rests and occasional notes. The piano accompaniment provides a rhythmic and harmonic foundation with eighth and sixteenth notes. The piece concludes with a final cadence on the fourth measure.

middle of the second-act finale of *Figaro* mentioned above is also a walled garden. Frequently the topos is used for closure. In the last movement of Haydn's Symphony No. 104 it is both a beginning and an ending gesture, but it is embedded in a lickety-split finale with articulate syllabic buffa cadences at the close.

Another topos that is defined by this mechanism of comic downsizing is the military march. Laurence Berman has shown how the martial gesture was domesticated from its baroque beginnings in the noble anger of the *stile concitato*, Monteverdi's depiction of heroic passion in *Il Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*. The *stile concitato* is the stuff of baroque concerto grosso Allegros and opera seria rage arias. But in the later eighteenth century it is transformed into the "buoyant, brisk, light-footed [march], . . . designed to accompany a leader in public ceremony"—the kind of march that saturates the Allegro movements of Mozart and Haydn.¹³ Berman aptly terms this kind of march "festal pomp." Many instrumental cadences substitute the march-like gesture of festal pomp for the vocal suasions of the actual buffa sound; the close of the "Jupiter" Symphony is one example, as we shall see shortly. But the insistent rhetoric of the press to cadence is as audible in cadences of festal pomp as it is in more clearly buffa-esque cadences. The dramatization of closure is a primary distinguishing feature of that collection of novel tropes—new turns to old habits—that we have been examining, and the sure grasp of the

EXAMPLE 18. Haydn, Symphony No. 104 in D Major, IV, mm. 102–16.

102

Fl

Ob *f*

Cl *f*

f Bsn

Hn (D) + Trp (D) 8va

Timp

Vln I *f*

Vln II *f*

Vla *f*

Vc *f*



108

f

f

f

f a 2

Hn a 2

a 2

Vlins, Vla 8vb, Vc 15vb, Cb 22vb

musical period is at least partly due to opera buffa's rich bequest to late eighteenth-century style. Like the topoi, these final cadences are mimetic acts, and, again like the topoi, they are superintended by the voice, the word. They are creatures of a vocal aesthetic, as first argued in chapter 2. As always, the buffa voice exhorts—either by sheer repetition or in dialogue—with its short, syllabic cadential calls. It works very hard. “Listen to me,” it cries. “This is important. This is an end. It is full and complete.” And, it hopes you will agree, “this is the way things ought to be, just exactly as they are.”

Before turning back to the D-minor Piano Concerto, K. 466, the work from which this chapter departed, we need to confront one of the most powerful pieces of evidence for the dominance of comic priorities in late eighteenth-century style, namely, the new predilection for the major mode. Compared with the musical language Mozart and Haydn inherited from their baroque predecessors, the prevalence of major keys is a striking new trope. A glance at Neal Zaslaw's book on Mozart's symphonies reveals that of the ninety-eight symphonies attributed to Mozart, only five are set in a minor tonality, and two of those are not actually Mozart's.¹⁴ James Webster's tabulation of Haydn's works in the minor mode in six major instrumental genres comes to thirty-seven—a number that, considering Haydn's colossal output, is minuscule—and twenty-two of those works are clustered in the period before 1780, his so-called *Sturm und Drang* period.¹⁵ Compare this to any list of works by a baroque composer, on which major and minor keys will be distributed with relative indifference.

With respect to the dramatic models that inform this music, it seems even more significant that many, though by no means all, of the works in minor tonalities by both Mozart and Haydn end in the major: the tragic close—the “dying fall”—is not their rule.¹⁶ As suggested in chapter 1, when comedy enters the picture, it encircles and undermines the tragic, rendering it one mode among many rather than the dominant affect. It is not just that comedy chooses not to dwell on the darker passions (which is not to say that it excludes them). It is also because a cadence on the minor tonic would provide a far less convincing close. Languid and open-ended, both in function and in affect it would inevitably undermine a *lieto fine*.

Obviously this new trope played an important role in determining my paradigmatic example, the last movement of K. 466. The components of the

concerto's final cadence should now be clear: it unites the "Ho capito" formula with a cadential tune and a happy ending in the major mode. The treatment of this tune in the Rondo is quite complex. It serves two functions, first as a cadential tune closing major sections of the movement, and then as a coda tune for the final close.¹⁷ The passionate minor-mode opening theme introduces the tune. That theme is broken off in a really extraordinary manner, as a declamatory "question" to which the cadential tune seems to enter as its "answer" (see example 19, m. 353); and this answer, which had appeared earlier in the minor mode, is now serenely cast in the major (mm. 355–69). After two phrases of D-major cadential figuration (mm. 370–94), the tune returns, significantly altered for its final appearance (m. 395 ff.). It is more concisely complementary and cadential in structure, its two normal four-measure lengths transformed into three two-measure units of dominant-tonic alternation (mm. 411–16). Being three, they pave the way for a new fourth unit, the last word in periodicity: the sassy trumpet call (mm. 417–18), which is then detached (the Zeno's paradox effect again) to lead up to the final touch, an unexpected six-measure terraced buildup over the subdominant that provides an unusually powerful whiplash effect to the final tonic chords (see example 19, mm. 417–28).

This brilliantly planned coda orchestrates the comic close in full serenity of purpose; it is difficult to see it as an aberration or a tortured compromise. Cuthbert Girdlestone came to terms with the ending only by terming the concerto the only one of Mozart's that deserves the adjective "Beethovenian," concluding that the close must represent "a victory of serenity over the tumultuous anxiety of earlier moments."¹⁸ Girdlestone is obviously thinking of the triumphant endings of Beethoven's symphonies: the Fifth, for example, where an entire movement functions as a closing gesture, through an apotheosis of festal pomp; or the first movement of the "Eroica," which achieves closure by a gesture to infinity. If Beethoven's symphonic closes partake of the comic at all, it must be as surcomic, cosmi-comic. "If we forget that fictions are fictive," says Frank Kermode, "we regress to myth."¹⁹ I'm not sure that Beethoven in his colossal acts of symphonic closure did not sometimes forget that these endings "do not have to be what they are." With him, artifice regresses (or progresses, as he surely thought) to the organic. But the makers of this music were always aware, I'm sure, that their fictions were fictive—an act of a man "in the midst," who, though ignorant of our actual ends, ever tried to fashion honest musical ones, without either false promises or the teachings of despair. The closures of comic finitude don't seek to force transcendence, to erase our

EXAMPLE 19. Mozart, Piano Concerto No. 20 in D Minor, K. 466:III, mm. 347–428.

347 Pno

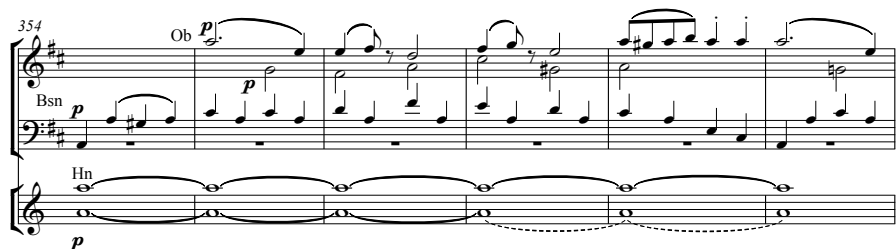


354

Ob *p*

Bsn *p*

Hn *p*



360

Vc *p*

Hn



365

(Vc)



EXAMPLE 19. (continued)

370 Fl *f*
Ob *f*
Hn *f*
Trp (D) + Timp 8vb *f*
p

strings *f*

377 Fl *p*
p

382 *f*
Vc, Cb *f*
p

(continued)

EXAMPLE 19. (continued)

387

p

p



392

(+ Vc)



397

Trp + Hns

p

simile

EXAMPLE 19. (continued)

402

Fl
Ob

(+Vc +Vla)

Vln I
Vln II

p

407

Brass

Fl
Ob

p

412

Brass

Fl
Ob

f

(continued)

EXAMPLE 19. (continued)

418

Ob 2

Fl

p

Hn

Vc

p

423

Hn + Trp

f

f

Vln I

Vla

Vc

f

nagging doubts, but to act in equilibrium with them, to temper our awareness of the possibility of tragedy with the essential sanity of the comic choice.

With its historicity, its commitment to the surface, its sense of contingency, comic narration does not usually traffic in the transcendent. That is one reason why I want to conclude by looking at a movement that more than any other has been voted “transcendent” by its admirers, and which comes from the most elevated genre (as yet little discussed in these pages), the symphony. Leonard Ratner says of the first movement of the “Jupiter” that, although monumental, it is still “a laughing, not an angry Jupiter.”²⁰ The last movement could just as well be described in these terms, at least under our broad definition of the word “comic,” even if the wit that often accompanies the comic is lacking from it. Because of its combination of galant with learned techniques this finale is often compared to the finale of the String Quartet in G Major, K. 387. There, however, a comic contrast in styles is the point: the movement starts with a portentous alla breve fugue exposition in whole notes, motet-style, which is wittily counterstated by a breakneck contredanse—a country fiddler’s tune. There are three complete fugue expositions in the first reprise, but in retrospect all this “fugality” is just so much frantic motion in place.²¹ In the coda the learned and galant have a final tangle and a thoroughly galant resolution: a tight stretto of the opening subject—four entries of it in the space of six measures—is relaxed into the *reductio ad absurdum* of a galant cadence crafted out of that same ecclesiastical motif. The galant absorbs the learned style by periodizing it.

In the “Jupiter” finale, fugato plays a supporting rather than a contrasting role, with its serious density elevating the affect from comic wit to the noble comic. The “white-note” ecclesiastical cantus firmus, which Neal Zaslaw hears as derived from “Credo, credo,” is at first detached from its usual contrapuntal context and treated as a singing allegro motive, *piano* in the violins, and answered by a galant version of a cantus firmus descending.²² It then serves as its own tutti counterstatement, still homophonic, but martial and grandiose. This opening sixteen-measure statement is itself answered by a triumphant military cadence, the dotted descending motive in strings and winds barely concealing an opera buffa fanfare in the horns that conjures up the theater.

Because of its public, ceremonial nature, eighteenth-century audiences had different expectations for the tone of a symphony than they had for the other instrumental genres. Koch said its first movement should possess “the

EXAMPLE 20. Mozart, String Quartet No. 14 in G Major, K. 387:IV, mm. 1–29.

Molto Allegro

Vln I

Vln II

p

Vc

p

10

Vla

p

17

23

EXAMPLE 21. Mozart, String Quartet No. 14 in G Major, K. 387:IV, mm. 267–end.

267

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vc

p

p

p

274

cresc.

f

cresc.

f

cresc.

f

cresc.

f

282

f

f

f

f

f

f

289

p

p

p

p

p

p

The musical score is written for four parts: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into four systems, each starting with a measure number (267, 274, 282, 289). Dynamics include piano (*p*), forte (*f*), crescendo (*cresc.*), and trills (*tr*). The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, beams, and slurs.

EXAMPLE 22. Mozart, Symphony No. 41 in C Major, "Jupiter," K. 551:IV, mm. 1–35.

Vln I Molto Allegro

Vln II

Viola

Cello

p

9

Fl

Ob a 2 f

Bsn a 2

f

Hn + Trp (C)

f

Timp

f Vln I

f Vln II

Vla (8va) + Vc

f

15

f

p

EXAMPLE 22. (continued)

21

Musical score for measures 21-25. The score is written for four staves. The top staff (treble clef) contains a melody with eighth and quarter notes, ending with a half note and a quarter note. The second staff (bass clef) contains a bass line with eighth and quarter notes. The third staff (treble clef) contains a series of chords, with a 'Timp 8vb' marking above the final measure. The bottom staff (bass clef) contains a bass line with eighth and quarter notes.

26

Musical score for measures 26-30. The score is written for four staves. The top staff (treble clef) contains a melody with eighth and quarter notes, ending with a half note and a quarter note. The second staff (bass clef) contains a bass line with eighth and quarter notes. The third staff (treble clef) contains a series of chords, with a 'Timp' marking above the first measure. The bottom staff (bass clef) contains a bass line with eighth and quarter notes.

31

Musical score for measures 31-35. The score is written for four staves. The top staff (treble clef) contains a melody with eighth and quarter notes, ending with a half note and a quarter note. The second staff (bass clef) contains a bass line with eighth and quarter notes. The third staff (treble clef) contains a series of chords, with a 'Timp' marking above the first measure. The bottom staff (bass clef) contains a bass line with eighth and quarter notes.

character of magnificence and the elevated,” and he quotes Schulz’s article from Sulzer’s encyclopedia that lists “the grand, the ceremonial, and the elevated” as characteristics of the symphony in general.²³ *Das Erhabene*, the “elevated,” can of course mean “sublime”; it is the term Kant used for it in *The Critique of Judgment* (1790). But the word for this distinguished philosophical classification began life as a humble descriptive adjective. Koch’s description of the musical style of *das Erhabene* does not summon up the disjunctive gestures of the radical sublime. Rather, it implies “a serious, slow movement, a full and powerful harmony, and melodic phrases without many ornaments, which, however, proceed in bold, firm paces, and often progress in large intervallic leaps. In performance the elevated style requires a marked and strongly sustained tone, and a rather prominent grammatical accent, especially in figures which are similar to the serious, and of which I have already spoken in the article *con gravità*.”²⁴ This is music to accompany the steady tread of Aristotle’s “great-souled man,” who “pursues few things rashly” and “thinks nothing to be great.”²⁵ In *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart* I posited a heroic rhythmic type I termed the “exalted march,” and I pointed to its origin in the lofty alla breve rhythms of the church fugue.²⁶ In the “Jupiter” finale the relation is actualized rather than immanent; the theme of the exalted march is the ecclesiastical cantus firmus itself. The opening of the movement is the epitome of the noble heroic—domesticated, of course, in its galant periodic context.

The famous passages of learned style and fugato in the finale are not merely a roiling of the waters but have crucial functions in the harmonic process. The first key area is expanded, C major’s hold loosened, by a quiet fugato passage that leads to a triumphant homophonic statement of the cantus firmus (mm. 36–56). A passage of bound style in the recapitulation often considered “arduous”—the cantus firmus with suspensions in sequence—is actually a brilliant compression of sixty-five measures into 39, taking off from measure 9 in the exposition and usurping in one sweeping gesture the functions of three different ideas: the original tutti statement of the first theme, the military cadence, and the fugal episode (mm. 233–71). This dramatic elision tightens the recapitulation and paves the way for the famous coda, out of whose dense and unremitting five-part invertible counterpoint there emerges with perfect surprise timing a last galant statement of the cantus firmus. It is answered, with clever economy, by a reprise of measures 13–30 of the exposition—the second half of the first tutti statement of the theme and the military cadence, part of what was omitted by the compression in the recapitulation—

EXAMPLE 23. Mozart, Symphony No. 41 in C Major, "Jupiter," K. 551:IV, mm. 356–423.

356

Ob

Bsn

Hn (C)

Trp (C) + Timp 8vb

Vln I

Vln II

Vc

Cb 8vb

f

p



366

+ Bsn 8vb

Bsn a 2

Fl + Ob a 2

+ Trp + Hns

Vln II

f

p



379 Woodwinds

Bsn

Cb

Vc

f

p

(continued)

EXAMPLE 23. (continued)

388

Fl tr

Ob I tr

Ob II

Bsn I tr

Bsn II



394

EXAMPLE 23. (continued)

400

Vc + Vla 8va

406

a 2 Ob

410

(continued)

EXAMPLE 23. (continued)

414

This system contains five measures of music. The first staff (treble clef) features a melody with eighth and sixteenth notes, including some beamed sixteenth notes. The second staff (bass clef) provides a harmonic accompaniment with eighth and sixteenth notes. The third staff (treble clef) contains a continuous sixteenth-note pattern. The fourth staff (bass clef) contains a continuous sixteenth-note pattern. The fifth staff (treble clef) contains a continuous sixteenth-note pattern. The sixth staff (bass clef) contains a continuous sixteenth-note pattern.



419

This system contains five measures of music. The first staff (treble clef) features a melody with eighth and sixteenth notes, including some beamed sixteenth notes. The second staff (bass clef) provides a harmonic accompaniment with eighth and sixteenth notes. The third staff (treble clef) contains a continuous sixteenth-note pattern. The fourth staff (bass clef) contains a continuous sixteenth-note pattern. The fifth staff (treble clef) contains a continuous sixteenth-note pattern. The sixth staff (bass clef) contains a continuous sixteenth-note pattern.

transferred wholesale to form the triumphant close. That cadence includes the threefold rising opera buffa fanfare, first heard in horns alone, which shines through the veil of the descending cadential motive. By omitting it in the recap, Mozart saved it up, as it were, for this moment of comic closure; it suggests the celebrations in the musical theater of the communal happy ending.

The narrative of the *commedia* has had great explanatory power for me, bringing under one aegis these several new tropes or turnings. It teaches me what a convention is, and what it is for; it justifies our letting our analytic attention play along the surface, with its mimetic representations, rather than hastening to plumb the depths; it encourages us to regard closure as more than brainless dithering. I also willingly confess that I find it humanly admirable in its good sense, compassionate celebration of human limitations and a certain courage or perseverance. Before finishing my comedic—that is, *commedic*—reading of the “Jupiter” finale, I would like to consider some of the “likely stories” that others have advanced about Classic music to see whether they do justice to these paramount values: sensitivity to the functions of convention, and the human representational content of this music. These questions constitute my criteria for interpretive adequacy.

Narrative studies in music have generally focused on the works of romantic composers, for the obvious reason that they are most connected in our minds with the unabashedly poetic. It is only recently that such narratives have been constructed about eighteenth-century music, the last redoubt of the formalists. Nevertheless, the reference-laden surface of Classic music, with its dynamic focus on tension and resolution, lends itself easily enough to narrative analysis. In *Playing with Signs* Kofi Agawu lays out both the potential and the limits of finding plots in Classic music:

The “natural” and “historical” associations of topic point to an irreducible conventional specificity. In some cases, the combination of topical sequences and essences enables the analyst to construct a plot for the work or movement. By “plot,” I mean a coherent verbal narrative that is offered as an analogy or metaphor for the piece at hand. It may be based on specific historical events, it may yield interesting and persuasive analogies with social situations, or it may be suggestive of a more generalized discourse. . . . Plots arise as a result of sheer indulgence; they are the historically minded analyst’s engagement with one aspect of a work’s possible meaning.

The creation of a plot, however, remains perhaps an optional rather than an obligatory stage in the analysis.²⁷

Agawu is willing to advance such “plots” for Mozart’s C-Major Quintet and the first movement of Beethoven’s String Quartet op. 132.²⁸ But as the passage just quoted suggests, he advances them hesitantly and formulates them mostly in terms of the play of oppositions: for the Mozart quintet a confrontation between high and low styles, for the Beethoven a conflict between high and low, sacred and profane, spontaneity and self-consciousness. He is reluctant to imagine any actual working-out of these oppositions along narrative lines.²⁹

Agawu’s dialectics of *topoi* are the readings of a cautious historian-theorist without a strong narrative investment, content to have theorized the referential surface of the work and disinclined to go further. Other narratives go much further, positioning themselves in one of two ways in relation to Agawu’s modest claims. Some choose to ignore the “irreducible conventional specificity” of topics, attempting to read what Agawu would call the “pure signs” of the underlying musical structure while ignoring the “impure” or referential surface. Others transform the conventional gestures into symbols that they elaborate into propositions from which they can infer actual plots: “this is that.” *Coups d’archets* are translated into exercises of absolutist authority, the pastoral into preoedipal coextension with the mother. I call these two approaches the animistic and the allegorical.

Among animistic narratives are analyses by Fred Everett Maus and Leo Treitler. Maus himself contributed the term “animistic” in an analysis of the last movement of a Beethoven piano sonata (op. 14, No. 1). An “animistic” analysis is one that “presents qualities of human embodiment without representing a determinate body,” after the manner of nonrepresentational art. Here are a few sentences from his analysis: “Two vigorous forces move away from each other, reaching a point of palpable conflict. A compensatory response follows, characterized by cooperation and clarity. But the response is too meek; the initial problem is posed again, and after a false start with the same inadequate response, a more complex response evolves, more effectively sustaining the energy of the opening.”³⁰ This narrative seems to inhabit a never-never land between music and a real story, adding little that we can’t already express in a more precise and informative (because technical) analytic vocabulary. At each level in the analysis of a literary narrative the link between human actions and the abstraction is preserved: at the barest, son kills father, son marries mother. But the link to the specificity of *musical* expression is severed once one leaves the score and translates musical relations and representations into such broad dynamic abstractions.

In *Music and the Historical Imagination* Leo Treitler has argued with clarity and erudition on behalf of criticism as “an exercise of the historical understanding,” as opposed to the “holistic and unitarian” perspective that focuses primarily on “synchronic pitch structure.”³¹ His commitment to capturing a sense of “historical presentness” notwithstanding, Treitler’s analysis of the slow movement of Mozart’s Symphony No. 39 is a strange and, I suspect, carefully calculated mixture of technical terms and seemingly innocent anthropomorphisms:

The dialogue has taken on an air of urgency and anxiety. On their third try the first violins succeed in breaking away and immediately become frisky in their new freedom.

The passage has the character of desperate thinking, looking for a way out, first in one direction, then in another.

Altogether the reprise seems to have gotten some trouble out of its system.³²

Treitler characterizes his narrative as an account of “emotional flux,” of a disembodied “consciousness of thought and experience”—recording the depth of the experience without its particularities.³³ In this it resembles Maus’s indeterminate dynamism. Unlike Maus, however, Treitler embraces historical specificity, departing from the works of romantic critics from around 1800, such as E. T. A. Hoffmann, Wackenroder, and Tieck. Perhaps he has just chosen the wrong history. Those writers were setting the agenda for the romantic future, while, as I hope I have demonstrated, the style of Mozart and Haydn is far more aptly described under the aegis of the old-fashioned doctrine of imitation, with its privileging of the voice and the word. Unsurprisingly, the descriptive terms Treitler embraces lead him to the highly romantic and fairly untenable position that Mozart’s operas are “symphonies with singers,” and (especially unsound) that instrumental music was for Mozart “the higher, prior form.”³⁴

The analyses of the animists in general are latter-day extensions of Susanne Langer’s notion of the isomorphism of music and feeling, namely, that “certain aspects of the so-called ‘inner life’ have formal properties similar to those of music—patterns of motion and rest, of tension and release, of agreement and disagreement, preparation, fulfilment, excitation, sudden change, etc.”³⁵ Langer’s vision of an imageless world of disembodied passions was liberating at a time when pitch-structure analysis was the only academically respectable way to look at music. But now that we have recognized an actual semiotic code of expression at work in the style, these narratives seem to stop short of the mark.

Those narratives I have characterized as “allegorical” take an opposite tack: rather than shrinking from historical meaning, they impute meaning of a startling propositional specificity, translating the topical dialectic into various kinds of archetypal or historical human struggles. Allegorical narratives come in two brands: narratives of transcendence and narratives of subversion, subversion being more prevalent these days. Narratives of subversion assert a fundamental dualism in this music between the free spirit of the individual in its interiority and a set of rigid conventions imposed from without, presumably by the Enlightenment thought police. “Enlightenment thought” is reified as a monolith, and tonal syntax, the harmonic process—those interior tropes developed to make communication possible—are demonized as the force of resistance and repression.

Susan McClary and Rose Subotnik, the pioneering allegorical narratists, imagined “the teleological process of tonality and sonata” as coercing “reluctant” moments of individual content to submit to repressive form.³⁶ Hardly any distinction remains between dependent and independent signs. All signs do “cultural work,” and purely syntactic ones, because they are aligned with Enlightenment rationality, are in truth the most insidious and oppressive of all. These historians speak from a distinctly nineteenth-century perspective when they posit a rigid form that one must battle or outwit. If instrumental music *can* be read in the allegorical mode, turning convention into tragic meaning, then interpreters should at the very least acknowledge that there was no such thing as a “grammar of sonata form” in the late eighteenth century, only a sense of workable harmonic procedure. By mistaking the nature of convention, allegorical readers often vitiate their own sometimes quite incisive observations. Finally, it is striking that all these narratives concern Mozart (never Haydn), a trend that may be traced in part to the recent Bicentensity but more likely is influenced by Mozart biography, with its tales of lurking patriarchs and tyrannical archbishops.³⁷ We forget that Mozart lived for a time in some contentment in the bustling open streets of his city of choice, Vienna. We know that some composers have suffered real political repression, the blank face of totalitarianism, as Richard Taruskin so eloquently reminds us.³⁸ Tales of repression by leading tone don’t have the same disturbing ring.

Narratives of transcendence exhibit the same sort of dualism in that one must “ascend beyond” and hence devalue the superficial, the *phainomena*. The main difference is that in the search for figures of the sublime, the supersensible ideal, signs of struggle are not the main quarry. The sublime, that staple

of the early romantics, is regularly invoked to describe, for example, Mozart's last symphonies, even though as of 1788 Kant's *Critique of Judgment* had not yet been published. But then, its complex "Analytic of the Sublime" as a philosophical epiphany that humbles our imagination and gives us some intimation of our supersensible faculty of cognition is not precisely material to feed the sensibilities. The Burkean sublime and the sublime described by Kant in a 1764 essay project a slightly more conventional, and representable, sense of the feeling.³⁹ The sublime causes astonishment, and "astonishment," says Burke, "is that state of the soul in which all its motions are suspended with some degree of horror."⁴⁰ Kant identifies it with the genre of the tragic and the temper of the melancholic. In her generally excellent handbook on the "Jupiter" Symphony, Elaine Sisman seeds a narrative of the sublime early on with references to the *Third Critique*, altering the usual translation of Schulz's article on the symphony (see above) so that *erhaben* reads as "sublime" rather than "elevated."⁴¹ To read the finale of the "Jupiter" as a rhetorical exercise in the sublime, Sisman must describe the magisterially ordered counterpoint as a manipulation of immensity that is undermining, disordered, and obscure, its final fivefold "apotheosis" (see example 23) in the coda a mass of "writhing fragments."⁴² I don't myself see the snake pit in this passage, the *horror mundi*. The extreme disjunctions of something like a topos of the sublime are more evident in the *ombra* and fantasy styles in slow introductions, where it is kept in check precisely by its containment in a preamble. Closure in late eighteenth-century style, even at its extremes, remains comic, and it will be left to Beethoven to translate the festal pomp of this noble comic finale into a gesture to the sublime.

These various narratives, with their notions of limits to be transcended, of artistic battles to be fought, seem to be shaped by the overarching story we have long told ourselves, a story that is epitomized by the not-so-innocent period label "Classic," a term that really needs to be discarded as having outlived its usefulness, even if I have succumbed to its convenience at various points in this very book. As we learned in chapter 2, the name "Classic" evolved in reaction to a stunning act of retrospective misappropriation by E. T. A. Hoffmann in the beginning of the nineteenth century. In the 1813 essay "Beethoven's Instrumental Music," whose influence can hardly be overstated, Hoffmann pronounced instrumental music to be the "only genuinely romantic art" because "its sole subject is the infinite," and Beethoven to be the most profound practitioner of this new and transcendent music.⁴³ At the same time he swept Mozart and Haydn into the charmed circle, styling them as the originators of the romantic

spirit: "Mozart and Haydn, the creators of our present instrumental music, were the first to show us the art in its full glory; the man who then looked on it with all his love and penetrated its innermost being—is Beethoven! The instrumental compositions of these three masters breathe a similar romantic spirit—this is due to their similar intimate understanding of the specific nature of the art."⁴⁴ By this act Hoffmann fixed Haydn and Mozart firmly at the beginning of the romantic century, the upbeat of the transcendent iamb that culminated in the music of Beethoven. Once Mozart and Haydn were bracketed inextricably with "our" music, there was little impulse to study their style as a vernacular on its own. Hoffmann, to be sure, was not thinking of "romantic" as a period label, musicologically underwritten and marketed with a list of appropriate style characteristics attached. He intended with that term to praise music that he saw as new, the product of original genius, and profoundly worked out. Hence, although he made his claims for Haydn and Mozart in the name of romanticism, the distinction hardly matters. What we call "Classic" may be no more than a subset of Hoffmann's musical romantic. As time passed it was not an enormous step to detach Hoffmann's protoromantics from their successors and give them a classification of their own, but not one that would not stand in the way of their participation in the new aesthetic.

In chapter 2 I touched on the necessity of situating the term "Classical" historically, but now, with the specters of the sublime and the transcendent hovering over Mozart's Jupiter finale and many contemporary works, it seems advisable to excavate the origins and implications of the label in more detail. The new classification could be described as a pseudo-Hegelian conception of the Classic. Ludwig Finscher has reported that one of the first uses of the word "Classic" with reference to the music of the Viennese triumvirate occurred in 1836, in an essay by Amadeus Wendt, "Concerning the Present Condition of Music, Especially in Germany, and How It Came About."⁴⁵ Wendt proposed as an antecedent to the "present condition" a "so-called Classic period," with its "Coryphaei, Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven."⁴⁶ Then, in what another modern German scholar, Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht, has characterized as "diluted Hegel," Wendt described "the drive of the style to make itself completely autonomous" and placed in the "center" of the Classic the music of Mozart, which manifests a "complete interpenetration of form and content" (the latter the analogue to Hegel's *Geist*). Haydn and Beethoven he saw as representing slightly different mixes of the form-and-content stew, Haydn being a little heavy on form, Beethoven on content.⁴⁷ So although Wendt's

generation began to reclassify Hoffmann's first romantics as Classic prototypes for the romantic canon, the reasons for which they were valued remained very much the same as Hoffmann's—purity, autonomy, transcendence. "Classic" is essentially a romantic notion, invented by nineteenth-century scholars and aestheticians to be applied to a music of the recent past they were putting forth as a paradigm for the future (i.e., their present).

This notion of the Classic is pseudo-Hegelian in part because there is no real evidence that Wendt read Hegel, and in part because it takes a fair amount of fancy footwork to ground the new concept of the Classic in Hegel's own aesthetics, something Eggebrecht seemed particularly concerned to do. Hegel saw three stages of art on the way to the full realization of Spirit—the symbolic, the classical, and the romantic. Music stood nearly at the pinnacle, belonging to the highest stage. (But Hegel was too much a disciple of the Logos, the Word, to trust this newly wordless art entirely; music finally yields pride of place to words with music, or poetry, and poetry is always on the verge of decomposing into philosophy.) The romantic is the state of subjective inner consciousness, or *Innerlichkeit*, when "the Spirit knows that its truth does not endure in corporeality and flies back into itself." Classical art—a perfect balance of the inner and the outer, of significant content and sensual form, precedes the crucial turn toward *Innerlichkeit* and finds its highest form not in music but in Greek sculpture.⁴⁸ Hence this contradiction: in the autonomy of their symphonic style Haydn and Mozart were romantic, but in their perfect balance of form and content they more properly belonged to the Hegelian *classical* stage. It was necessary to fudge, claiming that music imitated in its own ontogeny Hegel's three stages of art's phylogeny. Classicism could then be postulated as a brief but extraordinary period in music's history before it reached its ultimate realization in the romantic stage.⁴⁹

Not only, then, is "Classic" as applied to the music of Mozart and Haydn essentially a romantic notion; in addition, in the loose thinking that fastened the label tightly in place, there is a strong Hellenizing component. As Daniel Hertz has pointed out, a "classic" in common parlance is a model of perfection, and it is also a work of Greek or Roman antiquity.⁵⁰ The balance between form and content so admired in the Classic style found its prime exemplar in Greek sculpture, an art that in its extreme antiquity seems serenely (sublimely?) beyond the reach of time. It is no accident that the poem in which Keats praised his transcendent "ditties of no tone," a poem suffused with those romantic themes of separation and infinite longing, was entitled "Ode on a Grecian Urn."

And with the Hellenic comes the tragic, the perspective that has so penetrated and controlled our ordinary thinking about art and its significance as to become one of the dominant “covert values” of our time. Alienation and the longing for transcendence; disdain for the surface and a valorizing of the depths; a preference for the synoptic or “timeless” over the contingent run of time, for singularity over convention, for unity of figure, style, and affect—all these are values urged by the tragic perspective. They have shaped the pure and timeless vision of “Classicism” that has been forced on the music of the late eighteenth century, holding it in the sheltering shadow of musical romanticism no matter how emancipated it may seem to have grown. The tragic perspective shaped our own formalism and organicism for as long as we approved these values. Now as we begin to rebel against that formalism, that false notion of purity has been transmuted into an equally false notion of rigid, empty, and repressive conventions. The Classic has become a whipping boy against which to pit that pious icon of the tragic perspective, the subversive artist, who must struggle to prove his manhood, his individuality.

One truth I have nearly allowed to disappear from view, however, is that comedy itself has its subversions—not just as political satire, a tiny subset of the genre, but in its use of the mixed mode. The mixed mode challenges purity of style; it carries a certain democracy of viewpoint. Fear of the mixed mode is the fear that the center—whatever it may be for us—will not hold. We saw in chapter 2 that Plato stated unequivocally that the only artist he would admit to the Republic was the “unmixed imitator of the decent.” Not only was Achilles banned from the city, but also that first comic hero, Odysseus, the wily liar—or at least until in the Myth of Er he settled down and learned, against his nature, to mind his own business. One of Odysseus’s epithets in the *Odyssey* is the word *poikilos*, whose root meaning was “many-colored” or “dappled” (as a fawn or leopard): Odysseus was the “many-colored” man. Socrates also calls the regime of democracy in the *Republic* *poikilos*, and it too is a fragile order, “many-colored,” and if not protected by sheer good fortune apt to degenerate into the worst regime, tyranny. Always in the background, however, is the irony that Socrates pursued his inquiries in that most *poikilos* of cities, Athens. So many archetypes of the mixed point of view stress its fragility, its tendency to decompose. Perhaps one reason why strong and confident closure is so important in comedy is that it must contain the mixed mode of gesture that constitutes its beginnings and middles.

One comic work that lacks that closure is the one with which I began my first chapter, Diderot’s *Le Neveu de Rameau*. I have stressed the dialogue’s

praise of variety, of flux, through the image of the polyp, another version of the *poikilos*. But I have not as yet fully exposed its unsettling perspective on the power of the mixed mode—another image of decomposition, in the face of which the character Diderot stands both aghast and admiring. The core of the dialogue, as we know, is a lecture by the Nephew, that brilliantly abject changeling and court jester, on the triumph of opera buffa on the Paris stage. There may be no more vivid expression of the eighteenth-century's celebration of the comic, and of the mixed mode, than the climactic passage from *Le Neveu* already quoted in chapter 1. In this virtuosic episode, the Nephew, a very polyp himself, launches into a manic display, a performance of a performance, affecting all the styles, playing all the parts, working himself into an inspired frenzy. Allow me to recapitulate in closure:

He sang thirty tunes on top of each other and all mixed up: Italian, French, tragic, comic, or all sorts and descriptions, sometimes in a bass voice going down to the infernal regions, and sometimes bursting himself in a falsetto voice he would split the heavens asunder. . . . Here we have a young girl weeping, and he mimes all her simpering ways, there a priest, king, tyrant, threatening, commanding, flying into a rage, or a slave obeying. He relents, wails, complains, laughs, never losing sight of tone, proportion, meaning of words and character of music. . . . With cheeks puffed out and a hoarse, dark, tone he did the horns and bassoons, a bright, nasal tone for the oboes, quickening his voice with incredible agility for the strings . . . he whistled the recorders and cooed the flutes, shouting, singing, and throwing himself about like a mad thing: a one-man show featuring dancers, male and female, singers of both sexes, a whole orchestra, a complete opera-house, dividing himself into twenty stage parts, tearing up and down, stopping, like one possessed, with flashing eyes and foaming mouth. . . . He wept, laughed, sighed, his gaze was tender, soft or furious: a woman swooning with grief, a poor wretch abandoned in the depth of his despair, a temple rising into view, birds falling silent at eventide, waters murmuring in a cool, solitary place or tumbling in torrents down the mountain side, a thunderstorm, a hurricane, the shrieks of the dying mingled with the howling of the tempest and the crash of thunder; night with its shadows, darkness and silence, for even silence itself can be depicted in sound. By now he was quite beside himself. Knocked up with fatigue, like a man coming out of a deep sleep or long trance, he stood there motionless, dazed, astonished, looking about him and trying to recognize his surroundings.⁵¹

In the hands of this imitator, the kaleidoscopic buffa style—the style of styles—suddenly seems morally bankrupt. Lacking a moral self, the Nephew is caught in an infinite regress, finding no position for himself outside the things he imitates with such devilish clarity. One thinks of Don Giovanni and

Leporello expressing exaggerated comic pity at the antics of the fulminating Elvira. Until now we have been tacitly viewing the imitator as a benevolent deity, arranging his Protean representations on the magic-lantern screen for our pleasure and edification. And with good fortune he can be so. In this account, however, he becomes a fractured soul, a lunatic, even a demon, his imitations without ground or order.

Mysteriously left unpublished until 1804, Diderot's dialogue could be said to point a way—a *via negativa*—to the aesthetic conversion that occurred at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Perhaps the escape from the dark side of comedy when the center doesn't hold lies in flight, and then we are left with Hoffmann's "music of indefinite longing" for a lost Arcadia. The nineteenth century transformed the topos—the waltz, for example, the pastoral, the *ranz des vaches*—from its status as a representation among representations into a Proustian artifact that provides a window into a lost past, where women are young again and men are moral. Wrenched from the context of the variegated mimetic discourse shaped by opera buffa, the musical topos becomes a tragic talisman, a signifier of our separation from pastoral innocence and a stimulus to the state of yearning melancholy that offers to lead us back. It is in this light that I have offered in these pages the secular commedia of the late eighteenth century—not the timeless Classic Arcadia imagined by those looking back on it, but a fragile order in which for the briefest of times the center did hold. The astonishing thing is that we were lucky enough to have it at all.

NOTES

I. COMIC FLUX AND COMIC PRECISION

Epigraph: Cited in Roger Lonsdale, ed., *The New Oxford Book of English Verse* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 331.

1. Jacques Barzun, ed., *Pleasures of Music: A Reader's Choice of Great Writing about Music and Musicians from Cellini to Bernard Shaw* (New York: Viking Press, 1951), 424–36; Enrico Fubini, ed., *Music and Culture in Eighteenth-Century Europe: A Source Book*, trans. and ed. Bonnie J. Blackburn (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 104–11; Edward A. Lippman, ed., *Musical Aesthetics: A Historical Reader*, vol. 1, *From Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Pendragon Press, 1986), 367–74.

2. Wye J. Allanbrook, ed., *The Late Eighteenth Century*, vol. 5 of *Strunk's Source Readings in Music History*, ed. Leo Treitler (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997), 188–98.

3. Denis Diderot, *Le Neveu de Rameau*, ed. Henri Coulet, in vol. 12 of *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Herbert Dieckmann et al. (Paris: Hermann, 1989), 169. Subsequent citations refer to this edition. Henceforth all uncredited translations are mine.

4. I am grateful to Dr. Peter Reill of the UCLA history faculty and director of the Center for 17th- and 18th-Century Studies and William Andrews Clark Memorial Library for making me aware of the full significance of the polyp in eighteenth-century thought.

5. Diderot, *Le Neveu de Rameau*, 70.

6. Quoted in P. N. Furbank, *Diderot: A Critical Biography* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992), 243.

7. Not the first Paris performance, it should be noted. The intermezzo had been performed at the Théâtre-Italien in 1746, but in this less significant venue the production passed without the excited notice it aroused in 1752.

8. Some seventeen years later (1770), after an evening at the Comédie-Française, Charles Burney reported, "I perceived that the overtures and act tunes of this theatre,

as of the *Theatre Italien*, were all either German or Italian; the French begin to be ashamed of their own music every where but at the serious opera; and this revolution in their sentiments seems to have been brought about by M. Rousseau's excellent *Lettre sur la Musique Francoise* [sic]." Charles Burney, *The Present State of Music in France and Italy*, 2nd ed. (London: T. Becket, 1773; reprint, New York: AMS Press, 1976), 46.

9. Diderot, *Le Neveu de Rameau*, 160–61. The Nephew goes on to say, "In the old days a *Tancrède*, an *Issé*, a *L'Europe galante*, *Les Indes* and *Castor*, *Les Talents lyriques* would run for four, five, six months. You would never see the end of the performances of a work like *Armide*. Nowadays they all fall down around you one after another, like houses of cards" (161). The "Royal Academy of the Dead End" (*l'Académie royale de cul-de-sac*) under the guidance of its beleaguered factotums François Rebel and François Francoeur, the "Dead-End Kids," was constantly at war with the new music. In the words of the Nephew, "Rebel and Francoeur . . . say that all is lost; that they are ruined; and that if people tolerate that rabble singing at the fair much longer, national music will go to the devil, and the Royal Academy of the Dead End will have nothing to do but shut up shop" (161). The "rabble singing at the fair" refers to the *Théâtres de la Foire*, the troupes of actors who performed at the *Foires St. Germain* and *St. Laurent*, Parisian fairgrounds that became, in 1714, the *Opéra-Comique*, and the venue for popular French musical comedies.

10. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Les Confessions* (1770), ed. Bernard Gagnebin and Marcel Raymond, in *Oeuvres complètes de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, vol. 1 (Paris: Gallimard, 1959), pt. 2, bk. 8, 384.

11. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Essai sur l'origine des langues où il est parlé de la mélodie et de l'imitation musicale* (1753), ed. Jean Starobinski, in *Oeuvres complètes de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, vol. 5., edited by Bernard Gagnebin and Marcel Raymond (Paris: Gallimard, 1995), 375–429.

12. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse* (1760), ed. Henri Coulet and Bernard Guyon, in vol. 2 of *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1961), pt. 1, lettre XLVIII, 131–35.

13. Denis Diderot, *Lettre sur les sourds et muets* (n.p. [Paris], 1751), ed. Marian Hobson and Simon Harvey, in Diderot, *Lettre sur les aveugles à l'usage de ceux qui voient suivie de Lettre sur les sourds et muets à l'usage de ceux qui entendent et qui parlent* (Paris: Flammarion, 2000), passim. On Diderot's justification of the term, see James Doolittle, "Hieroglyph and Emblem in Diderot's *Lettre sur les sourds et muets*," *Diderot Studies II* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1952), 148–67.

14. Diderot, *Le Neveu de Rameau*, 169.

15. *Ibid.*, 169–70.

16. The works of Horace employ the word in both senses. Marine: "Namque sagacius unus odoror, / polypus an gravis hirsutis cubet hircus in alis / quam canis acer ubi lateat sus" (For I am unique in my sharp sense of smell— / whether a polyp or a heavy goat sleeps in your hairy armpits— / sharper than a keen hound where the wild sow lies hidden; *Epode* 12.4–6); Medical: "Uuc praevertamur, amatorem quod amicae / turpia decipiunt caecum vitia, aut etiam ipsa haec delectant, / veluti Balbinum polypus

Hagnae" (And here let us notice that the ugly points of a mistress / escape the blind lover; may even delight him / as Hagne's polyp delights Balbinus"; *Satires*, 1.3.38–40).

17. See Michel de Montaigne, *Apologie de Raymond Sebond* (Paris: Gallimard, 1962), 87: "The chameleon takes on the color of the place where it is stationed; but the polyp gives itself the color that pleases it, according to the circumstances, in order to hide itself from things it fears and to attract what it is stalking. With the chameleon the change is passive, with the polyp active."

18. For the following account I am indebted to Virginia P. Dawson, *Nature's Enigma: The Problem of the Polyp in the Letters of Bonnet, Trembley and Réaumur* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1987).

19. "I imposed on them the name of *Polyps* because their horns seemed to us analogous to the arms of the marine animal who carries that name. M. Trembley adopted it all the more willingly because his careful observations soon led him to discover that these little bodies or freshwater polyps were ravenous, that their horns were true arms with which they were able to catch insects." René-Antoine Ferchault de Réaumur, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire des insectes*, 6 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1734–42), vol. 6 (1742), préface, liv., quoted in Sylvia G. Lenhoff and Howard M. Lenhoff, *Hydra and the Birth of Experimental Biology—1744: Abraham Trembley's Memoirs concerning the natural history of a type of freshwater polyp with arms shaped like horns* (Pacific Grove, CA: Boxwood Press, 1986), 5.

20. Gilles Auguste Bazin, *Lettre d'Eugène à Clarice au sujet des animaux appelés polypes* (Strasbourg: Imprimerie du Roy et de Monsieur le Cardinal de Rohan, 1745), quoted in Dawson, *Nature's Enigma*, 185–86.

21. The freshwater polyp is a member of the phylum of Coelenterates, a group of soft-bodied sea animals that includes the jellyfish. Distinguished by large digestive cavities, or *coela*, the Coelenterates are shaped like cylinders, bells, or umbrellas, and polyps are the cylindrical models of the group—hydras, anemones, and the individual members of coral colonies, which attach themselves to rocks at one end of their hollow cavity and feed themselves with waving tentacles on the other. Coelenterates were considered "insects" in the eighteenth century, the class *Insecta* having "a much wider (and less precise) applicability than is the case in present-day usage." See Aram Vartanian, "Trembley's Polyp, La Mettrie, and Eighteenth-Century French Materialism," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 11 (1950): 267.

22. "Trembley's famous zoophyte came to be the most widely-bruited and convincing clue to the immanence of self-determining powers in matter as such, or of the capacity of Nature to form organic beings by its own inherent laws without the imposition of design from the outside" (*ibid.*, 253). See also Barbara Maria Stafford, *Body Criticism: Imaging the Unseen in Enlightenment Art and Medicine* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 349–50.

23. "If a man does not break up into an infinity of men, at least he breaks up into an infinity of animaliculi whose metamorphoses and future and final organization it is impossible to predict. Who knows if this is not the seed-bed of a second generation of beings, separated from this one by an inconceivable interval of centuries and of successive

developments?" Denis Diderot, *La Rêve d'Alembert*, ed. Jacques Roger (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1965), 80.

24. For example, this piety was echoed in an essay by the Italian opera historian Paolo Gallarati on the sources for Mozart's operas: "After the composition of *Idomeneo* and *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, Mozart had come round to the idea of a new kind of musical theatre oriented towards a representation of life and based on the dynamic force of individual psychology. Italian comic opera . . . had never aspired to an accurate representation of reality, but aimed at presenting a conventionally stylized abstraction of life in the manner of a rationalistic game." Paolo Gallarati, "Mozart and Eighteenth-Century Comedy," in *Opera Buffa in Mozart's Vienna*, ed. Mary Hunter and James Webster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 99.

25. Aristotle, *Physics*, 192b 20–25.

26. Diderot, *Le Neveu de Rameau*, 181.

27. Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1953), 581.

28. Francesco Algarotti, *Saggio sopra l'opera in musica* (1755), trans. anon., 1767, in Allanbrook, ed., *The Late Eighteenth Century*, 187.

29. Charles de Brosses, "Letter to M. de Maleteste," in Fubini, ed., *Music and Culture in Eighteenth-Century Europe*, 207–8.

30. Friedrich Melchior von Grimm, "The Little Prophet of Boehmischbroda" (1753), in Oliver Strunk, ed., *Source Readings in Music History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1950), 630.

31. The Nephew vouches for its ubiquity: "There should be a police order to forbid any one of any quality or condition to have the *Stabat* of Pergolesi sung. That *Stabat*—it should have been burned by the hand of the hangman." Diderot, *Le Neveu de Rameau*, 160.

32. Rousseau, *Lettre sur la musique française*, in Allanbrook, ed., *The Late Eighteenth Century*, 174.

33. Rousseau, "Duo," in *Dictionnaire de musique* (Paris: Veuve Duchesne, 1768; facsimile edition, Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1969).

34. The description of the baron is P. N. Furbank's (see Furbank, *Diderot*, 72).

35. Baron d'Holbach, "Letter to a Lady of a Certain Age, on the Present State of the Opera," trans. Piero Weiss, in Piero Weiss and Richard Taruskin, eds., *Music in the Western World: A History in Documents* (2nd ed., Belmont, CA: Thomson/Schirmer, 2008), 238. Ever the ironist, d'Holbach plays the role of a Ramellian and reports these words as the effervescence of "our modern Enthusiasts." But in that his most natural and eloquent prose is enlisted in the praise of the *bouffons*, there is little doubt that the opinions he expresses were actually his own.

36. De Brosses, "Letter to M. de Maleteste," 207.

37. Burney, *The Present State of Music in France and Italy*, 302–3, 326.

38. Giambattista Mancini, *Riflessioni pratiche sul canto figurato* (3rd ed.; Milan, 1777), in Allanbrook, ed., *The Late Eighteenth Century*, 137.

39. Stefano [Esteban de] Arteaga, *Le rivoluzioni del teatro musicale italiano dalla sua origine fino al presente*, vol. 2 (rev. ed., Bologna, 1787), 184–85. Quoted in Mary Hunter,

"Fusion and Juxtaposition of Genres in Opera Buffa 1770–1800: Anelli and Piccinni's 'Griselda,'" *Music and Letters* 47 (1986): 366.

40. See n. 24 above.

41. "Passion" and "pathos" are derived from parallel Latin and Greek verbs meaning "to be affected by," "to suffer."

42. The Greek words were currency, if not common coin, in eighteenth-century writing about aesthetics. See, for example, Johann Georg Sulzer, *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste*, ed. Johann Gottfried Dyck and Georg Schaz, 4 vols. (Leipzig, 1792; facsimile edition, Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1994), s.v. "Leidenschaftlich." For an illuminating modern discussion of *ēthē* and *pathē*, see Lawrence Berman, *The Musical Image: A Theory of Content* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993), 62–74 and *passim*.

43. Wayne Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 9.

44. For a useful discussion of the term *enargeia*, especially concerning its importance in eighteenth-century art criticism, see Jean H. Hagstrum, *The Sister Arts: The Tradition of Literary Pictorialism and English Poetry from Dryden to Gray* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958; Midway Reprint, 1974), 11–12 and *passim*.

45. For an exposition of the term *energeia* in Aristotle's writings, see the essay "Aristotle, an Introduction," in Jacob Klein, *Lectures and Essays*, ed. Robert B. Williams and Elliott Zuckerman (Annapolis, MD: St. John's College Press, 1985), 171–96. Because the person "at work" is not just potentially himself but actually so, the more accurate synonym for our word "energy" would be *dunamis*, or "potential" (from which "dynamic" is derived; see *ibid.*, 191).

46. Aristotle, *Poetics* 1450a15–22.

47. I first made a study of these characteristic styles or *topoi* in *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart: "Le nozze di Figaro" and "Don Giovanni"* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

48. G. W. F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (1807), trans. as *Phenomenology of Spirit*, by A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 317–18.

49. Although written sometime between 1760 and 1774, *Le Neveu de Rameau* first came to light in a German translation by Goethe in 1805. Some (notably Jean Fabre, in his edition of *Le Neveu* [Geneva: Droz, 1977]) see the work as a series of layers accumulated over more than a decade, others as a complete composition, probably dating from the end of a fourteen-year window. Says Henri Coulet, "We prefer to think that in 1773 or 1774, rather quickly, Diderot wrote in one sitting what would become the one hundred thirty-four pages of his autograph copy, wanting to reawaken the atmosphere of the years from 1759–1762." Coulet, "Introduction to Denis Diderot," in *Le Neveu de Rameau*, ed. Henri Coulet, 33–36.

50. Letter to Sophie Volland, October 15, 1759, quoted in Aram Vartanian, *Diderot and Descartes: A Study of Scientific Naturalism in the Enlightenment* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 256, n. 113.

51. Diderot, *Le Rêve d'Alembert*, 79.

52. Nietzsche on Bizet's music: "It is rich. It is precise. It builds, organizes, finishes: thus it constitutes the opposite of the polyp in music, the 'infinite melody.' Have more painful tragic accents even been heard on the stage? How are they achieved? Without grimaces. Without counterfeit. Without the *lie* of the grand style." Friedrich Nietzsche, "*The Birth of Tragedy*" and "*The Case of Wagner*," trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1967), 157.

53. First lines of ariettes from Egidio Duni's *l'Isle des fous* (1760): "I am a poor wretch . . . O Milord, Milord, let me leave . . . O earth, receive my gold, preserve my treasure . . . My soul, my soul, my life! O earth! . . . There's my little friend, my little friend!" First lines of arias from *La serva padrona*: "To wait and have no one come . . . Think about Zerbina . . . With you it's always strife . . ."

54. Diderot, *Le Neveu de Rameau*, 166–67.

55. Quoted in Ruth Solie, "The Living Work: Organicism and Musical Analysis," *19th-Century Music* 4 (1980): 147–56.

56. Noël Antoine Pluche, *Le Spectacle de la nature*, vol. 7, *Contenant ce qui regarde l'homme en société* (Paris, 1755), translation mine (quoted in Bellamy Hosler, *Changing Aesthetic Views of Instrumental Music in Eighteenth-Century Germany* [Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1981], 8). Hosler points out that Pluche's opinions were "promulgated at some length in Marpurg's *Beyträge*," which confirms their currency in this period.

57. Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Hamburg Dramaturgy*, trans. Helen Zimmern (New York: Dover Publications, 1962), 75. I have substituted "specify" for "define" (*bestimmen*) and "disorderly feelings" for "undefined sensations" (*unordentliche Empfindungen*). To make the sense clearer, I added a comma after "feel" and the adversative "yet."

58. See Hosler, *Changing Aesthetic Views of Instrumental Music*, 1.

59. The Hamburg publisher Georg Jacob Decker had sent Bach a collection of Italian songs, probably the work of Carl Heinrich Graun. In this thank-you note Bach remarks that because these songs are tasteful compositions, there is no longer any market for them. Stephen L. Clark, trans. and ed., *The Letters of C.P.E. Bach* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 68.

60. Johann Adam Hiller, *Wöchentlichen Nachrichten und Anmerkungen, die Musik betreffend* (Leipzig, 1766–70), 3: 107.

61. *Ibid.*, 2: 14.

62. Quoted in Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht, "Der Begriff des Komischen in der Musikaesthetik des 18. Jahrhunderts," *Musikforschung* 4 (1951): 149. See also Gretchen Wheelock, *Haydn's Ingenious Jestings with Art* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1992), 47. Similar complaints were made in Vienna, Hanswurst's home turf, particularly by Joseph von Sonnenfels; see his *Briefe über die wienerische Schaubühne* (1768) (Vienna: Carl Konegen, 1884).

63. About the nickname James Webster states, "No. 59 was called in some eighteenth-century sources 'Feuer-Symphonie,' apparently in the belief—which remains conjectural—that it accompanied a play titled 'Die Feuersbrunst.'" *Haydn's "Farewell" Symphony and the Idea of Classical Style* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 232.

64. The nature of the shift has been much discussed in recent literature. See, for example, Carl Dahlhaus, *The Idea of Absolute Music*, trans. Roger Lustig (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), *passim*; Hosler, *Changing Aesthetic Views of Instrumental Music*; Joseph Kerman, "How We Got into Analysis, and How to Get Out," in *Write All These Down* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 12–32; John Neubauer, *The Emancipation of Music from Language: Departure from Mimesis in Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986); Charles Rosen, *The Romantic Generation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 68–78; Leo Treitler, "'To Worship That Celestial Sound': Motives for Analysis," in *Music and the Historical Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 46–66; Mark Evan Bonds, "Idealism and the Aesthetics of Instrumental Music at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 50 (1997): 387–420; Sanna Pederson, "Defining the Term 'Absolute Music' Historically," *Music and Letters* 90 (2009): 240–62.

65. Dahlhaus, *The Idea of Absolute Music*, 2; E. T. A. Hoffmann, "Beethoven's Instrumental Music," in David Charlton, ed., *E. T. A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings*, trans. Martyn Clark (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 96.

66. Hoffmann, "Beethoven's Instrumental Music," 97.

67. *Ibid.*, 96.

68. Keats, "Ode on a Grecian Urn" (written May 1819, first published 1820), lines 11–14.

69. Cf. Thomas Morley, *A Plain & Easy Introduction to Practical Music*, ed. Alec Harman (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973), 296: "The most principal and chiefest kind of music which is made without a ditty is the Fantasy."

70. Hoffmann, "Beethoven's Instrumental Music," 96.

71. Kevin Barry is one commentator who would like to push the development of the notion of music as an empty sign back to the mid-eighteenth century, where he sees it as already working a "complex subversion of a representational theory." *Language, Music, and the Sign: A Study in Aesthetics, Poetics, and Poetic Practice from Collins to Coleridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 2.

72. See Janet M. Levy, "Covert and Casual Values in Recent Writings about Music," *Journal of Musicology* 5 (1987): 3–27. As Levy points out in this valuable article, "Many, if not most, of the covert value judgments in musicological writings are legacies of nineteenth-century thought, passed along in a kind of underground whose pathways have been utilized freely in what seems to be a quasi-automatic and unquestioned way" (3–4).

73. See chapter 2 for further discussion of the misleading assumptions behind the treatment of the *Nachahmungslehre* in twentieth-century scholarship.

74. For a discussion of this phenomenon, see George Buelow, "Rhetoric I, 2–4," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 2001).

75. I should mention two considerable exceptions: Daniel Heartz and James Webster. Heartz raised the question of the unquestioned periodization of eighteenth-

century music into baroque and Classical with particular clarity in two publications in the late 1960s. See Daniel Heartz, "Approaching a History of 18th-Century Music," *Current Musicology* 9 (1960): 92–95; and a paper given on a panel entitled "Critical Years in European Musical History, 1740–1760," in *Report of the Tenth Congress of the IMS, Ljubljana 1967* (Basel: Bärenreiter Kassel, 1970), 160–68. In the latter paper Heartz took issue with the dates named in the title of the panel, pointing out that this title assumes that "the two decades between 1740 and 1760 witnessed the change from the so-called 'baroque' period to the so-called 'classical' period." He lists "five events that did *not* happen between 1740 and 1760," all of which suggest that we must look for the origins of "modern" musical style at least twenty years earlier, in the Neapolitan opera composers of the 1720s and 1730s. "The terms which musicology has attached to the pre- and post-1750 'eras' are as misleading as the periodization itself. They derive from art-historical concepts of fifty years ago that are either wrong, imperfectly understood, or hopelessly outdated" (Heartz, "Approaching a History of 18th-Century Music," 93). James Webster also takes on the designation in connection with his discussion of Haydn's stylistic development and comes up with a new label that raises its own problems—"First Viennese Modern Style" (Haydn's "Farewell" *Symphony*, 335–73; "Between Enlightenment and Romanticism in Music History: 'First Viennese Modernism' and the Delayed Nineteenth Century," *19th-Century Music* 25 [2001–02]: 108–26). See also Webster's keynote article in the maiden issue of the journal *Eighteenth-Century Music*, "The Eighteenth Century as a Music-Historical Period?" *Eighteenth-Century Music* 1 (2004): 47–60. I will have more to say on this subject in chapter 4.

76. Charles Rosen, *The Classical Style: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven* (New York: Norton, 1971), 235.

77. George Steiner, *Antigones: How the Antigone Legend Has Endured in Western Literature, Art, and Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 2–3.

78. Richard Janko, *Aristotle's Poetics* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987).

79. He also refers to it as a comedy within the work itself, in Canto XXI of the *Inferno*: "Cosi di ponte in ponte altro parlando, / che la mia comedia cantar non cura / venimmo; e tenavamo 'l colmo" (Thus from bridge to bridge, speaking other things, of which my comedy does not care to sing, we came along).

80. Dante Alighieri, *Letter to Can Grande della Scala*, trans. Robert S. Haller, in David H. Richter, ed., *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), 121.

81. A sentence omitted in this passage states, "And for this reason some writers have the custom of saying in their salutations, by way of greeting, 'a tragic beginning and a comic ending to you.'"

82. Dante, *Inferno* Canto 20, 133.

83. "Interdum tamen et vocem Comoedia tollit, / iratusque Chremes tumido deligit ore; / et tragicus plerumque dolet sermone pedestri" (Yet sometimes even comedy elevates its voice, and angry Chremes rages in swelling tones; and in tragedy Telephus and Peleus often lament in prosaic speeches; *Ars poetica*, 1.93–95); cited in Erich

Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. Willard Trask (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1953), 186–87.

84. Auerbach, *Mimesis*, 189; C.S. Lewis, *The Discarded Image: An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 10.

85. For contemporaneous descriptions of the gigue, see Allanbrook, *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart*, 40–43.

86. Although the novel was published in 1813, no one would argue that it had a great deal in common with the romantic beginnings of the nineteenth century.

87. “O mistress mine, where are you roaming? / O, stay and hear, your true love’s coming, / That can sing both high and low. / Trip no further, pretty sweeting; / Journeys end with lovers meeting, / Every wise man’s son doth know.” Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, II, iii, 40–45.

“All comedies are ended by a marriage.” Lord Byron, *Don Juan* (Harmondsworth: Penguin), Canto III, l.66.

88. Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957), 163–86.

89. Da Ponte has already brought the convention of the comic *lieto fine* to our attention earlier in the opera, in the second-act finale, when he has Figaro with feigned indifference to the sputtering count suggest to his co-conspirators: “Per finirla lietamente / E all’usanza teatrale, Un’azione matrimoniale / Le faremo ora seguir” (To finish [the farce] happily, and according to theatrical usage, let’s perform for them now a matrimonial tableau). Figaro makes this statement with formal emphasis, supported by a pair of proleptic horns—they depict the ceremony as already in progress. The spectators’ pleasure at this sally functions on two levels: delight in Figaro’s cleverness in stage-managing ruses to confound the Count and a more reflective amusement at remembering that the comedy they are watching is a fiction, a game with its own rules, to which music lends its own sort of corroboration.

90. For a discussion of the § pastoral as an idealized dance of the shepherds, see Allanbrook, *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart*, 43–44.

91. Emblematic of Susanna’s reticence is her one real “aria,” “Deh, vieni,” an imitation of virtual singing, embodied in a trick (see *ibid.*, 174–77).

92. For a discussion of the † gavotte, the special dynamics of its rhythmic pattern, and its pastoral connotations, see *ibid.*, 49–52.

93. These, for example, are the symphonies by Haydn and Mozart with gigue-like finales, and a long list it is:

Haydn: “A” (Hob. I/107), 8 (“Le Soir”; the movement is subtitled *La Tempesta*), 14, 16, 22, 23, 28, 41, 60, 61, 65, 73 (both symphony and movement subtitled “La Chasse”), 74, 83, 98, 100.

Mozart (Breitkopf & Härtel numbers): 4, 5, 6, 8, 10 (coda only), 13, 16, 17, 20, 22, 24, 26, 27, 29, 33 (Allegro assai: main theme in 24 with triplets), 34.

The use of giges, contredanses, and fast (♩) minuets for symphonic and other instrumental finales was overdetermined, to be sure, by their conventional use as a

Kehraus (“sweeping out” or go-home signal), the name given to (among other things) the last dance at a Viennese ball. According to the 1811 edition of Johann Christoph Adelung, *Grammatisch-kritisches Wörterbuch der Hochdeutschen Mundart . . . mit D. W. Soltau’s Beyträgen, revidirt und berichtet von Franz Xaver Schönberger* (Vienna: B. Ph. Bauer, 1811), “Der Kehrab, oder Kehraus, plur. car. von der ersten Hauptbedeutung des Zeitwortes kehren, ein langer und geschwinder Tanz, mit welchem eine Tanzlust gemeinlich beschlossen wird; weil der Tanzplatz durch die langen Kleider des andern Geschlechtes alsdann gleichsam ausgekehret wird” (II, col. 1533–34). But that, too, is in its way a *lieto fine*. (Thanks to Bruce Alan Brown for locating Adelung’s definition.)

2. COMIC VOICE IN THE LATE MIMETIC PERIOD

Epigraphs: Aristotle, *De anima* 420b6; “Alles muss gehörig singen,” Johann Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* (1739), facsimile edition by Margarete Reimann (Kassel und Basel: Bärenreiter, 1954), I, i, 6.

1. See, for example, Johann Adam Hiller’s satirical critique of his predecessors’ omission with classification, quoted in Allanbrook, *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart*, 28.

2. Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*; John Neubauer, *The Emancipation of Music from Language*, 8.

3. Prominent among the earliest writers were Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder, whose brief life ended in 1798; Ludwig Tieck, a contemporary and friend of Wackenroder’s, who lived well into the nineteenth century; and E. T. A. Hoffmann, who was twenty-four in 1800 and published his famous review of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony ten years later. For Chua’s account of these early romantic writers, see Daniel Chua, *Absolute Music and the Construction of Meaning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 6.

4. Anonymous remark in an article in *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* (1801), quoted in Carl Dahlhaus, *Esthetics of Music*, trans. William Austin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 27.

5. Wackenroder, “Das eigenthümliche innere Wesen der Tonkunst und die Seelenlehre der heutigen Instrumentalmusik,” in *Phantasien*, quoted in David Charlton, *E. T. A. Hoffmann’s Musical Writings*, 13. I have chosen these two citations virtually at random from the vast number of passages I could cite to make this point.

6. Concerning Friedrich Schlegel’s identification of instrumental music with philosophy, see Bonds, “Idealism and the Aesthetics of Instrumental Music at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century,” 406. In “Beethoven, E. T. A. Hoffmann, and the Idea of Musical Truth,” a paper given at the AMS Houston, November 2003, later incorporated into the third chapter of his *Music as Thought: Listening to the Symphony in the Age of Beethoven* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), Bonds explicated this identification by suggesting that since philosophy is about the infinite, which is graspable only negatively, art is the only path to the perception of the infinite.

7. In his well-known essay “Beethoven’s Instrumental Music,” in Charlton, ed., *E.T.A. Hoffmann’s Musical Writings*, 98–100.

8. The chief culprit in this change of perspective was Ferdinand Gelbcke (1812–92), who argued, in a famous essay of 1841, published in Robert Schumann's *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* and titled "Classisch und Romantisch: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichtsschreibung der Musik unserer Zeti," that the music of the late eighteenth century, like all classical art, was "object-centered, contemplative rather than expressive," and maintained a balance "between the art which shapes it and the material that is to be shaped." For excerpts see Peter le Huray and James Day, eds., *Music and Aesthetics in the Eighteenth and Early-Nineteenth Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 524–29. On the evolution of the idea of "classical style" in the nineteenth century, see Webster, *Haydn's "Farewell" Symphony*, 349–56.

9. Consider, for example, the enthusiasms of one distinguished German musicologist: "The musical particularity of Classic music is linked with its essentially instrumental character: not only does instrumental music—symphony and concerto, chamber and keyboard music—make up the greater part of musical production, but also Viennese compositions in general are instrumentally conceived. And the individuality, the particularity, the palpability of the music conceived of as the Viennese Classic style is the spiritedness of its instrumental manner, its individuality. . . : it is always incomparable in itself—and so is also its purity as music, its essentially musical independence, its autonomy: it is always completely of itself alone. The two elements, the purity and the spiritedness of Classic music, are mutually dependent, and appear compositionally as the perfect union of content and form, of meaning and sensual shape." Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht, *Versuch über die Wiener Klassik: Die Tanzszene in Mozarts "Don Giovanni," Beihefte zum Archiv für Musikwissenschaft*, vol. 12 (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1972), 1.

10. Bellamy Hosler, in *Changing Aesthetic Views of Instrumental Music*, cannot suppress a certain hostility to "neo-classic rationalism," which makes it difficult for her to grant much plenitude or richness to the art of mimesis. In his excellent book on the relation of language and music in this transitional period, *The Emancipation of Music from Language*, John Neubauer prejudges the case by calling his tale an "emancipation." See below, n. 12, for Leo Treitler's brief for the priority of instrumental music in Mozart's operas.

11. Quoted in Gernot Gruber, *Mozart and Posterity*, trans. R. S. Furness (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1994), 52.

12. Leo Treitler, "Mozart and the Idea of Absolute Music," in *Music and the Historical Imagination*, 183, 212. Treitler is by no means alone in this. Stefan Kunze considers the orchestra the primary carrier of meaning in Mozart's operas: "In the operas of Mozart the vocal parts signify the personal embodiment of what the orchestra expresses." Kunze, s.v. "Vokalmusik," in *Riemann Musiklexikon*, 12 Auflage, Sachteil Mainz 1967, Sp. 1052a, quoted in Eggebrecht, *Versuch über die Wiener Klassik*, 1, n. 2. Peter Kivy praises Mozart's opere buffe for dissolving the dramatic into pure musical form: the buffa ensemble is a "sinfonia concertante for voices and orchestra." *Ossin's Rage* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 235–36.

13. An attitude epitomized by Fontenelle's famous remark, "Sonate, que me voulez-tu?" (immortalized by Rousseau in his *Dictionnaire*, s.v. "Sonate"), which suggests the hauteur of the aristocrat addressing the arriviste.

14. Neal Zaslaw, *Mozart's Symphonies: Context, Performance Practice, Reception* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 510–25.

15. Charles Burney, discussing the style of the keyboard sonatas of Johann Schobert, casually equates symphony and overture: “The novelty and merit of Schobert’s compositions seems to consist in the introduction of the symphonic, or modern overture style, upon the harpsichord.” Charles Burney, *A General History of Music from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period* (1789), ed. Frank Mercer (New York: Dover Publications, 1957), II: 957. “The overture and the symphony,” states the pedagogue Heinrich Christoph Koch in his 1793 composition manual, “belong to the opening pieces that are used for the introduction to a play or a concert.” Koch, *Versuch einer Anleitung zur Composition*, 3 vols. (1782; 1787; 1793) (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1969), 3: 292. In the article “Instrumentalmusik” from his 1802 *Musikalisches Lexikon*, Koch still does not imagine a role for the symphony apart from its introductory function.

16. It is telling that Koch classes the concerto with pieces that are content-filled, affective (“can take on every character that music is capable of expressing”) as opposed to those that serve a specific occasional function, like the annunciatory symphony (Koch, *Versuch*, 3: 327–32).

17. The Symphony in D Major, K. 111a (1771), for example, was derived from the overture to *Ascanio in Alba*, the Symphony in D Major, K. 207a (1775), from *La finta giardiniera*, and the Symphony in C Major, K. 213c (1775), from *Il re pastore*.

18. See Zaslaw, *Mozart's Symphonies*, 520.

19. Zaslaw lists several venues for which Mozart was planning concerts when he was writing the last three symphonies (very quickly, over the summer of 1788). Unfortunately, we do not know if these particular concerts ever took place, and if so, what their programs were (*ibid.*, 421–31).

20. Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, I, x, 65; II, xii, 8.

21. For example, the statements by Pluche, Lessing, and others quoted in chapter 1 imply the same fervent preference for the voice.

22. Rousseau, *Dictionnaire de musique*, s.v. “Unité de mélodie.”

23. Rousseau, *Dictionnaire de musique*, s.v. “Sonate.”

24. Sulzer [Johann Abraham Peter Schulz], *Allgemeine Theorie*, s.v. “Singen.”

25. Johann Georg Sulzer, *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste* (Leipzig: Weidmann, 1792; facsimile edition, Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1967). Sulzer assigned the articles on music to Johann Philipp Kirnberger, a Berlin music pedagogue and briefly a pupil of J.S. Bach. Kirnberger was the sole author of the technical information in the articles from the start of the alphabet through “Modulation,” at which point, in ill health, he enlisted the aid of his student Johann Abraham Peter Schulz, a conductor and composer. Schulz collaborated with Kirnberger until the letter S, when Kirnberger gave him full responsibility. See Thomas Christensen’s essay on Sulzer in Nancy Kovaleff Baker and Thomas Christensen, eds. and trans., *Aesthetics and the Art of Musical Composition in the German Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 3–24. Although many recent commentators, including Christensen, have wanted to uncover Sulzer’s hand in some of Schulz’s articles on music (particularly in “Sonata” and “Sym-

phonie”), Matthew Riley has established that the ailing Sulzer had little influence on the project. “Civilizing the Savage: Johann Georg Sulzer and the ‘Aesthetic Force’ of Music,” *Journal of the Royal Music Association* 127 (2002): 2 and n. 5.

26. “[Instrumental music is] music whose singing consists merely of inarticulate tones and which uses no words to make comprehensible what it is expressing. It is thus opposed to vocal music, which sings comprehensible words. All music is grounded in the power that already lies in inarticulate tones to express various passions. And if the language of the feelings could not be spoken without words, no music would be possible. Thus it appears that instrumental music is of the essence in this fine art. In fact one can entirely dispense with vocal music in dances, festive processions, and military marches, because instruments alone are sufficient to arouse and support necessary feelings on such occasions. But where the objects of feelings must themselves be portrayed or made recognizable, then music stands in need of speech.” Sulzer, *Allgemeine Theorie*, s.v. “Instrumentalmusik.” I quote at length because my translation differs substantially from that of Thomas Christensen, especially in the fifth sentence, which Christensen translates, “It seems, then, that instrumental music is the most important of the fine arts in this regard” (Es scheint also, daß die Instrumentalmusik bei dieser schönen Kunst die Hauptsache sey). To translate it thus is to overstate Sulzer’s estimate of instrumental music’s powers: its capacity for expression, although limited, is essential to the fine art of music, but it is by no means the most important of the fine arts in any regard. The error should not be further perpetuated in English texts. See Christensen, *Aesthetics and the Art of Musical Composition*, 95; the translation is quoted without comment by Nancy Baker later in the volume, p. 118.

27. Vincenzo Manfredini, *Difesa della musica moderna, e de’ suoi celebri esecutori*, (Bologna: 1788), in Allanbrook, ed., *The Late Eighteenth Century*, 202. Manfredini’s *Difesa* is a commentary on Arteaga’s commentary on Manfredini’s review of the first volume of Arteaga’s *Le rivoluzioni del teatro musicale* (Bologna 1783).

28. Koch, *Musikalisches Lexikon* (Frankfurt: August Hermann dem Jüngern, 1802), s.v. “Sonate.”

29. *Ibid.*, s.v. “Instrumentalmusik.”

30. Christian Gottfried Krause, *Von der Musikalischen Poesie* (Berlin: J. F. Vosz, 1753), 41.

31. Charlton, ed., *E. T. A. Hoffmann’s Musical Writings*, 98.

32. Rousseau, *Essai sur l’origine des langues*, 118. Melody’s dominance is made possible by Rousseau’s principle (see n. 22) of the “unity of melody.” Rousseau refers here not to the motivic organization of a melody but to the relation of the leading voice to the full texture of the piece. Hence the phrase might be better translated for modern readers as the “singleness” of melody: it stipulates that “two melodies should never be heard at one time.” The harmony should only support the melody and confirm its mode; any independence in the lower parts—as, say, a contrapuntal elaboration—compromises the force of the cantilena.

33. Sulzer, *Allgemeine Theorie* [Kirnberger], s.v. “Gesang.” Contrast Christensen, *Aesthetics and the Art of Musical Composition*, 94: “Even a basic instrumental melody

can be considered a song. From this, we see that words, song, and melody are most often of equal importance.” Rousseau uses the verb *réciter* to describe the solo instrument’s activity in an untexted composition (Rousseau, *Dictionnaire*, s.v. “Sonate”).

34. Francesco Galeazzi, *Elementi teorico-pratici di musica* (1796), in Allanbrook, ed., *The Late Eighteenth Century*, 86.

35. The words “voice” or “song” have appeared in the titles of three books by prominent figures in the post–Kerman “new musicology,” all of which can be viewed as contributing to this argument: Carolyn Abbate, *Unsung Voices* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991); Lydia Goehr, *The Quest for Voice: Music, Politics, and the Limits of Philosophy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Gary Tomlinson, *Metaphysical Song: An Essay on Opera* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999).

36. “Voice-object” is a term coined by Abbate (*Unsung Voices*, 10).

37. Tomlinson, *Metaphysical Song*, 85.

38. *Ibid.*, 64, 66. A little later Tomlinson makes the content of these eighteenth-century antecedents more explicit: “The conception of music that took shape from the mid-eighteenth century on, that marked its high water in the Wagnerian age, and that we still live with in modified form today evolved together with the emergence of Kantian subjectivity” (*ibid.*, 84).

39. Johann Adam Hiller, *Treatise on Vocal Performance and Ornamentation* (1780), trans. Suzanne J. Beicken (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 99.

40. Burney, *The Present State of Music in France and Italy*, 108–10. Like Rousseau in the *Dictionnaire* article “Unité de mélodie,” Burney wants simplicity in his accompaniments: “All the jargon of different parts, of laboured contrivance, and difficult execution, is little better than an ugly mask upon a beautiful face; even harmony itself, upon such occasions is an evil, when it becomes a sovereign instead of a subject” (109).

41. The burden of Lydia Goehr’s densely argued book is to reconnect formalism—music as carrier of the empty sign—to the human and the body, in a move that grants the cake and the eating of it as well. The function of music is that of “expressing or voicing the inexpressible through performance” (Goehr, *The Quest for Voice*, 4).

42. The full translation is “‘Love that discourses to me in my mind’ he began to sing so sweetly that the sweetness still sounds within me” (Dante, *Purgatorio*, Canto 2, 112–14).

43. “I say ‘Love who discourseth to me in my mind.’ By ‘love’ I mean the devotion which I applied to gain the love of this lady [Philosophy]. . . . For . . . philosophy comes into existence when the soul and wisdom are made friends, so that each is wholly loved by the other.” William Walrond Jackson, trans., *Dante’s Convito*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), 168–69.

44. Tomlinson, *Metaphysical Song*, 17. Or see Daniel Chua: “Music was a hidden signature, embedded in the world through a system of resemblances where it could articulate the diversity of the cosmos within the unity of the octave; it was the *discordia concors* of the world.” Chua, *Absolute Music and the Construction of Meaning*, 24.

45. Tomlinson, *Metaphysical Song*, 54.

46. *Ibid.*, 23, 84, 47.

47. *Ibid.*, 62.

48. Both Richard Taruskin and Downing Thomas have taken Tomlinson to task for the rigidity with which he treats the Foucauldian shifts. See Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically: Historical and Hermeneutical Essays* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), xx–xxxii; and Thomas, *Aesthetics of Opera in the Ancien Régime, 1647–1785* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 179–87.

49. This end point coincides, not incidentally, with the putative invention of music aesthetics, which rests on the notion of *ars gratia artis*, or “art in a void.” The term itself was coined by Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten in his *Aesthetica* (1750), but numerous scholars have pointed out the antecedents of a true aesthetics in earlier periods. See Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Studies in Renaissance Thought and Letters*, vol. 3 (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1993), 599 ff.

50. Stephen Halliwell, *The Aesthetics of Mimesis: Ancient Texts and Modern Problems* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 5–6, 236–37. I have found in Halliwell’s book a thoughtful confirmation of my own developing efforts to create an account of the long history of musical mimesis.

51. Plato, *Republic* 397a. Note that the “mimetic man” is also a “demotic man,” who makes his chaotic imitations before *hoi polloi* (the many).

52. Diderot, *Le Neveu de Rameau*.

53. Plato, *Republic* 397d.

54. Francesco Geminiani, *The Art of Playing on the Violin* (London, 1751), 1. Dourly true to his word, Geminiani, even when he was handed a program to set (*The Incharnted Forrest*, a staged pantomime commissioned by the renowned theater architect Servandoni and presented at the Tuileries in 1754), outfitted it with “absolute music,” a chain of concerti grossi that made little or no reference to the events on stage.

55. M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), 9.

56. The Greek term *eidos*, usually translated as “form,” preserves in its etymology a much more down-to-earth meaning. Its root is in the verb “to see”; it could be translated as “the looks of a thing.” If one retains this meaning in considering the entities known portentously in English as the Platonic “forms” or “ideas,” they seem considerably less abstract. See *The Republic of Plato*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1968), 446.

57. *Lexis* literally means “speech” and is related to *logos*. *Diēgēsis* (“narrative”) is from a verb meaning essentially “lead through.” The discussion of mimesis is found in Plato, *Republic* 392c–394d.

58. *Ibid.*, 396e.

59. *Ibid.*, 600e.

60. Aristotle, *Poetics* 1448b5–19. Some commentators perceive this section of the *Poetics* as a critique of Book X of the *Republic*. See, for example, Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 1: 238, n. 8.

61. The mirror is, of course, the familiar metaphor for the work of imitative artists in M. H. Abrams's classic account of the evolution of the romantic theory of art in *The Mirror and the Lamp*.

62. Aristotle, *Poetics* 1448a1 (*prattontas*—a form of the present participle of the verb *prattō*, “to do”).

63. *Ibid.*, 1447a22.

64. Plato, *Republic* 401d (emphasis mine).

65. *Ibid.*, 595c–598d.

66. Aristotle, *Politics*, Book VIII, ch. 5, trans. T. A. Sinclair (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962), 309.

67. Halliwell, *The Aesthetics of Mimesis*, 239.

68. Aristotle, *Politics* 1340a18–1340b19.

69. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1125a12–16.

70. See Hosler, *Changing Aesthetic Views of Instrumental Music*, 260–79; Edward Lippman, *A History of Western Musical Aesthetics* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 83–136; Lawrence Lipking, *The Ordering of the Arts in Eighteenth-Century England* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972), 218–24.

71. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, 13–14, 91–92, 94.

72. Michel-Paul-Guy de Chabanon, *De la musique considérée en elle-même et dans ses rapports avec la parole*, 2nd rev. ed. (Paris: Pissot, 1785).

73. See also my remarks to this effect in *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart*, 1–9 (“Expression, Imitation, and the Musical Topos”).

74. Plato, *Laws* 669d–e. *Aulos* is often misleadingly translated as “flute,” despite the fact that it was a reed instrument.

75. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1341a25.

76. See Hosler, *Changing Aesthetic Views of Instrumental Music*, 1; and Halliwell, *The Aesthetics of Mimesis*, 251.

77. “Omnis enim motus animi suum quemdam a natura habet vultum et sonum et gestum; totumque corpus hominis et eius omnis vultus omnesque voces, ut nervi in fidibus, ita sonant ut a motu animi quoque sunt pulsae” (Cicero, *De oratore*, III, lvii, 216).

78. For other quotations of the passage, see Charles Batteux, *The Fine Arts Reduced to a Single Principle* (Paris, 1747), trans. Edward A. Lippman, in Lippman, ed., *Musical Aesthetics*, 266; Daniel Webb, *Observations on the Correspondence between Poetry and Music* (London, 1769), in Lippman, ed., *Musical Aesthetics*, 202; Johann Nikolaus Forkel, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik* (Leipzig, 1788), in Allanbrook, ed., *The Late Eighteenth Century*, 282, n. 5 (the source of Forkel's remark). Bellamy Hosler points out Jean-Baptiste Dubos's paraphrase of Cicero's first sentence in *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et sur la peinture* (Paris, 1719), 459, and Sulzer's in *Allgemeine Theorie*, s.v. “Ausdruck in der Musik” (see Hosler, *Changing Aesthetic Views of Instrumental Music*, 63 and n. 43, and 153 and n. 44).

79. Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, III. *Paradiso*, trans. John D Sinclair (London: John Lane, 1946), Canto 14, 97–129; Canto 15, 1–6.

80. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 987b11–12.

81. Quoted in Weiss and Taruskin, ed., *Music in the Western World*, 114.

82. Gioseffo Zarlino, *On the Modes, Part Four of "Le Istitutioni Harmoniche,"* 1558, trans. Vered Cohen (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983), 94. Horace, *Ars poetica* 89: "To set forth a comic theme in tragic verse does not suit."

83. Descartes was by no means the first seventeenth-century writer to study the mechanisms of the passions. It had been the occupation of many during the first half of the century, for example, Thomas Wright in *The Passions of the Minde* (1602). My discussion of the passions in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries has benefited from Joseph Roach's excellent study of the passions in acting in the same period, *The Player's Passion* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1985).

84. René Descartes, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, 2 vols., trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), I: 348.

85. For a neutral adjective meaning "concerning the passions" I have turned to the rather rare usage "passional," since the common formation "passionate" is now entirely given over to the meaning of "hot-blooded" or "fervent."

86. See the elegant edition of the original 1698 text and Le Brun's illustrations with critical essays by Jennifer Montagu, *The Expression of the Passions: The Origin and Influence of Charles Le Brun's "Conférence sur l'expression générale et particulière"* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994).

87. See especially Buelow, "Rhetoric I, 2–4," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. Johann Mattheson speaks rather wistfully of one such compendium, seen by him in manuscript and intended for publication, which had unfortunately not yet seen the light of day. The work, by one Georg Abraham Thilo, was entitled *Specimen Pathologiae Musicae* (which Mattheson translates as "an essay on how one could stimulate the affections through sound"). The first chapter dealt with "the bases of the affections and general reflections on them," the second with "the passions in particular and their expression through music," with specific musical examples. This much-desired compendium was to have been published in Lorenz Christoph Mizler von Kolof's Leipzig *Musikalische Bibliothek*.

88. Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, I, iii, 54, 53.

89. For the passage on music's healing powers, see *ibid.*, I, iii, 1–48; for the passage on affect, see I, iii, 49.

90. *Ibid.*, I, iii, 89. As usual Mattheson uses three phrases where one would do: empty of the moral projections of human feelings, these compositions will also be "according to the statement of Horace, *nugae canorae* (sonorous trifles) . . .; in good French, *des niaiseries harmonieuses*, which I do not venture to translate, though I understand it well."

91. *Leidenschafften* (6), *Affecte* (4), *Gemüther* (3), *Gemüths-Bewegungen* (3), *Gemüths-Beschaffenheit* (1), *Neigungen* (2), *Gemüths-Neigungen* (3), *Empfindungen* (2), *Passionen* (1), *Temperamente* (1). The standard English translation uses only five different words, and without any attempt to reflect the particularities of Mattheson's usage.

92. Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, I, iii, 83; II, iv, 43.
93. *Ibid.*, II, xii, 4.
94. *Ibid.*, II, xii, 420. Johann Adolf Scheibe had said something very like this about the fire of instrumental music in his periodical *Der critische Musicus* (1737–40); see Hosler, *Changing Aesthetic Views of Instrumental Music*, 58.
95. Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, II, xii, 32.
96. For the *passepied*, see *ibid.*, II, xiii, 113; for the *sarabande*, II, xiii, 118.
97. Modern translations of this literature tend to translate *Empfindungen* as “sentiments.” Not only is this term too close to “sentimental” for my comfort; it also suggests a response that has undergone a process of mental formulation, whereas the important quality of *Empfindungen* is that they are below the verbal threshold. What is important is the sensitivity of the faculty that has caused impressions, weak or strong, pleasant or unpleasant, of external objects, and not the formulation of an articulate opinion. This translation is complicated by the fact that *Empfindungen* seem to be a series of *Gefühle* (also usually translated as “feelings”) that motivate a moral feeling or action, and a *Leidenschaft*, the “tree” to *Empfindung*’s “root,” is a strongly held *Empfindung* (Koch, *Musikalisches Lexikon*, s.v. “Empfindung”). But in the same paragraph Koch couples *Empfindungen* and *Leidenschaften*, the expression of which is “the true goal of music.” The vocabulary for the feelings in this period is as fluid as the feelings themselves.
98. The one possible English synonym that I avoid is “emotion,” which for modern readers tends to suggest private, idiosyncratic feelings rather than the common, codifiable versions that are the province of eighteenth-century poetics.
99. Koch, *Musikalisches Lexikon*, s.v. “Ausdruck.”
100. *Ibid.* The quotation is taken from Sulzer, *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste*, s.v. “Ausdruck.”
101. Although *Erhaben* is the German equivalent for “sublime,” I have chosen to translate it here with the less specialized “exalted.” A similar description of the *Erhaben* can be found in Johann Jakob Engel’s essay “Über die musikalische Malerey”: “Representations of the elevated [*Erhaben*] have a very weighty content, so their movement is slow.” Johann Jakob Engel, “Über die musikalische Malerey” (Berlin, 1780), in Allanbrook, ed., *The Late Eighteenth Century*, 224. The affects in Koch’s list form a continuum in which all the *descripta* are related by matters of degree. The sublime of Burke and Kant would have to be dramatically disjunct—off the charts, as it were. See chapter 4 of this volume for a discussion of the sublime in this style.
102. Koch, *Musikalisches Lexikon*, “Leidenschaft, Affect.” Koch’s list is an expansion of a merely suggestive one by Engel, whose essay Koch knew well. See Engel, “Über die musikalische Malerey,” in Allanbrook, *The Late Eighteenth Century*, 224.
103. Lorenzo Bianconi, *Music in the Seventeenth Century*, trans. David Bryant (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 204.
104. See chapter 1.
105. See n. 101 for Koch’s and Engel’s specifications of the *Erhaben*.
106. Halliwell, *The Aesthetics of Mimesis*, 13.

107. James Beattie, *Essay on Poetry and Music as They Affect the Mind* (London, 1776), in Lippman, ed., *Musical Aesthetics*, 218.

108. *Ibid.*, 220.

109. *Ibid.*, 223.

110. *Ibid.*, 231.

111. André Morellet, *De l'Expression en musique et de l'imitation dans les arts* (1771), in Lippman, ed., *Musical Aesthetics*, 269.

112. For example, in *Sonata Forms* Charles Rosen speaks of “a new interest in personal, direct expression of sentiment (sometimes called *Empfindsamkeit*) opposed to the objective, complex, emblematic expression of sentiment of the Baroque (*Affektenlehre*).” Charles Rosen, *Sonata Forms* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1980), 13. There are familiar misconceptions at both poles of this statement—the *Affektenlehre* and *Empfindsamkeit*. As we have seen, contrary to popular assumption, there was no fixed vocabulary of sentiment in the baroque, and on the other hand, the *empfindsamer Stil* (sensitive style) was as much a recognizable, codified topos as any other—characterized by stops and starts, an accumulation of sigh motives, and other signs of the communally recognized personal.

113. Hosler, *Changing Aesthetic Views of Instrumental Music*, xiv–xviii.

114. Koch, *Musikalisches Lexikon*, s.v. “Malerei.” Or see Daniel Webb: “But what shall we say to that musician, who disgraces the poet by realizing his metaphors, and, in downright earnest, makes the fields *laugh*, and the vallies *sing*.” For Webb, these “idle conceits of a forced imitation” turned music into an “aesthetic monster.” Daniel Webb, *Observations on the Correspondence between Poetry and Music*, 214. Francesco Galeazzi chimes in from Italy with the same opinion: “Many renowned masters make a considerable mistake, which is that of believing that the expression of the words consists in the force of one single word: for example, to express an *ascendit* with an ascending flight, a *descendit* with a fall toward the heavy, a *Deprofundis* by making a bass moo, an *altissimus* by making a soprano cheep, an *in aeternum* by making a tenor breath out on an eternal held note, etc. . . . It is certainly not appropriate to believe that the true way of expressing words with music consists in similar trifles, and childishnesses, but rather in mastering and entering thoroughly into the entire feeling, which ought to be strengthened and made more energetic and expressive by the music.” Francesco Galeazzi, *Elementi teorico-pratici di musica, con un saggio sopra l'arte di suonare*, (Rome: Pilucchi Cracas, 1791) II: 292–93.

115. Engel, “Über die musikalische Malerey,” 225. Cf. Webb: “Music hath no other means of representing a visible object, than by producing in the soul the same movements which we should naturally feel were that object present.” Webb, *Observations on the Correspondence between Poetry and Music*, 212.

116. Jean Baptiste Dubos, *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et la peinture* (1719) (Paris, 1770; facsimile edition, Geneva: Slatkine, 1967), 485. Cf. Rousseau: “The art of the musician consists in substituting for the imperceptible image of the object that of the movements that its presence stirs in the heart of the contemplator. . . . It will not represent these [images] directly; but it will stir up in the soul the same movements as one feels in seeing them.” Rousseau, *Dictionnaire*, s.v. “Imitation.”

117. Adolf Sandberger, "Mehr Ausdruck der Empfindung als Malerei," in *Ausgewählte Aufsätze zur Musikgeschichte*, vol. 2 (Munich: Drei Masken, 1924), 201.

118. Chabanon, *De la musique considérée en elle-même*; Beattie, *Essay on Poetry and Music as They Affect the Mind*; Thomas Twining, *Two Dissertations on Poetical and Musical Imitation* (London, 1789); Adam Smith, "Of the Nature of That Imitation Which Takes Place in What Are Called the Imitative Arts," in *Essays on Philosophical Subjects* (Dublin, 1795), 179–243.

119. Lessing, *Hamburg Dramaturgy*, 77.

120. "Daines Barrington's Report on Mozart," in Otto Erich Deutsch, ed., *Mozart: A Documentary Biography*, 2nd ed., trans. Eric Blom, Peter Branscombe, and Jeremy Noble (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1966), 97–99.

121. Carl Dahlhaus, *Esthetics of Music*, 22. The original text:

Indem ein Musickus nicht anders rühren kann, er sey dann selbst gerührt; so muß er nothwendig sich selbst in alle Affecten setzen können, welche er bey seinen Zuhörern erregen will; er giebt ihnen seine Empfindungen zu verstehen und bewegt sie solchergestalt am besten zur Mit-Empfindung. Bey manen und traurigen Stellen wird er man und traurig. Man sieht und hört es ihm an. Dieses geschieht ebenfalls bey heftigen, lustigen, und andern Arten von Gedancken, wo er sich alsdenn in diese Affecten setzt. Kaum, daß er den einen stillt, so erregt er einen andern, folglich wechselt er beständig mit Leidenschaften ab. Diese Schuldigkeit beobachtet er überhaupt bey Stücken, welche ausdrückend gesetzt sind, sie mögen von ihm selbst oder von jemand anders herrühren; im letzten Fall muß er dieselbe Leidenschaften bey sich empfinden, welche der Urheber des fremden Stückes bey dessen Verfertigung hatte. (C. P. E. Bach, *Versuch über die wahre Art, das Clavier zu spielen* (Berlin, 1752), 122–23)

Since a musician cannot move us unless he himself is moved, it follows that he must be capable of entering into all the affections which he wishes to arouse in his listeners; he communicates his own feelings to them and thus most effectively moves them to sympathy. In languid and sad passages he becomes languid and sad. We see and hear it. The same will also be true of vigorous, merry and other sorts of musical themes, as he enters into those affections. Hardly has he stilled one than he awakens another; therefore, he is constantly changing affections. He will fulfill this function in all pieces that have been composed expressively, whether they are his own or someone else's; in the latter instance he must feel within himself the very emotions which moved the author as he composed the piece. (Trans. Piero Weiss, in Weiss and Taruskin, *Music in the Western World* (2nd ed.), 230)

122. E. T. A. Hoffmann, *Kreisleriana*, in E. T. A. Hoffmann's *Musical Writings*, 155. Notice that Diderot's hieroglyphs—semaphoric gestures of the passions—have been transformed into the secret signs of music notation, in keeping with the romantic view of the composer as high priest of the musical art. See chapter 1.

123. "If you want me to weep, you must first experience grief yourself" (Horace, *Ars poetica* 102–3).

124. "Format enim Natura prius nos intus ad omnem / fortunarum habitum" (*ibid.*, 108–9).

125. Sulzer, *Allgemeine Theorie*, s.v. "Ausdruck in der Musik"; Koch, *Musikalisches Lexikon*, s.v. "Ausdruck."

126. “Die Theorie der Empfindungen” (Heinrich Christoph Koch, II. 99). Again Koch is echoing Sulzer: “The composer must undertake a special study, investigating the timbre [*Ton*] of all the passions. He must view all men under this aspect only.” Sulzer, *Allgemeine Theorie*, s.v. “Ausdruck in der Musik.”

127. Denis Diderot, *Paradoxe sur le comédien, précédé des Entretiens sur le fils naturel* (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1981), 127–28.

128. *Ibid.*, 129.

129. Sulzer, *Allgemeine Theorie*, s.v. “Ausdruck in der Musik.”

130. *Ibid.* Johann Friedrich Reichardt said the same thing at about the same time—that Hasse was known to be distinguished in the expression of the “violent passions,” while Graun “invariably surpassed Hasse in the gentle and affecting.” Johann Friedrich Reichardt, *Briefe eines aufmerksamen Reisenden* (1774), First Letter, in Strunk, ed., *Strunk’s Source Readings in Music History*, 704–5.

131. For many of the thoughts expressed in what follows, I am indebted to Mary Hunter’s foundational study *The Culture of Opera Buffa in Mozart’s Vienna: A Poetics of Entertainment* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 52–70.

132. For a discussion of *ethos* and *pathos* both in Greek music and in their usage in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see Berman, *The Musical Image*, 62–75, 197–21. See also Jane R. Stevens, “The Meanings and Uses of Caractère in Eighteenth-Century France,” in Georgia Cowart, ed. *French Musical Thought, 1600–1800* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 1989), 23–52.

133. Berman introduces the helpful term “festal pomp” to describe the heroic style in the late eighteenth century. See Berman, *The Musical Image*, 210–13, 218–19, 246.

134. Allanbrook, *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart*, 123–24.

135. Diderot, *Éloge de Richardson*, 89. The anonymous translation is inexact; the original French: “C’est lui qui porte le flambeau au fond de la caverne; c’est lui qui apprend à discerner les motifs subtils et déshonnêtes qui se cachent et se dérobent sous d’autres motifs qui sont honnêtes et qui se hâtent de se montrer les premiers.” *Oeuvres complètes de Denis Diderot* (Paris: A. Belin, 1818), I: 602.

136. Hunter, *The Culture of Opera Buffa*, 52–54.

137. Koch, *Musikalisches Lexikon*, s.v. “Charakter.”

138. Koch, *Versuch*, 2: 16.

139. Eduard Hanslick, *On the Musically Beautiful*, trans. Geoffrey Payzant (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1986), 5.

140. “Moral standards, while still implacably absolute in themselves, may . . . be to some extent diffused into the textures of personal sensibility; taste, affect and opinion testify more eloquently to one’s participation in a universal common sense than either moral strenuousness or ideological doctrine.” Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 32. There are, of course, abundant writings to be drawn on in connection with these issues, but particularly helpful to me have been this study by Eagleton and a more narrowly musical one by Gerhard Sauder, “Die empfindsamen Tendenzen in der Musikkultur nach 1750,” in Hans Joachim Marx, ed., *Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach und die europäische Musikkultur des mittleren 18. Jahrhunderts. Bericht*

über das Internationale Symposium der Joachim Jungius-Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften Hamburg 29. September–2. October 1988 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), 41–64.

141. "If it is reason that makes the man, it is feeling that guides him." Cf. J. J. Rousseau, *Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse*, in *Collection complète [sic] des Oeuvres de J. J. Rousseau* (London: n.p., 1774), 305. Friedrich Schiller, *Über die Ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen in einer Reihe von Briefen* (1794).

142. "O Richardson! . . . Le coeur humaine, qui a été, est et sera toujours le même, est le modèle d'après lequel tu copies." *Oeuvres complètes de Denis Diderot* [1818], I: 603. Cf. Diderot, trans. X, *Éloge de Richardson*, 90.

143. Rousseau, *Dictionnaire*, s.v. "Unité de mélodie."

144. See Baker and Christensen, *Aesthetics and the Art of Musical Composition in the German Enlightenment*, 9.

145. W. S. Newman, "Emanuel Bach's Autobiography," *Musical Quarterly* 51 (1965): 372 (emphasis mine). Charles Burney, who claims in his history that Bach's autobiography was written at his suggestion, states that it was Bach's "principal wish . . . to play and compose in the most vocal manner possible," because "music ought to touch the heart." Charles Burney, *A General History of Music*, 955 (emphasis Burney's). Bach's fellow keyboard pedagogue Daniel Gottlob Türk mentions almost in passing in his 1789 treatise the "main purpose" of the keyboard player, which is "to move the heart of his listener." Daniel Gottlob Türk, *School of Clavier Playing*, trans. Raymond H. Haggh (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982; originally published as *Klavierschule* (Leipzig, 1789), 322.

146. Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, ed. Lester G. Crocker (New York: Pocket Books, 1973), 58.

147. Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*, 85. On p. 43, Eagleton observes that "there is a right and a wrong to taste, quite as absolute as the death penalty."

148. Mozart to his father, Vienna, December 28, 1782, in Emily Anderson, ed., *Letters of Mozart and His Family*, 3rd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1989), 833 (emphasis mine). The original German reads: "Nun fehlen noch 2 Concerten zu den Subscriptions-Concerten. Die Concerten sind eben das Mittelding zwischen zu schwer und zu leicht—sind sehr Brilliant—angenehm in die ohren—natürlich, ohne in das leere zu fallen—hie[r] und da—können auch *kenner allein* satisfaction erhalten—doch so—dass die nichtkenner damit zufrieden seyn müssen, ohne zu wissen warum." Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *Briefe und Aufzeichnungen*, vol. 3, ed. W. A. Bauer, O. E. Deutsch, and J. H. Eibl (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1963), 245–46. See Elaine Sisman, "Observations on the First Phase of Mozart's 'Haydn' Quartets," in *Words about Mozart: Essays in Honour of Stanley Sadie*, ed. Dorothea Link with Judith Nagley (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2005), 33–58.

149. In this reading it resonates with Lessing's similar remark about audience reception, quoted in chapter 1.

150. The modern preference for the *Kenner*, the connoisseur, first finds expression in the work of Johann Nikolaus Forkel, Bach biographer and stern antigalant music

critic, in the 1780s and '90s. Mattheson, with his strong distaste for musical pedantry, considered the responses of the untutored "Liebhaber or galant homme" as a standard for taste, and Sulzer respected the *Liebhaber*, the generality of his audience, while hoping that they would aim for the status of *Kenner* by reflecting on the purposes of the fine arts. For an informative summary of these opinions, see Matthew Riley, "Johann Nikolaus Forkel on the Listening Practices of 'Kenner' and 'Liebhaber,'" *Music and Letters* 84 (2003): 414–33.

151. Friedrich Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, trans. Elizabeth M. Wildinson and L. A. Willoughby (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 215.

152. *Ibid.*, 155.

153. *Ibid.*

154. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. J. H. Bernard (New York: Hafner Press, 1951), 58.

155. Rousseau, *Essai sur l'origine des langues*, 121; cf. Neubauer, *The Emancipation of Music from Language*, 85–89.

156. Rousseau, *Essai sur l'origine des langues*, 131–32.

157. "Let [the musician] realize that he will have to render noise as song; that if he wants to produce the croaking of frogs, he must make them sing. For it is not enough to imitate them; he must touch and please, without which his tedious imitation is nothing, and by interesting no one, will make no impression." *Ibid.*, 125.

158. Sulzer, *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste*, s.v. "Ausdruck in der Musik" (emphasis mine). See also Koch, *Versuch*, 3: 202; Koch, *Musikalisches Lexikon*, s.v. "Ausdruck."

159. Hanslick, *On the Musically Beautiful*, 72.

160. Aristotle, *Politics* 1340b18–20.

161. Shakespeare, *Much Ado about Nothing*, II, iii, 60–62.

3. THE COMIC SURFACE

The Wilde quote was also used as an epigraph by Susan Sontag in her well-known 1964 essay "Against Interpretation," in which she condemned the search for latent content in an artwork—the insistence on "excavating" behind a text to discover its thematic subtext, supposedly the locus of the real truth. Susan Sontag, "Against Interpretation," in *The Critical Tradition*, ed. David H. Richter (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), 545–50.

1. Leonard B. Meyer, "Commentary," *Music Perception* 13 (1996): 462.

2. Leonard B. Meyer, *Style and Music: Theory, History, and Ideology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), 195.

3. See chapter 2.

4. See Holly Watkins, "From the Mine to the Shrine: The Critical Origins of Musical Depth," *19th-Century Music* 27 (2004): 179–207. In this excellent essay Watkins traces the metaphor's origins in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century German Pietist thought and its transmission through the writings of Johann Gottfried Herder, the

aesthetic of the sublime, and new theories of stratification in geology. I am indebted to the article for many of the formulations in this section. (It is now incorporated as chapter 1 in Holly Watkins, *Metaphors of Depth in German Musical Thought: From E. T. A. Hoffmann to Arnold Schoenberg* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011]—Ed.)

5. “Holistic and unitarian” is Leo Treitler’s characterization of most modern analytic systems; see his “‘To Worship That Celestial Sound’: Motives for Analysis,” in *Music and the Historical Imagination*, 52.

6. Watkins, “From the Mine to the Shrine,” 206, n. 94.

7. The quoted terms are from Heinrich Schenker, *Free Composition* (*Der freie Satz*, Vienna: Universal, 1935), trans. and ed. Ernest Oster (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 1977), 17, 18. The method as described here, however, is not Schenker’s but that of his Anglophone adapters such as Allen Forte, as propagated in textbooks and curricula over the last half century. See William Rothstein, “The Americanization of Heinrich Schenker,” *In Theory Only* 9 (1986): 5–17; reprinted in Heidi Siegel, ed., *Schenker Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 193–203. Schenker’s own method, as befitted its organicist bias, went in the other direction, deriving the diversity of the surface from the *Ursatz*, conceptualized as the beginning, not the end, of the analytical process.

8. “May the musician always carry in his heart the image of the bass arpeggiations.” Schenker, *Free Composition*, 15 and fig. 1.

9. *Ibid.*, xxiii.

10. Some analysts believe that the study of proper Schenkerian methods ennoble the student’s moral character—a tempting claim (*ibid.*, 5). See, for example, the article by American Schenkerian William Pastille in which he characterizes Schenkerian analysis as offering training in “self-discovery, deep engagement, and responsible judgment.” William Pastille, “Music and Life: Some Lessons,” *Theory and Practice* 24 (1999): 119.

11. Schenker, *Free Composition*, 15.

12. Ruth Solie argues the point forcefully in an article on Schenker and organicism, one of the earliest critiques of this subject in the mainstream musicological literature: “The natural urges of the tone are concretized in the *Ursatz*, a sort of anti-taxonomic device whose effect is to put all pieces in the same category by a Leibnizian transcendence of their multifarious surfaces.” Solie, “The Living Work,” *19th-Century Music* 4 (1980): 151.

13. Perhaps the most symptomatic was “How We Got into Analysis, and How to Get Out,” *Critical Inquiry* 7 (1980): 311–31, by Joseph Kerman, one of the founding editors (in 1977) of the journal *19th-Century Music*. (The article is reprinted in Kerman, *Write All These Down*, 12–32.) Another roughly contemporaneous voice was that of Anthony Newcomb, in “Those Images That Yet Fresh Images Beget . . .,” *Journal of Musicology* 2, no. 3 (Summer 1983): 227–45: “The relation of the individual moment to the normative whole, and the relation of this whole to the larger system of which it forms part (for example, the system of functional tonality)—these are what analysis should uncover. Thus, once one has determined that a passage is an introduction, or a bridge, or an initial bass arpeggiation to the fifth degree of the scale, or an upper-voice

prolongation of the flatted sixth degree—whatever—and once one has perhaps gone on to assess how each of these passages contributes to the unity that is the whole structure, then one has completed one's task. . . . There is no question of intent at all, or of the artwork as an act of human communication" (229–30).

14. Nor do I mean to denigrate analysis by reduction, which is an abidingly useful technique. Reductions are most helpful, however, when they confine their excavations to the middle ground and preserve the rhythmic configurations of the surface. A brief, lucid, and more sympathetic account of Schenker's work for the uninitiated can be found in Scott Burnham, *Beethoven Hero* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 89 ff.

15. One notable and highly relevant, if perhaps inconclusive, effort to combine Schenkerian analysis with a historical account of late eighteenth-century music can be found in Kofi Agawu's *Playing with Signs: A Semiotic Interpretation of Classic Music* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991).

16. The phrase in quotes alludes to the calculated heresy embodied in the title of the philosopher Jerrold Levinson's refreshing "concatenationist" objection to the structuralist fictions propagated by music analysts, *Music in the Moment* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997). Levinson's book appeared at a propitious moment, when voices were being raised against the claims of "Structural Hearing" (to cite the slogan of the other side, as embodied in the title of a famous textbook [New York: Charles Boni, 1952] by the neo-Schenkerian Felix Salzer) from within the musical-theoretical community as well as from topical theorists. As a result, Levinson's book was received and reviewed much more respectfully than it might have been had it been published a few years earlier. See the symposium published in the journal *Music Perception* 16 (1999): 463–94, under the title "*Music in the Moment: A Discussion*," with contributions by Justin London, Arnie Cox, Charles D. Morrison, Fred Everett Maus, Bruno H. Repp, and Jerrold Levinson.

17. Kofi Agawu, "Topic Theory: Achievement, Critique, Prospects," in *Passagen. IMS Kongress Zürich 2007, Fünf Hauptvorträge*, ed. Laurenz Lütteken and Hans-Joachim Hinrichsen (Zurich: Bärenreiter, 2008), 38–69.

18. See Leonard G. Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1980), 1–30. Ratner's article "Topical Content in Mozart's Keyboard Sonatas," *Early Music* 19 (1991): 615–19, is another demonstration of topical analysis (of Mozart's Sonata in D Major, K. 284:I).

19. The title *Rhythmic Gesture* arose from the premise that the most crucial identifiers of these styles or topics are rhythmic, whether social dance types or the measured footfalls of the ecclesiastical style—Beethoven's "great notes weighing a pound each" (see Ratner, *Classic Music*, 24). The essay on topical succession involved the first movements of Mozart's piano sonatas K. 332 and 333. "Two Threads through the Labyrinth: Topic and Process in the First Movements of K. 332 and K. 333," in Wye J. Allanbrook, Janet M. Levy, and William P. Mahrt, eds., *Convention in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Music: Essays in Honor of Leonard G. Ratner* (New York: Pendragon Press, 1992), 125–71.

20. Agawu, *Playing with Signs*, 23–25.
21. Umberto Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), 16.
22. Elaine Sisman, *Mozart: The “Jupiter” Symphony* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), and “Genre, Gesture, and Meaning in Mozart’s ‘Prague’ Symphony,” in *Mozart Studies*, ed. Cliff Eisen (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 27–84.
23. Raymond Monelle, *The Sense of Music: Semiotic Essays* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000) and *The Musical Topic: Hunt, Military and Pastoral* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006).
24. Robert S. Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994); *Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topics, and Tropes: Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).
25. Agawu, “Topic Theory,” 6–7. The title was not of Agawu’s choosing. He has declared his discomfort with the word “theory” used in connection with topoi and prefers to substitute “awareness” (*ibid.*, 7–8).
26. William E. Caplin, “On the Relation of Musical Topoi to Formal Function,” *Eighteenth-Century Music* 2 (2005): 113.
27. Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, 170.
28. Ratner, *Classic Music*, 9.
29. “Borrowing an expression that belongs to rhetoric, we might very well say that these materials [characteristic late eighteenth-century musical styles and types] were musical topics.” Leonard G. Ratner, *Music: The Listener’s Art*, 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), 214.
30. Manfred Bukofzer, *Music in the Baroque Era: From Monteverdi to Bach* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1947), 388–89. Leonard Ratner was the University of California at Berkeley’s first music history Ph.D. Working under Bukofzer, Ratner received the degree in 1947 with a dissertation entitled “Harmonic Aspects of Classic Form,” and he began his three and a half decades of teaching at Stanford the same year.
31. Bukofzer, *Music in the Baroque Era*, 388. Bukofzer showed the same confusion in his earlier “Allegory in Baroque Music,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 3 (October 1939–January 1940): 1–2, 5–6.
32. See George J. Buelow, “Johann Mattheson and the Invention of the *Affektenlehre*,” in George J. Buelow and Hans Joachim Marx, eds., *New Mattheson Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 393–407. Buelow points out that beyond three occurrences of the word in Mattheson’s corpus (one each in three different texts of the pedagogue’s voluminous writings), he has found no other instances of the phrase “in the Baroque and post-Baroque theoretical literature” (*ibid.*, 397).
33. George J. Buelow, “The *Loci Topici* and Affect in Late Baroque Music: Heinichen’s Practical Demonstration,” *Music Review* 27 (1966): 161–76. See also Buelow’s “Rhetoric and Music,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians; Thorough-Bass Accompaniment According to Johann David Heinichen*, rev. ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986).

34. Surfing the web these days one still encounters this mistaken notion. Here are two instances taken at random: “Recognizing the motive as the basis for all composition, baroque theorists devised a system, known as *loci topici*, in which the various affetti (sadness, joy, passion, etc.) were associated with specific musical motives.” Timothy Smith, “Bach: The Baroque and Beyond, Motivic Development & Saturation,” <http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~tas3/inv.html>. “Baroque musical rhetoric was closely linked to the Theory of Affects. All the baroque composers used rhetorical figures (*loci topici*), which represent passions in music.” Philippe Lalitte et al., “The Perceptual Structure of Thematic Materials in *The Angel of Death*,” *Music Perception* 22 (2004): 266.

35. *Topoi* is the Greek plural of *topos*; the Latin plural is *loci*. *Topicus* is an adjective formed in the Latin from *topos*. Obviously Aristotle never knew the latter expression, but neither, it seems, did Cicero. Ruth Tatlow, in *Bach and the Riddle of the Number Alphabet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 112, cites a sixteenth-century discussion of the *topica* using the term *loci topici* by Peter Ramos, *Dialecticae Partitiones sive Institutiones* (1543). This may be the earliest recorded usage.

36. Cicero, *Topica*, 2. Cicero intended his *Topica* as a summary of Aristotle’s. As he wrote to his friend and dedicatee Caius Trebatius, he composed his version because Trebatius had complained that he found Aristotle’s hard going.

37. Mattheson provides a translation—“örtliche Stellen der Rede-Kunst” (topical places of rhetoric)—that carefully preserves the redundancy; but he later comments that the *loci* should better be called “dialectisch” than “topisch” (a synonym of “örtliche”), which suggests that he or one of his sources was aware of the *loci*’s connection with the classical tradition. Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, I, iii, 68; II, iv, 21. For the list of subject matters, see Aristotle on Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse, trans. George A. Kennedy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 46.

38. For sixteenth-century Spain and Italy, see M.J. Woods, “Sixteenth-Century Topical Theory: Some Spanish and Italian Views,” *Modern Language Review* 63, no. 1 (January 1968): 66–67. For the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, see Ruth Tatlow, “J.S. Bach and the Baroque Paragram: A Reappraisal of Friedrich Smend’s Number Alphabet Theory,” *Music and Letters* 70 (1989): 191–205; and her *Bach and the Riddle of the Number Alphabet*. According to Buelow, “Descriptions of the *loci topici* . . . appear in every book on rhetoric published in Germany in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.” “The *Loci Topici* and Affect in Late Baroque Music,” 63.

39. Mattheson substitutes *descriptionis* for Neumeister’s *definitionis*. Neumeister is familiar today as a poet who supplied many of J.S. Bach’s cantata texts. His lectures were later published (plagiarized, some suggest) by Christian Hunold (Menantes) as *Die allerneueste Art, zur reinen und galanten Poesie zu gelangen* (Hamburg, Fickweiler, 1712). Ruth Tatlow, *Bach and the Riddle of the Number Alphabet*, 117–18, speculates that Mattheson drew his version of the *loci* either from conversations with Neumeister, from Hunold’s publication, or from a treatise by Christian Weise (*Curieuse Fragen über die Logica* [Leipzig 1696]). Perhaps misled by their curious macaronic nomenclature, Tatlow is unaware that *loci topici* is merely a new term for an old concept; in “Numbers and Music” in *The New Grove Online* (www.oxfordmusiconline.com), she states that

the *loci topici* “were not known to the ancient Greeks.” But insofar as they are identical in all essentials with Cicero’s *loci* they attest to the faithful transmission of these *loci* from treatise to treatise over the ages, albeit under varying names.

40. The list Mattheson received from Neumeister combines the *loci* of genus and species, part and whole, each as one place, but, unlike Cicero, he details the traditional four causes separately. Mattheson’s types of difference are less refined than Cicero’s: his *locus oppositorum* embraces Cicero’s similarity, difference, contraries, and contradictions. In the category of adjuncts, Cicero lists the before, during, and after: antecedents, adjuncts, and consequents; for Mattheson they are contained in *adjunctorum* and *circumstantiarum* (the latter being temporal—before and after). This compression gains him a place for examples and testimonies—arguments from authority, which Cicero considered a special type of *locus*.

41. Buelow, *Thorough-Bass Accompaniment*, 163; Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, II, iv, 20 and 22. Mattheson acknowledges that for many these “quite pleasing expedients for invention” carry a taint of the academy, but he feels they should be available to composers whose inventive faculty has deserted them. *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, II, iv, 22.

42. Buelow, *Thorough-Bass Accompaniment*, 326. Apparently many baroque writers used this metaphor (Buelow, “Johann Mattheson and the Invention of the *Affektenlehre*,” 404). See Mattheson’s usage below. In Cicero’s *De oratore* the orator Antonius displays the same *horror multitudinis* as Heinichen centuries later, and also the same confidence in the magical efficacy of the dialectical *topoi* to organize this vastness. “A multiplicity of cases is to be feared,” he warns, “for their variety is endless if they are identified with individuals; . . . but, if they are brought under general heads of inquiry [*universas quaestiones*], they are so bounded and so few that careful and thoughtful speakers with good memories should be able to handle them all, after mentally running through them and all but sing-songing [*decantatas*] them.” Cicero, *De oratore*, II, xxxii, 140. The pedagogues’ awe at the thought of this infinite sea of unarticulated human passions is itself evidence that no cookbook of the affections existed.

43. Buelow, “The *Loci Topici* and Affect in Late Baroque Music,” 163.

44. *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, II, iv, 43 (single quotes and emphasis mine). For further potshots at Heinichen’s narrow focus, see *ibid.*, II, iv, 49 and 78.

45. Mattheson’s exegesis of the *loci* is found in *ibid.*, II, iv, 20–83.

46. *Ibid.*, I, iii, 83.

47. *Ibid.*, II, xiv, 52.

48. For Heinichen, see Buelow, *Thorough-Bass Accompaniment*, 326. Heinichen’s discussion of the *loci topici* occurs in the introduction to his treatise, which Buelow in the first (1966) edition of his monograph on Heinichen’s thorough-bass practices omitted from the discussion. But the introduction is a fascinating window on general composing habits in the early eighteenth century. Heinichen’s “modernist” opinions are quirkily articulated there, along with an extended discussion of musical expression. Happily, by the time Buelow issued his 1986 revision of the book, questions of affect were very much in the air, and he appended a translation of the introduction as appen-

dix B. He had already summarized Heinichen's discussion of the *loci topici* in "The *Loci Topici* and Affect in Late Baroque Music."

49. Buelow, *Thorough-Bass Accompaniment*, 326.

50. Buelow, *Thorough-Bass Accompaniment*, 376 (emphasis mine). Heinichen concludes his analogy with more praise for the modern efficiency of this ancient method: "Enough has been shown . . . to prove . . . how important it is not to waste time with useless, pedantic eccentricities, but to strive to give the amateur a shorter road to the art of music than usually occurs." In a footnote a page later he states, "Today one usually studies all things more completely, more briefly, and with greater vigor, for which a good order or a good, applicable method is absolutely necessary. *Ordo docet omnia*, etc." Buelow, *Thorough-Bass Accompaniment*, 377, n. (s).

51. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, 70, 79. Curtius discusses a long list of these literary topoi, ranging from "affected modesty," "God as painter," and "perpetual spring" to "the ape as metaphor." See his index, s.v. "topics," for a list.

52. *Ibid.*, 70.

53. *Ibid.*, 79.

54. See Edgar Mertner, "Topos und Commonplace," in *Strena Anglica: Otto Ritter zum 80. Geburtstag*, ed. Gerhar Dietrich and Fritz W. Schulze (Halle: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1956), for an impassioned protest against the debasement of the concept of topos in the eighteenth century and later, largely traceable, in his opinion, to Curtius's work. See also Woods, "Sixteenth-Century Topical Theory," 66–73.

55. According to Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, 98–101, this particular topos is historically so widespread as to be archetypical, an image of the "collective unconscious"; others, he allows, are more historically and stylistically determined. A modern reversal of the cliché might be a satirical one: the absurdity of the preternaturally old *puer*—a contravention of the seven ages of man.

56. Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, II, iv, 15–19.

57. Neumeister (Hunold), *Die allerneueste Art, zur reinen und galanten Poesie zu gelangen* (see n. 39), 541.

58. See <http://special.lib.gla.ac.uk/exhibns/month/nov2002.html>, which includes an illustration of the "ark." See also Margaret Murata, "Music History in the *Musurgia universalis* of Athanasius Kircher," in *The Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts*, ed. John W. O'Malley, S.J., Gauvin Alexander Bailey, Steven J. Harris, and T. Frank Kennedy, S.J. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 201–2. Murata includes an illustration of the ark and describes two existing examples, one in Wolfenbüttel and one made by Samuel Pepys in Magdalene College, Cambridge. Jim Bumgardner worked out a computer algorithm using Kircher's method and set a hymn text to the musical modules on the ark's wands. See his "Kircher's Mechanical Composer: A Software Implementation," www.krazydad.com/pubs/kircher_paper.pdf.

59. Leonard G. Ratner, "Ars combinatoria: Chance and Choice in Eighteenth-Century Music," in H. C. Robbins Landon, ed., *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Music: A Tribute to Karl Geiringer on His Seventieth Birthday* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 346. As Ratner points out in this article, the principles of *ars combinatoria*

were by no means new to music; they fascinated earlier music theorists and pedagogues like Glareanus, Mersenne, Kircher, and Printz.

60. Ibid., 350. See also Catherine Nolan, "Music Theory and Mathematics," in Thomas Christensen, ed., *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 284–86.

61. Ann Moss, *Printed Commonplace Books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), vi.

62. Ibid., viii. Like the use of *loci topici*, commonplacing began in antiquity; "Cicero says that Aristotle says that Protagoras was among the first" (ibid., 3). The practice picked up again in the twelfth century, peaked in the late Renaissance, and continued into the Victorian era, with occasional twentieth-century updates. John Milton was a commonplacer, as were John Locke, and Thomas Jefferson in his earlier years. Modern authors—W. H. Auden, for example, and Wallace Stevens—have occasionally playfully invented their own versions. Modern humanist scholars are high-tech common-placers, gathering their data on laptops equipped with data storage "cells."

63. Ibid., 18.

64. Lucius Annaeus Seneca, Loeb Classical Library, vol. 5, *Epistles 66–92*, trans. Richard M. Gummere (Loeb Classical Library, 1917; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 277.

65. Ann Blair, "Humanist Methods in Natural Philosophy: The Commonplace Book," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 53, no. 4: 542.

66. In an article placing Glareanus's *Dodecachordon* in the context of the Renaissance commonplace book, Cristle Collins Judd forswears suggesting "overt emulation" on Glareanus's part, claiming only that the theorist was "highlighting means and materials of humanist production that were so deeply ingrained as of necessity to transfer across apparent disciplinary boundaries." Judd, "Musical Commonplace Books, Writing Theory, and 'Silent Listening': The Polyphonic Examples of the 'Dodecachordon,'" *Musical Quarterly* 82 (Autumn–Winter 1988): 486. I am suggesting something similar about Mattheson, with even lighter traces. In the chapter after the discussion of *inventio*, "On the Art of Making a Good Melody," Mattheson makes the comparison to commonplace books explicit. He again recommends the possibility, to those who desire to "seek out examples" [of the use of half steps in writing a charming (*lieblich*) melody], of placing the examples under "certain general and specific labels," and adds the phrase "like *loci communes* (common places)." He then offers four examples of such general titles or heads with their specific contents. Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, II, v, 123.

67. Ratner, "Ars combinatoria," 359.

68. Ibid., 360.

69. Ibid., 353.

70. Daniel Heartz, *Music in European Capitals: The Galant Style, 1720–1780* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2003), 18.

71. Dietrich Bartel, *Musica Poetica: Musical-Rhetorical Figures in German Baroque Music* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 88.

72. Demosthenes, asked to name the most important parts of rhetoric, gave this famous answer, according to Quintilian, *Institutio oratio* (c.E. 95), Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), XI: 3–6.

73. Bartel, *Musica Poetica*, 60.

74. Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, II, v, 13 “On the Disposition, Elaboration, and Ornamentation of Melody.” The *Dispositio* consisted of six sections: *Exordium*, *Narratio*, *Propositio*, *Confirmatio*, *Confutatio*, and *Peroratio*. Note that here, as in the latter half of the century, there is no mention of “form” or “structure”; the shape of the whole is guided by the leading voice, as pointed out in chapter 2.

75. Meinrad Spiess (1683–1761), *Tractatus Musico-Compositorio-Practicus* (Augsburg: Johann Jakob Lotters, 1745), 133.

76. *Ibid.*, 133.

77. See chapter 2. The verse is scanned “Quis? quid? u- / bi? quibus / auxili- / is? cur? / quomodo? / quanto?” (Who? what? where? by whom? with what aids? why? how? how many?).

78. For the pervasiveness of the church, chamber, and theater categories in late eighteenth-century music, see Ratner, *Classic Music*, 7, where he quotes Spiess’s own description of the styles. See also Türk, *School of Clavier Playing*, 397; Koch, *Musikalisches Lexikon*, s.v. “Styl, Schreibart.” Spiess could not have his way, of course. He was probably reacting, among other things, to the eighteenth-century invasion—indeed, the takeover—in church style of the operatic aria. For a discussion of the earlier history of the distinction, see Ruth Halle Rowen, “Some 18th-Century Classifications of Musical Style,” *Musical Quarterly* 23 (1947): 90–101. The distinction is prominent in pedagogical texts through the second half of the eighteenth century. See, for example, Spiess, *Tractatus Musico-Compositorio-Practicus*, 161 ff; Sulzer, *Allgemeine Theorie*, s.v. “Cammernmusik”; Türk, *School of Clavier Playing*, 397–98; Augustus Frederic Christopher Kollmann, *An Essay on Practical Music Composition According to the Nature of That Science and the Principles of the Greatest Musical Authors* (London: The Author, 1799), 100–102; Koch, *Musikalisches Lexikon*, s.v. “Styl, Schreibart.”

79. For a few more examples of these criticisms see Allanbrook, *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart*, 27–28; Melanie Lowe, *Pleasure and Meaning in the Classical Symphony* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 27.

80. There is, however, a rich collection of indirect references to them gathered by Ratner and Agawu (see Ratner, *Classic Music*, 1–30; Agawu, *Playing with Signs*, 26–30).

81. Koch was among them. See Ratner, “*Ars combinatoria*,” 395.

82. Koch says nearly the same thing, using some of the same examples, in the *Ver-such*, 2: 42–43. Imitating nature in music, he argues, does not mean mimicking old women weeping, posthorns blaring, or cuckoos crying. Decrying what he sees as excessive clowning in the latest styles, he admonishes against allowing young composers to “play the Harlequin.”

83. Michel-Paul-Guy de Chabanon, *De la musique considérée en elle-même et dans ses rapports avec la parole*, in Allanbrook, ed., *The Late Eighteenth Century*, 240. For

additional commentary on this passage from Chabanon, see Allanbrook, *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart*, 6.

84. See Downing Thomas, *Music and the Origins of Language: Theories from the French Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

85. Koch, *Musikalisches Lexikon*, s.v. “Instrumentalmusik” (emphasis mine). In his article on instrumental music in Sulzer’s *Allgemeine Theorie*, Kirnberger, anxious about instrumental music’s general lack of affect, says the same thing without the story: “In conformity with its nature, the use of instrumental music is mainly restricted to dances, marches, and other celebratory displays.” For these pieces, he states in the next paragraph, “have their fixed characters, ballets, dances, and marches, for example, and the composer has in these characters a guiding principle [literally, plumb line—*Richtschnur*] which he has to follow in their composition.” He adds overtures to the list because their affects are set by the affects of the works they introduce, but he disparages “concertos, trios, solos, sonatas, and the like” as mere “pastimes or . . . practice material,” and, a little later, condescends to instrumental music with that eighteenth-century commonplace “a pleasant-sounding noise” (*ein wol klingendes Geräusch*; see chapter 2 for further references). Sulzer, *Allgemeine Theorie*, s.v. “Instrumentalmusik.” In Sulzer’s encyclopedia the distance between the opinions of the conservative Kirnberger and those of the more “modern” Johann Adolf Peter Schulz can be measured by the distance from I (for “Instrumentalmusik”) to S (for “Symphonie”). Kirnberger’s opinions are more representative of the period. For a further discussion of authorial distribution in *Allgemeine Theorie*, see chapter 2.

86. Koch, *Musikalisches Lexikon*, s.v. “Instrumentalmusik” (emphasis mine).

87. Ibid.

88. Engel, “Über die musikalische Malerey,” 230.

89. These notions of a plotless narrative, of a “pointless” oration, resonate with Kant’s famous statement about a beautiful work of art in the *Critique of Judgment* that one should sense in it “purposiveness without purpose” (Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, Third Moment, 54–73). Nonetheless, while the concept could perhaps be stretched to accommodate my reading of late eighteenth-century music, it is not at all clear that Kant would have agreed in the case of music, which he famously disliked. The locution “purposiveness without purpose” can be seen as pointing ahead to formalist readings of works of art.

90. The list is culled from various sources: from Leonard Ratner’s *Classic Music* and from my long years of association with him, from Kofi Agawu’s *Playing with Signs and Music as Discourse*, and from a brainstorming session I participated in when visiting Cornell University in the 1990s, when James Webster, Kofi Agawu, David Rosen, and I spent a pleasant hour trying to name as many late eighteenth-century topoi as we could think of. The most recent entry came from Alexander Silbiger, who in a presentation to the Mozart Society of America at the Kansas City AMS meeting in November 1999 identified a guitar topos in the first movement of K. 332. See “Il Chitarrino le Suonerò: *Commedia dell’arte* in Mozart’s Piano Sonata K. 332,” *Mozart Society of America Newsletter* 3, no. 2 (August 1999): 1. I had never given much thought to

eighteenth-century guitar style, but it is definitely recognizable here. In fact, the guitar reference is perhaps even more obvious in the first two measures of the second key area of the first movement of K. 333. Silbiger's insight also points to an as yet underexplored research area, namely guitar music in Vienna in the latter half of the eighteenth century. It was heartening to see other scholars getting into the topical act.

91. Allanbrook, *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart*, 6–8; "Two Threads through the Labyrinth," 130–45, 169–71. Kofi Agawu has also discussed the movement in *Playing with Signs*, 44–48, and *Music as Discourse: Semiotic Adventures in Romantic Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 44, and Leonard Ratner lists its topics, but rather more briefly (*Classic Music*, 222).

92. The agitato style is often labeled "Sturm und Drang" after the style that distinguishes Haydn's "Sturm und Drang" symphonies, but, as many critics have pointed out, there is little historical justification for calling it that. See Daniel Heartz, s.v. "Sturm und Drang," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*.

93. Alexander Silbiger has put forward the plausible hypothesis that the rather "fussy" notation of the opening measure of the minuet (grace notes to indicate a rolled chord rather than the usual arpeggiation sign) suggests guitar style, and that the interruption is a common form of guitar "vamping." Indeed the dark minor and castanet-like beats of the vamping passages seem a cliché of Spanish guitar music. As Silbiger concludes, the matter requires further study, both of indigenous Spanish guitar music in the eighteenth century and how it might have been practiced and recognized in late eighteenth-century Vienna. See Silbiger, "Il Chitarrino le Suonerò."

94. Richard Taruskin recalls that Paul Henry Lang used to call it "roughage."

95. Rosen, *The Classical Style*, 21; Susan McClary, "Review: *The Sense of Music: Semiotic Essays*, by Raymond Monelle," *Notes*, 2nd ser., 58, no. 2 (December 2001): 326.

96. Webster, *Haydn's "Farewell" Symphony*, 393. In a 1998 article on Haydn's sacred vocal music Webster classifies topoi as *musikalische Bildlichkeit*, or "musical imagery," "musical conceptualizations of textual images and ideas," again invoking the extramusical. James Webster, "Haydn's Sacred Vocal Music and the Aesthetics of Salvation," in *Haydn Studies*, ed. W. Dean Sutcliffe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 44–45.

97. Sisman, *Mozart: The "Jupiter" Symphony*, 46. Sisman's question is echoed by Melanie Lowe in her *Pleasure and Meaning in the Classical Symphony*, 25.

98. Sisman, "Genre, Gesture, and Meaning," 28.

99. See Gretchen A. Wheelock, "Engaging Strategies in Haydn's Opus 33 String Quartets," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 25 (1991): 1–30; Barbara Russano Hanning, "Conversation and Musical Style in the Late Eighteenth-Century Parisian Salon," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 22 (1989): 512–28; Richard Will, "When God Met the Sinner, and Other Dramatic Confrontations in Eighteenth-Century Instrumental Music," *Music and Letters* 78 (1997): 175–209, esp. 183–85; Elisabeth LeGuin, "A Visit to the Salon de Parnasse," in Tom Beghin and Sander M. Goldberg, eds., *Haydn and the Performance of Rhetoric* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 14–38; and Edward T. Cone, *The Composer's Voice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974).

Such metaphors, to be sure, were not unknown to the eighteenth century: see Louis-Gabriel Guillemain's *Conversations galantes et amusantes*, a set of six *sonates en quatuors* published in Paris in 1743 (with a sequel in 1756). These are still continuo pieces and do not yet display the variegated surface that is the subject of this chapter.

100. Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, *Aesthetica* (vol. 1, 1750), cited in Bellamy Hosler, *Changing Aesthetic Views of Instrumental Music*, 95.

101. Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, ed. Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye, trans. Wade Baskin (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959), 106 (emphasis mine).

102. For negative opinions about other sorts of contrast, see William S. Newman, *The Sonata in the Classic Era*, 3rd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1983), chapter 2, "The Concept of 'Sonata' in Classic Writings."

103. Charles Burney, *A General History of Music, Volume II*, ed. Frank Mercer (New York: Dover Publications, 1957), 945.

104. *Ibid.*, 866 (emphases Burney's).

105. Charles Burney, *The Present State of Music in Germany, The Netherlands, and United Provinces* (London 1773; reprint London: Travis and Emery Music Bookshop, 2002), 1: 170. Music he heard memorably performed by a band on a Venetian barge was "full of fancy, full of fire; the passages were well contrasted; sometimes the graceful, sometimes the pathetic prevailed, and sometimes, however strange it may be thought, even noise and fury had their effect" (Burney, *The Present State of Music in France and Italy*, 159).

106. Burney, *The Present State of Music in France and Italy*, 233, 305. Zanotti actually enjoys an entry in Grove, but its author feels that Burney far overrated the abbot's talents.

107. Burney, *The Present State of Music in Germany, The Netherlands, and United Provinces*, 1: 91.

108. "The musical performances of this country want *contrast*. . . . Sound can only be augmented to a certain degree, beyond that, is *noise*. . . . Even *noise* is sometimes successfully made, in full pieces; but, when this is attempted, it should be for the sake of that contrast and opposition of passages and musical phrases, by which one contributes to the effect of another; for, when a piece is executed with such unremitting fury, as I have sometimes heard, it ceases to be music; and, instead of a part, the whole deserves no other appellation than that of *noise*" (Burney, *Present State of Music in Germany, The Netherlands, and United Provinces*, 2: 202–3). Notice that Burney allows noise as a part—a topos—of the whole (cf. n. 109), probably thinking of passages in concertato or agitato style.

109. Burney, *Present State of Music in Germany, The Netherlands, and United Provinces*, 1: 279. See also Daniel Heartz, *Music in European Capitals: The Galant Style, 1720–1780* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2003), 700, where Heartz cites the same opinion as expressed by Meude-Monpas in his *Dictionnaire de musique* of 1787 and in a retrospective reflection by Burney more than twenty years later in Rees's *Cyclopædia*: "We [English] were unwilling to give up the harpsichord, and thought the tone of the

pianoforte spiritless and insipid, till experience and better instruments vanquished our prejudices and the expression and the *chiar'oscuro* in performing music expressly composed for that instrument, made us amends for the want of brilliancy of the tone so much that we soon found the scratching of the quill in the harpsichord intolerable, compared with the tone produced by the hammer." Percy Scholes calculates that the aging Burney finished his articles for the *Cyclopedia* "about 1809 or 1810." Percy A. Scholes, *The Great Dr. Burney*, 2 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1948), 2: 187.

110. In a recent article Roger Mathew Grant claims that Johann Philipp Kirnberger (1721–83) was the first theorist of rhythm to describe musical time in the new Newtonian fashion—as an undifferentiated string of pulses forming a neutral backdrop to metrical formations. Earlier writers had assumed the primacy of the bar—the actual rhythmic event—as a measure of time, whereas Isaac Newton posited time as an infinite empty background against which surface events are measured. Roger Mathew Grant, "Epistemologies of Time and Metre in the Long Eighteenth Century," *Eighteenth-Century Music* 6 (2009): 66. Grant finds it disappointing that after seemingly going modern, Kirnberger straightaway returned to more comfortable terrain—"the relationships between time signatures, tempo and character," in which events sculpt time rather than the reverse. But human beings tend to quail in the face of the infinite, especially in the arts. I suspect that the "monotonously flowing stream" of pulses had no real being for Kirnberger; it was purely conceptual. The groupings imposed by measures and bars return meter to the domain of breath length and gesture, of kinetic response, where no ground is merely neutral, time-marking, nontopical territory. Kirnberger's remarks on the linkage between meter and character are an important contribution to the history of expression in the late eighteenth century.

111. See Joseph Joachim Quantz, *Versuch einer Anweisung über die Flöte traversiere zu spielen* (1752), trans. Edward R. Reilly (London: Faber and Faber, 1966) as *On Playing the Flute*, chapter 14, "Von der Art das Adagio zu spielen" (Of the manner of playing the Adagio), pp. 162–78.

112. Allanbrook, *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart*, 13.

113. Monelle, *The Musical Topic*, 7.

114. Janet M. Levy, "Gesture, Form, and Syntax in Haydn's Music," in *Proceedings of the International Haydn Conference, Washington, DC, 1975*, ed. Jens Peter Larsen, Howard Serwer, and James Webster (New York: W. W. Norton, 1981), 355–63; "Texture as a Sign in Classic and Early Romantic Music," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 35 (1982): 482–531; W. Dean Sutcliffe, *Haydn: String Quartets*, Op. 50, Cambridge Music Handbooks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). Levy's brilliant and meticulous work on the semiotics of conventional gestures and textures of the period has been mind-altering for all who have encountered it.

115. Levy, "Gesture, Form, and Syntax," 361–62.

116. Sutcliffe, *Haydn: String Quartets*, Op. 50, 70. Sutcliffe calls the measures that contain the full resolution (150 to the end) a "coda," but Levy implies that these measures are still part of the recapitulation, which seems closer to the truth. The point of the movement is the reverse recapitulation, in which the proper close of the (improperly

closing) opening theme, which provides the movement's period, is reserved to the last. This crucial event should rightly occur within the bounds of the recapitulation, not as a valedictory coda or afterthought.

117. Sutcliffe, *Haydn: String Quartets*, Op. 50, 67, 66.

118. On this Bergsonian trope see Janet M. Levy, "Something Mechanical Encrusted on the Living: A Source of Musical Wit and Humor," in Allanbrook, Levy, and Mahrt, eds., *Convention in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Music*, 225–56. Because opus 50 was dedicated to Friedrich William II, king of Prussia, an amateur cellist, Rosen sees the repeated note in the cello as a "charming joke" in that it is "a motif hardly taxing to the royal virtuosity." Rosen, *The Classical Style*, 123. There is an implied contrast, of course, to the string quartets that Mozart dedicated to the king (the "Prussian" Quartets, Kk. 575, 589, and 590), in which the cello plays a much more virtuosic role. But Haydn has arguably entrusted the royal soloist with a far more momentous responsibility: representing the cosmic clock against which human passions are measured.

119. It is of course possible for modern performers to miss them, as Charles Rosen demonstrated some years ago in an exchange in the *New York Review of Books* with Malcolm Bilson about Mozart's articulation markings. Rosen praised "the more sustained lyricism of these bars [mm. 5–8] . . . that contrasts with the articulated opening and needs a longer line." "Early Music: An Exchange," *New York Review of Books*, November 8, 1990, 60. A performer sensitive to the signs of the late eighteenth-century mimetic vocabulary could never hear these measures as lyrical and sustained. Janet Levy, in her illuminating article "Texture as a Sign in Classic and Early Romantic Music," writes vividly of the solo's ability to suspend regular expectations and enable such dramatic mutations. With the Alberti missing, the dotted-half F and G in the treble in measures 7–8, which would seem to be the notes that Rosen found lyrical, mark time above the bass entry, and, as in any moment of learned style, should not be emphasized to the detriment of the imitation. The four-measure continuation (mm. 9–12) provides the postponed cadence—a result of the imitation, not of the singer's lyrical overflow. Elaine Sisman might speak here of "galant counterpoint." See her *Haydn and the Classical Variation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 47.

120. For a discussion of the nature of such topical progresses, see Allanbrook, "Two Threads through the Labyrinth," 125–28, 169–71.

121. Sulzer, *Allgemeine Theorie*, s.v. "Cammernusik."

122. See, for example, Koch's *Musikalisches Lexikon* article "Kammernusik," where he states that church music is dedicated to expressing "religious feelings, while opera puts forward moral ones."

123. *Ibid.*

124. *Ibid.* For a more extensive discussion of Koch's metaphor, see Allanbrook, "'To Serve the Private Pleasure': Expression and Form in the String Quartets," in *Wolfgang Amadè Mozart: Essays on His Life and His Music*, ed. Stanley Sadie (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 132–35.

125. Spiess, *Tractatus Musico-Compositorio-Practicus*, 161–62.

126. Sulzer, *Allgemeine Theorie*, s.v. “Sonata.” And Koch: “The sonata, with its species, the duet, trio, and quartet, has no particular character, but the sections of which it consists, namely its Adagio and two Allegros, can assume every character, which expression that music is capable of depicting” (Koch, *Versuch*, III. 315). In the *Versuch* Koch does not include “solo” in his list; he added it in his *Musikalisches Lexikon* inventory of instrumental music (s.v. “Solo”).

127. Türk, *School of Clavier Playing*, 390.

128. Koch, *Musikalisches Lexikon*, s.v. “Styl, Schreibart.” For an analysis of a movement that uses the arbitrary as a “rule” for its topical unfolding, see my discussion of the first movement of Mozart’s String Quartet K. 428 in Allanbrook, “To Serve the Private Pleasure,” 152–60.

129. Koch, *Musikalisches Lexikon*, s.v. “Instrumentalmusik.” Koch’s list consists of six genres, of which the other three are: “4) compositions meant for ceremonial processions, such as the military march, or compositions similar to the march that are customary for civic processions; 5) compositions meant for the personal use of the performer, such as the *Capriccio*, the fugue, the fantasy, etc. . . . 6) dance music.” Note that dance music remains cordoned off in a special category, just as in Mattheson’s *Der Vollkommene Capellmeister*, even though by now it had become an expressive staple in mainstream compositions.

130. Both Mozart and Haydn composed duos, Mozart writing two of them (K. 423 and K. 424, for violin and viola), Robbins Landon speculates, to help Michael Haydn out of a tight spot: he had been ordered by their patron, the Archbishop Colloredo, to write a set of such duos and could not complete them because of ill health. Neal Zaslaw with William Cowdery, eds., *The Complete Mozart: A Guide to the Musical Works of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart* (New York: W. W. Norton), 272. Mozart also wrote twelve duos for two horns (K. 487, 1783). Haydn wrote duos for violin and viola, or baritone. Both called their earlier duos sonatas, the later ones duos or duette.

131. Or sometimes, apparently, young children. Schulz, when praising the eloquence of keyboard sonatas by C. P. E. Bach, notes that it takes genius to compose these works, but excitable “German-Italian” performers cannot manage their sensitive style. Often they are best interpreted by children, given some time for them to have become accustomed to such works (Sulzer, *Allgemeine Theorie*, s.v. “Sonate”). Schulz’s remark reflects a sense of the simplicity, heartfeltness, and novelty of the sonata style; often only a child is free enough of prejudice to enter into the spirit of a genuine innovation.

132. Rosen, *Sonata Forms*, 11 (emphasis mine).

133. Johann Friedrich Daube, *The Musical Dilettante: A Treatise on Composition* by J. F. Daube, trans. Susan P. Snook-Luther, ed. Ian Bent (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 97, 95. Other of Daube’s numerous iterations of this instruction, issued for varying ensembles and movement styles, can be found on pp. 69, 108, 115, 116, 119, 132, and 139. He even proposes rough proportions for the two styles in varying circumstances: in a first Allegro three parts rushing and one part singing style, in a slow movement, not surprisingly, the reverse. He also supports the introduction of galant

alternation into fugues, a popular practice that Snook-Luther suggests more conservative pedagogues opposed. “At this point, for the sake of the beginners, let us write a fugue which embodies not the strict rules of the ancients, but rather the freedom of the moderns” (ibid., 208).

134. Allanbrook, “Two Threads through the Labyrinth,” 148–55.

135. Levy and Sutcliffe are not seriously to be faulted for their failure to discuss the topoi of the movement; their omission implies no exclusion, and their descriptions, within the bounds they have set, are accurate. Charles Rosen’s far more widely read discussion, however, actually distorts the events of the movement (*The Classical Style*, 120–21). Ignoring the obvious caesura in measure 6, he flattens out the topical differences in favor of abstract unity, claiming that the entire exposition is derived from two figures: “a repeated note in the cello [a] and a six-note figure in the violin [b]” (the latter the sigh motive). He styles the virtuoso triplets as the spawn of b, hence an extension of the sigh motive, and he notes no caesura before the downward triplet run in measure 9, ignoring the continuation of the virtuoso topos. His account shows what can happen when an analyst, obedient to an exigent but anachronistic critical imperative, abandons the rich and immediately palpable forms on the surface in search of less palpable patterns that, he is sure, must lurk beneath. Such “atomism” is as modern in its twentieth-century scientific context as was Burney’s scrutiny of surface details in the context of eighteenth-century natural philosophy. Observation of creatures was the activity of the eighteenth-century amateur naturalists, the Trembleys by their freshwater ponds; forming hypotheses about unobservables is the activity of the modern physicist. Rosen’s search for subterranean relations never goes as deep as Schenker’s, whom he criticizes trenchantly earlier in *The Classical Style* (33–36). Yet “unity” and “logic” are still his watchwords, while the word “expression,” as we have seen, provokes him to self-righteous fulmination as a corrupter of thought.

4. COMIC FINITUDE AND COMIC CLOSURE

1. Agawu, *Playing with Signs*, 45.

2. Otto Jahn, *Life of Mozart* (1891), trans. Pauline D. Townsend, 3 vols. (New York: Cooper Square, 1970), 2: 476.

3. Arthur Hutchings, *A Companion to Mozart’s Piano Concertos*, rev. ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1980), 134.

4. Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 58.

5. Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, 164.

6. Winton Dean, *Handel and the Opera Seria* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 147.

7. Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, 164.

8. Donald Francis Tovey, *Essays in Musical Analysis: Concertos and Choral Works* (London: Oxford University Press, 1989), 164; Hutchings, *A Companion to Mozart’s Piano Concertos*, 150; Rosen, *The Classical Style*, 226–27.

9. See Allanbrook, “Comic Issues in Mozart’s Piano Concertos,” in Neal Zaslaw, ed., *Mozart’s Piano Concertos: Text, Context, Interpretation* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 75–106, especially 89–93. The connection between “Ho capito” and Mozart’s piano concertos was made by Janet M. Levy in her “Something Mechanical Encrusted on the Living,” 225–56.

10. Rosen, *The Classical Style*, 227.

11. Its consequent alone did appear once before, to close the lyric episode, but at a joint where it could provide very little sense of rest, turning into a brief upbeat to a modulatory passage on the way to the primary dominant cadence of the rondo (mm. 142 ff.).

12. Cuthbert Girdlestone, *Mozart and His Piano Concertos* (New York: Dover, 1958), 294 and 298. For a related view of these questions about comedy and closure, see Allanbrook, “Comic Issues in Mozart’s Piano Concertos,” 93–102.

13. Berman, *The Musical Image*, 210–11. The affect of *fierté*—of haughty pride—that characterizes the *stile concitato* lingers in the topos I have termed the “exalted march,” the slow *stile antico* alla breve movement that is the meter of so many revenge arias in Mozart’s operas. Donna Anna’s “Or sai chi l’onore” is a prime example. See Allanbrook, *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart*, 18–22.

14. Zaslaw, *Mozart’s Symphonies*, 545–49.

15. Webster, *Haydn’s “Farewell” Symphony*, 220–24.

16. Some of Mozart’s minor-key works with finales that close in minor are the Piano Sonata in A Minor, K. 310/300d, the Piano Sonata in C Minor, K. 457, the Piano Concerto in C Minor, K. 491, and the two G-Minor Symphonies, the “Little,” K. 183, and the “Great,” K. 550. Among minor-key works that end in major are the Serenade for Wind Instruments in C Minor, K. 388 (rearranged as the String Quintet in C Minor, K. 406), the String Quartet in D Minor, K. 421 (which ends with a tierce de Picardie), the Piano Quartet in G Minor, K. 478, and the String Quintet in G Minor, K. 516. Note that, with the addition of the Piano Concerto in D Minor, this list of Mozart’s important minor-key instrumental works is nearly complete. As to Haydn, according to Webster (*Haydn’s “Farewell” Symphony*, 221–23), he closed all but four of his thirteen minor works on the sharp side of the spectrum in the minor, but of his works on the flat side the majority closed in the major.

17. It occurs first in F major (m. 140), to close the first run-through of the Rondo themes, and recurs in D minor in a second major cadential section just before the cadenza (m. 303).

18. Girdlestone, *Mozart and His Piano Concertos*, 329.

19. Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending*, 41.

20. Ratner, *Classic Music*, 395.

21. The subject of the second exposition, full of familiarly “fugal” syncopations, is cleverly fashioned to fit into the interstices of the first, so that after it receives its own exposition the two can be combined in another go-round, the whole complex comprising the area of the “second theme.” Earlier, the modulation to the dominant constitutes another private sally that is easy to overlook, a union of galant and learned topics in

which the running eighth-note melody of the contredanse fiddling is transformed by its combination with chains of suspensions in a modulating sequence toward the half cadence on the dominant (mm. 31–39).

22. Zaslaw, *Mozart's Symphonies*, 543.

23. "Der Charakter der Pracht und des Erhabenen" (Koch, *Versuch*, 3: 301); "Die Symphonie ist zu dem Ausdrucke des Grossen, des Feyerlichen und Erhabenen vorzüglich geschickt" (ibid., 303).

24. Koch, *Musikalisches Lexikon*, s.v. "Erhaben."

25. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1125a12–16.

26. Allanbrook, *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart*, 18–22.

27. Agawu, *Playing with Signs*, 33–34.

28. Ibid., 87–90, 117.

29. For a more or less similar discussion, see Allanbrook, "'All'usanza teatrale': Mozart and Representation," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 22 (1993): 105–23, especially 117–19.

30. Fred Everett Maus, "Music as Narrative," *Indiana Theory Review* 12 (1991): 20, 11–12. Influenced by Edward Cone's work on agency, Maus has endeavored in this article and several others to stake out a slightly different position in which there are agents "that cannot be determinately individuated."

31. Treitler, "'To Worship that Celestial Sound': Motives for Analysis," in his *Music and the Historical Imagination*, 52.

32. Treitler, "Mozart and the Idea of Absolute Music," in ibid., 205, 207, 211.

33. Ibid., 185.

34. Ibid., 213, 183.

35. Susanne Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key* (New York: Mentor Books, 1959), 228.

36. See Susan McClary, "Narratives of Bourgeois Subjectivity in Mozart's 'Prague' Symphony" (1992), an unpublished paper later incorporated in McClary, *Conventional Wisdom: The Content of Musical Form* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 102 ff; "Narrative Agendas in 'Absolute' Music," in Ruth Solie, ed., *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 326–44; Rose Rosengard Subotnik, "Evidence of a Critical World View in Mozart's Last Three Symphonies," in her *Developing Variations: Style and Ideology in Western Music* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 98–111.

37. Neal Zaslaw tells a tale of subversion only once, at the end of his comprehensive source book for Mozart's symphonies, where its emergence seems incongruous. Citing Subotnik's work, he ventures a symbolic reading of the coda to the finale of the "Jupiter" Symphony: he suggests that the absence from the "final synthesis" of a brief scrap of a galant theme perhaps reminiscent of Salzburg and Leopold's domination could be a metaphor for "Mozart's dreaming of escaping his oppressive past and giving utterance to his fondest hopes and highest aspirations for the future" (Zaslaw, *Mozart's Symphonies*, 544).

38. See, for example, the essays collected under the rubric “Shostakovich and the Inhuman” in Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically* 468–544.

39. Immanuel Kant, *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime and Other Writings*, trans. John T. Goldthwait (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960).

40. Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (London 1757), part 2, section 1, quoted in Peter le Huray and James Day, eds., *Music and Aesthetics in the Eighteenth and Early-Nineteenth Centuries*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 71.

41. Elaine Sisman, *Mozart: The “Jupiter” Symphony*, 9. Sisman uses the translation by Bathia Churgin in “The Symphony as Described by J. A. P. Schulz: A Commentary and Translation,” *Current Musicology* 29 (1980): 7–16. *Erhaben* is translated as “elevated” by Ratner (*Classic Music*, 145), and as “grandeur” by Nancy K. Baker in Heinrich Christoph Koch, *Introductory Essay on Composition* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983), 198.

42. Sisman, *Mozart: The “Jupiter” Symphony*, 79.

43. E. T. A. Hoffmann, “Beethoven’s Instrumental Music,” in Oliver Strunk, ed., *Source Readings in Music History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1950), 775.

44. *Ibid.*, 776.

45. Wendt, “Über den gegenwärtigen Zustand der Musik besonders in Deutschland und wie er geworden” (Göttingen: Dieterichschen Buchhandlung, 1836). Wendt was professor of philosophy at Göttingen. See Ludwig Finscher, *Zum Begriff der Klassik in der Musik*, vol. 11 of *Deutsches Jahrbuch der Musikwissenschaft* (Leipzig, 1967), quoted in Eggebrecht, *Versuch über die Wiener Klassik*, 5.

46. Wendt, “Über den gegenwärtigen Zustand der Musik besonders in Deutschland,” 3; quoted in Eggebrecht, 8. By characterizing the three as Coryphaei (leaders of the chorus), Wendt does something that few of his successors will do, which is grant that there was a chorus—of *Kleinmeister*—to be led.

47. Wendt, “Über den gegenwärtigen Zustand der Musik besonders in Deutschland,” 5; quoted in Eggebrecht, *Versuch über die Wiener Klassik*, 9–10.

48. Eggebrecht, *Versuch über die Wiener Klassik*, 10–11, summarizing Hegel’s *Aesthetics*: Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Ästhetik*, 2 vols., ed. Friedrich Bassenge (Berlin: Aufbau; Frankfurt am Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, n.d.), 1: 297 and 1: 90.

49. Eggebrecht, *Versuch über die Wiener Klassik*, 9–12.

50. Daniel Heartz, s.v. “Classic,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (London: Macmillan, 1980).

51. Diderot, *Le Neveu de Rameau*, trans. Leonard Tancock (London: Penguin, 1966), 102–4.

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