

## Thoughts in advance of an interpretation

### Reflections on Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* in the light of performance practice

#### Ornaments, cadenzas, lead-ins, dynamics and other points of vocal interest

Luigi Bassi<sup>1</sup> was a member of the Prague opera company and, as such, played a major part in the overwhelming success of *Don Giovanni* in Prague, where he sang not only the title role in the very first performance of Mozart's *dramma giocoso*, but also the Count in the local première of *Le nozze di Figaro*. Describing a later performance of one of Mozart's operas, he wrote: "There's nothing here, there's none of the animation or freedom that the great maestro wanted in this scene. Under Guardasoni<sup>2</sup> we never sang this number the same way in two performances running, we didn't keep such strict time but made new jokes at each performance and paid attention only to the orchestra; everything parlando and virtually improvised - that's how Mozart wanted it."

However much Mozart may have insisted on a regular beat<sup>3</sup>, he was far from demanding slavish adherence in such matters. The type of freedom described by Bassi is entirely consistent with his own description of 'tempo rubato': "Everyone is amazed that I can always keep strict time. What these people cannot grasp is that in tempo rubato in an Adagio, the left hand should go on playing in strict time. With them the right hand gives in to the rubato."<sup>4</sup> Applying this definition to Bassi's foregoing description, we could say that the orchestra was the "left hand" and the singer, with his freedom of approach, the right hand.<sup>5</sup>

Bassi's account also touches on all the other questions bound up with a 'parlando' treatment of the text, including the various liberties that could be taken, the ornaments and cadenzas sanctioned by contemporary performance practice and the 'animation' that was achieved in various ways, not least of which was the use of extremely finely differentiated dynamics.

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<sup>1</sup> 1766-1825

<sup>2</sup> the Italian impresario in Prague

<sup>3</sup> See his letters to his father of 3 October 1777 (No. 342) and 23/25 October 1777 (No. 355)

<sup>4</sup> letter to his father of 23/25 October 1777 (No. 355)

<sup>5</sup> See also Leopold Mozart's letter to his daughter of 9 March 1787 (No. 1038) and his *Violin Method*, p. 267, XII, para. 20

Countless passages in Mozart's letters allow us to build up a fairly clear picture of his ideas of what constituted a good singer. Apart from the fact that female singers should be as "pretty" as possible "on stage"<sup>6</sup>, he wanted a "beautiful voice"<sup>7</sup>, with a natural vibrato<sup>8</sup>. The voice should not be too small<sup>9</sup>. Mozart also demanded "excellent, clear diction"<sup>10</sup> and a moderate use of cantabile. The problem of cantabile singing occupied him greatly. On the one hand, he criticised singers for what he called too much 'cantabile' - singers who followed the school of Antonio Maria Bernacchi<sup>11</sup>, and who indulged in too many unmotivated changes of dynamics<sup>12</sup>, while on the other hand, cantabile singing was evidently something close to his heart<sup>13</sup>. It appears from his letter of 7 March 1778 that what he understood by 'cantabile' was a very light portamento but one which, far from being applied uninterruptedly, was dictated by his concept of 'gusto' or taste. It is a question he goes into in detail in his letter of 12 June 1778. That he also regarded free ornamentation as coming under the heading of 'taste' is clear from his letter to his father of 14 February 1778. Much as he valued a "marvellous throat"<sup>14</sup> and a "fluent throat"<sup>15</sup> and much as he thought it important<sup>16</sup>, he none the less thought very little of it merely as a vocal mannerism. What was decisive for Mozart was that singing should "go to the heart"<sup>17</sup>, although this conviction did not prevent him from laying great emphasis on tasteful decorations and cadenzas, as is clear from his work with Aloysia Weber, the best examples of which are the original ornaments he wrote for her for insertion in concert aria K294<sup>18</sup> (Appendix V).

In his letter of 14 February 1778 Mozart mentions "an aria cantabile with coloratura indications" ("ein aria Cantabile mit ausgesetztem gusto"). These two folios are preserved in the Mozarteum in Salzburg and contain an aria from Lucio Silla and a variant of an aria from Johann Christian Bach's Adriano in Siria. Three additional cadenzas for tenor voice may be found in Florence<sup>19</sup>, while the Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin

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<sup>6</sup> letter of 2 October 1777

<sup>7</sup> letter of 24 March 1770

<sup>8</sup> letter of 12 June 1778

<sup>9</sup> letter of 26 January 1770

<sup>10</sup> letter of 12 June 1778

<sup>11</sup> the Italian alto castrato best known for his Handelian roles but also internationally acclaimed as a teacher of singing

<sup>12</sup> letter of 2 October 1777

<sup>13</sup> letters of 7 February 1778, 19 February 1778, 2 October 1777, 27 June 1781 and so on

<sup>14</sup> letter of 24 March 1770

<sup>15</sup> Leopold Mozart's letter to his daughter of 26 May 1786

<sup>16</sup> letters of 24 March 1770, 19 February 1778 and 17 June 1778

<sup>17</sup> letters of 19 February 1778 and 13 November 1780

<sup>18</sup> NMA II: 7/ii

<sup>19</sup> Biblioteca Horace de Landau

(Mus.ms. 15570) contains a series of previously unpublished cadenzas for three operatic arias by Johann Christian Bach K293e in a copy prepared by Leopold Mozart<sup>20</sup> (Appendix II-IV). Their importance may be inferred from the fact that Mozart asked his father to send them on to him in Mannheim.<sup>21</sup> Although it is clear from all these remarks that Mozart was thinking of free ornamentation when he used the term 'gusto' and although he passed on these practices to his students, it must be equally clear that only limited use can be made of such practices in his own operas and that his use becomes even more limited the more remote these operas are from Italian influence. In short, only his own examples can serve as a basis for studying possible ornaments.

The first version of Figaro contains no autograph cadenzas. For Vienna, Mozart wrote what, in part, was a new version of the score, and in Susanna's aria K577 No. 28a<sup>22</sup> we do indeed find an autograph cadenza. One of the most important examples of original ornamentation occurs in K294 (see appendix V-VI), where Mozart has written out the vocal line twice, once unornamented, the second time ornamented. Further examples may be adduced from Mozart's other Viennese operas: Die Zauberflöte No. 17, bar 37, and the cadenza for the Three Ladies<sup>23</sup>, which, for reasons that are unclear, was then deleted again; Don Giovanni No. 2, bar 132 and No. 10a, bar 36; Così fan tutte No. 2, bar 33; No. 4, bar 86; and No. 4, bar 90; Die Entführung aus dem Serail No. 1, bars 18, 28 and 34; and the explicit ad lib. beside a fermata, indicating a cadenza, in No. 3, bars 28-29 and 81-82, not forgetting the cadenza<sup>24</sup> for 'Martern aller Arten'<sup>25</sup> that is written out in full. Careful consideration of these sparing but clear examples suggests the following ornaments for Figaro: No. 6, bar 84; No. 10, bars 31 and 77; No. 20, bar 36 (thereby underlining the Countess's question; see Scheibe); No. 24, bar 35; No. 25, bar 52; No. 28, bars 38 (turn) and 46.

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<sup>20</sup> See Leopold's letter of 25/26 February 1778

<sup>21</sup> It is in this letter of 14 February 1778 that Mozart mentions "at least one aria cantabile with coloratura indications".

<sup>22</sup> NMA II:5, xvi, p. 613

<sup>23</sup> NMA II:5, xix, p. 371

<sup>24</sup> L. Mozart, letter No. 960

<sup>25</sup> See Leopold Mozart's letter of 26 May 1786; see also K420 NMA II:7, iii, p. 66, bar 164

Suggested lead-ins for Le nozze di Figaro:

Nr. 6, Bar 84  
ven - ti

Nr. 10 (Peters 9), Bar 31  
- Lante 3 - 2 - - . Non pinan (drai) Vgl. NMA II, 7, i, p. 42, bar 63

Nr. 10 (Peters 9), Bar 77  
- Lante 3 - - - - - . Non pinan (drai) Vgl. NMA II, 7, i, p. 42, bar 63

Nr. 20 (Peters 19), Bar 36  
- so?

Nr. 24 (Peters 23) Bar 35  
co - sa di - ra? OR co - sa di - ra

Nr. 28 (Peters 27) Bar 37  
vic - ni - nar - di

Nr. 25 (Peters 24) Bar 52  
tà, in Li - ber - tà

Nr. 28a Bar 76 Cantographe (Cadenza)  
(cen) - de

To these may be added a number of additional appoggiaturas which are used outside the recitatives to achieve particular verbal emphasis and musical tension. That Mozart also reckoned on this type of appoggiatura in the arias (the appoggiatura acquires the value of the first main note with two notes of the same pitch) is clear, for example, from K36 (33i)<sup>26</sup> as well as from K83, bar 69 and La finta giardiniera<sup>27</sup>.

That Mozart expected a wide range of subtly differentiated dynamics from his singers may be inferred not only from the ensembles in his later operas (since not every singer can engage in free improvisation here, the dynamics in these ensembles are clearly marked, whereas extremely few dynamic markings may be found elsewhere in his scores) but also from various remarks in his letters<sup>28</sup>. Here he seems to have differed from his father in feeling that a relatively large dynamic range was imperative<sup>29</sup>. It is clear from his markings

<sup>26</sup> NMA II:7, i, p. 42, bar 63

<sup>27</sup> NMA V:8, i, p. 32, bar 196

<sup>28</sup> See letters of 7 March 1778, 2 October 1777 and 12 June 1778

<sup>29</sup> See Leopold's letter of 25 March 1785



in K293e (bars 58 and 68-9) that he wanted an extraordinarily wide range of dynamics in coloratura passages, with a decrescendo into the 2nd note of two slurred pitches, emphasis on lower principal notes and lighter voicing of final syllables when sung *piano* at the top of the singer's range; see also the original version of Cherubino's first-act aria, 'Non so più cosa son' No. 6<sup>30</sup>, where the dynamic markings are entered with great precision. Particularly striking is the fact that numerous *subito* markings are linked together by means of crescendi. It is possible to deduce from this a number of points of principle concerning the way the dynamics should be treated in performance. (See also Quantz's instructions on the dynamic treatment of an Andante, Appendix VII.) Mozart laid great emphasis on a good *messaggio di voce*, i.e., the singing of a long note so that it begins quietly, swells to full volume and then diminishes to its original volume: in a letter of 2 October 1777 he writes of the astonishing beauty of a singer's 'crescendo and decrescendo'. As for the trill, he did not want it performed in the old Italian way as advocated by Caccini and consisting of repeating the same note<sup>31</sup>, but preferred a "pure and clear" trill, preferably taken not too fast, with a *nota cambiata*<sup>32</sup>.

Finally, he detested bad singing habits<sup>33</sup> and poor intonation<sup>34</sup>, demanding above all a voice that was 'even'<sup>35</sup>.

#### **On the question of appoggiaturas and the treatment of recitative**

By proscribing undue liberties on the part of singers and insisting on singing the notes as written, Gustav Mahler rid Mozart of some of the partially inauthentic performance practices of the nineteenth century, while at the same time removing a number of the music's essential stylistic features. Singers of Mozart's time included appoggiaturas in the recitatives and Mozart undoubtedly reckoned on their doing so, even though we have no first-hand evidence of this. If they were not notated, it was for reasons of harmonic clarity, but also to give the singers the freedom to structure the music as they pleased. Only in cases where they are incontrovertible were they included. The placing of appoggiaturas goes hand in hand with linguistic emphasis and is therefore an essential aspect of the actual meaning of the text. As such, it is an indispensable part of the musical interpretation. There are numerous passages in the writings of eighteenth-century authors that show us how appoggiaturas should be handled. The largest collection of such examples is found in the preliminary remarks contained in Georg Philipp Telemann's *Harmonischer Gottes-Dienst* (Hamburg, 1725), which also includes instructions on the free treatment of tempo in recitatives.

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<sup>30</sup> NMA II:5, xvi, pp. 94ff and 629ff

<sup>31</sup> letter of 12 June 1778

<sup>32</sup> letter of 2 October 1777

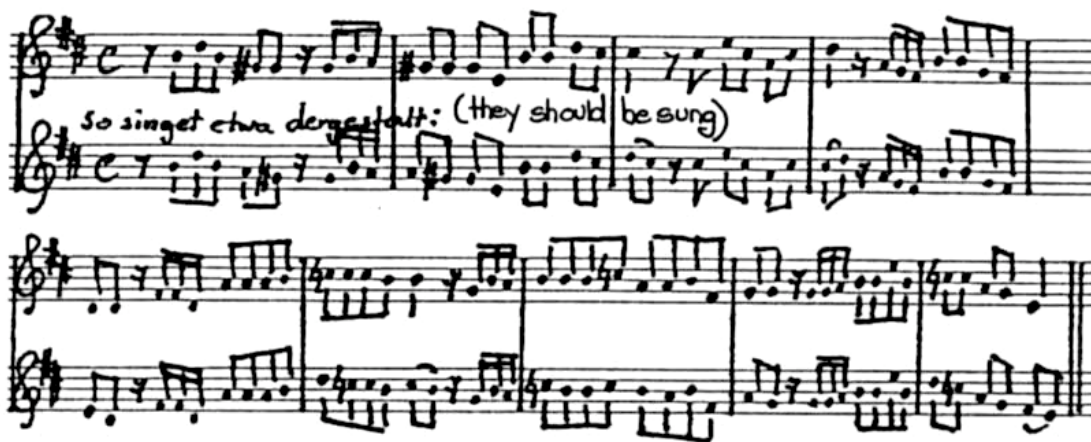
<sup>33</sup> letter of 30 December 1780

<sup>34</sup> letter of 30 December 1780

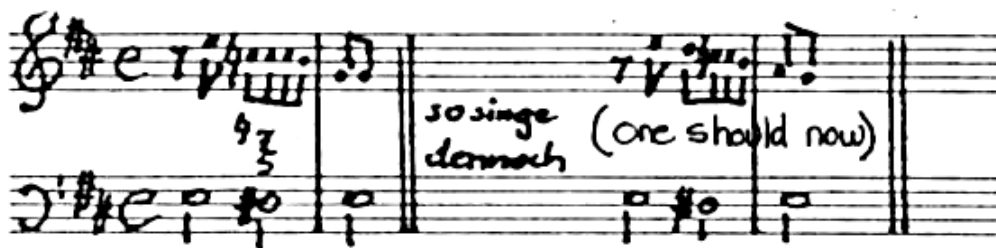
<sup>35</sup> letter of 30 December 1780

Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767)  
Harmonischer Gottes-Dienst Hamburg, 1725  
preface<sup>36</sup>

"In the case of recitative, it must be remembered that it must be sung not to the same regular beat but in accordance with the content of the poetry, now more slowly, now more quickly. The singers must take care not to sing all the time just as the notes appear on the printed page but from time to time to use a so-called "accent" (i.e. appoggiatura). In other words, if the clausulas appear as follows in the recitative of the first piece, they should be sung, for example, as follows:



'Nor should one worry if a modulation occasionally seems to run counter to the bass, as in

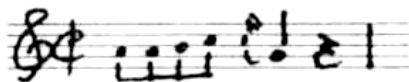


'There are, of course more kinds of appoggiatura that should also be included, in part, under the above example, but space does not allow consideration of them here. All final cadences - in other words, when a full stop follows in the poetry or when the following or similar progressions are found in any key, viz.:

<sup>36</sup> reproduced from Telemann, Singen ist das Fundament zur Musik in allen Dingen, Reclam: Leipzig 1981



This last mentioned is sometimes also found expressed in the following way"



Johann Adolph Scheibe (1708-1776) criticises the above notation in Friedrich Wilhelm Marpurg's Kritische Briefe<sup>37</sup>, demanding that the composer should write out the passage in full, otherwise many singers will not perform it correctly. Johann Adam Hiller (1728-1804) warns against excessive use of the appoggiatura<sup>38</sup>.

Scheibe published his 'Treatise on Recitative', in vols. xi and xii of the Bibliothek der schönen Wissenschaften und freien Künste (Leipzig, 1764/5). The study is divided into two parts, viz.: (i) 'singing speech', by which he means recitation and declamation ('Recitation is a pleasing imitation of indifferent speech using specific musical notes, while declamation, by contrast, is a pleasing imitation of emotionally charged speech using specific musical notes')<sup>39</sup> and (ii) 'actual singing', under which he lists 'ariettas, cavatas, arias, odes and choruses'. The arioso occupies the middle ground between (i) and (ii). However much he praises Telemann's recitative as a good example of the genre<sup>40</sup>, he disagrees with Telemann on the treatment of questions in recitative but gives no examples.

<sup>37</sup> Berlin, 1760-62, letter 109, p. 352

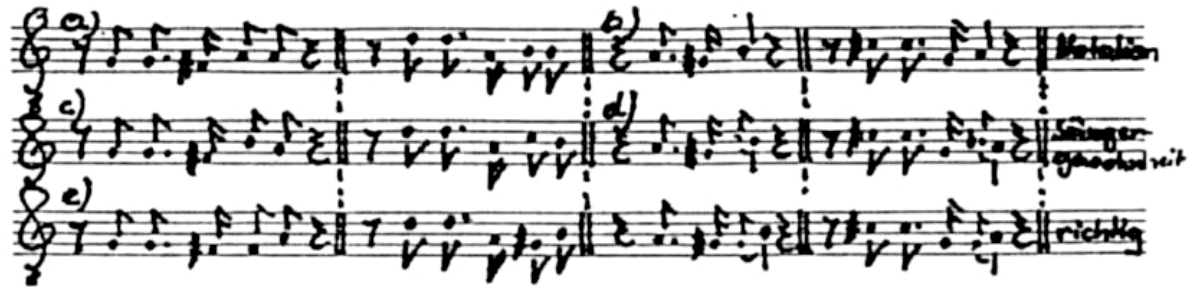
<sup>38</sup> See his Anweisung zum musikalisch-zierlichen Gesange, Leipzig, 1780, p. 101

<sup>39</sup> p. 215

<sup>40</sup> p. 218

Johann Adolph Scheibe (1708-1776)  
Abhandlung über das Rezitativ Leipzig 1764/5)<sup>41</sup>

"The question is a figure of speech which, regardless of its clarity, is generally expressed in a very ambiguous way when we compare the majority of examples gleaned from so many composers with the manner of expression appropriate to language. For example, it is generally expressed as a) if it has a feminine ending and as b) in the case of a masculine ending" (p. 218).



(The words added at the end of each stave are 'Notation', 'Singers' custom' and 'correct')

"In order to sound more tender, the singer sings the first of these as c) and the second as d). But does the same expression as a) reflect the tone of someone asking a question? And since b) is correct, the singer who adds an appoggiatura makes it as wrong as the first, a). The correct way of expressing a question is e) and it should be sung or recited in no other way, since no question must be allowed to descend from a higher note to a lower one" (p. 219).

"I know very well that people may express themselves in such a way that the voice rises by a fourth at the end of the phrase; this can sometimes appear entirely natural; but as soon as the singer, in keeping with ancient tradition, adds a short appoggiatura by approaching the note from the second above, one no longer hears a question; what results is a threatening or defiant expression. I do not think that I need stress the fact that I am speaking here of our German language and that throughout this entire treatise my attention has in fact been directed at the nature of our mother tongue. The majority of our singing teachers, including, more often than not, the best of them, rarely draw a distinction between whether their pupils are supposed to be singing in German or Italian" (p. 220).

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<sup>41</sup> Bibliothek der schönen Wissenschaften und freien Künste, vol. xi, no. 2

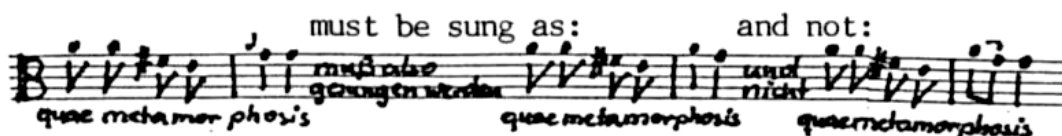
Scheibe condemns excessive ornamentation in recitative (appoggiaturas, trills, mordants, turns and slides): "Although I do not exclude them entirely, it must never appear as though the singer were seeking a somewhat more elegant alternative in order to avoid monotony and stiffness; and as if singing speech inclines more to singing and finally seems to approach arioso."

Scheibe also considers the question of the accompaniment, which is bound to be highly variable depending on what is being expressed; the instruments must "sometimes continue playing quietly and on other occasions strike up briefly and truncatedly". The variable nature of the accompaniment is attested by the method of notation adopted by Bach in his St. Matthew Passion, in other words, well before the publication of Scheibe's lines quoted here: in his autograph full score, Bach writes out the passing notes, whereas in the autograph parts they are notated shorter in keeping with performance practice. Haydn, too, expressed his thoughts on the question of appoggiaturas:

**Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)**  
letter to Götthein (1768)<sup>42</sup>

"the accompaniment should not enter until the singer has completely finished singing the text, even though the opposite often appears in the score, as, for example, at the beginning of the bar on the repeated word "metamorphosis", where the instruments strike up on "-phosis", regardless of which the final syllable must be fully audible on the lips of the singers but then swiftly fall away; for it would be most absurd if the word were to be drowned out by the players and if all that one understood of it was "metamo"; but I leave this to the harpsichordist, from whom all the others must take their cue. (...) "

"Above all I recommend to these two boys (i.e. unpractised soloists) clear diction, slow in recitatives, so that every syllable can be understood, likewise the nature of the singing in recitatives, for example:"



"I rely in this on the skill of the tenor, who will give the boys all the instruction they need on this point."

<sup>42</sup> autograph owned by the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, Vienna, quoted in Robert Haas, *Aufführungspraxis der Musik*, Potsdam, 1931, p. 238ff

Like Scheibe, Johann Adam Hiller allows occasional modest ornaments in recitatives but draws a distinction between recitatives in the theatre, in church and in chamber music.

**Johann Adam Hiller (1728-1804)**

**Anweisung zum musikalisch- zierlichen Gesange Leipzig, 1780<sup>43</sup>**

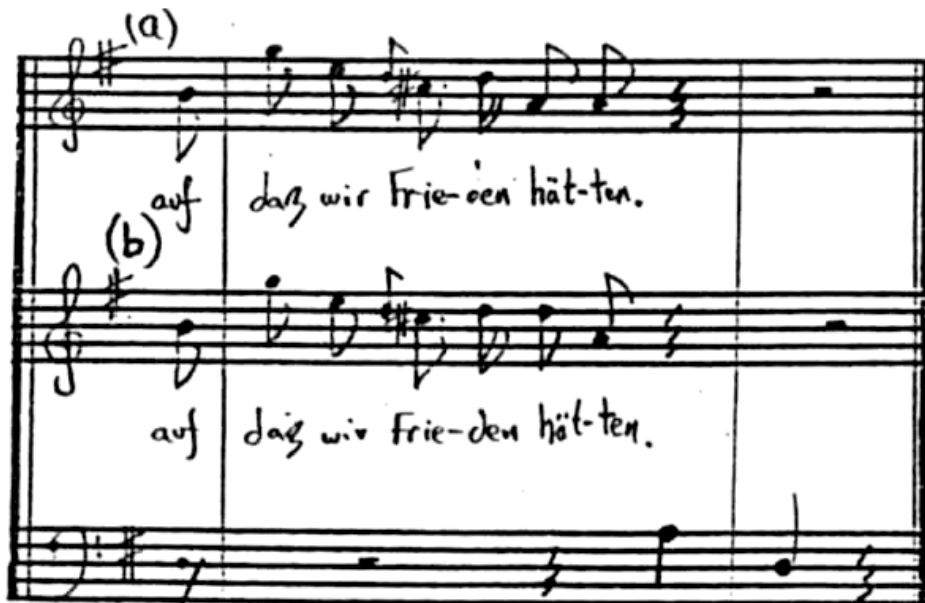
"The recitative is sung most quickly of all on stage, since it takes the place of common speech here. At a time when chamber cantatas were still in fashion, chamber recitative used to demand a particular skill in delivery. It was not extravagant mannerisms and ornaments with which the singer embellished them but the liveliest sympathy with the words which generally expressed the heart's most powerful emotions and which produced a style of delivery in which the singer appeared to feel deeply everything he said. Church recitative remains to this day in possession of such a style of delivery. It demands, throughout, a noble seriousness of purpose and, quite apart from its slower delivery, an occasional tendency to dwell on certain notes, while powerful appoggiaturas will be required on other notes. It is well known that recitative is everywhere sung without observing the beat. In accompanied recitatives, of course, there are sometimes passages which, because of the accompaniment, are bound to the beat and to which attention is drawn by the inclusion of an a tempo marking; the singer must then take care that the delivery does not become academic and stiff but must seek to conceal the slavishness of the beat as far as possible" (p. 100, VI, para. 12).

"Mordants and compact trills rarely occur in recitative, full trills not at all; conversely, the use of appoggiaturas is all the more necessary. On stage, one must be more sparing in the use of these ornaments than one would be in church and in the chamber, in order not to rob the recitative of the semblance of speech. The only exception is in the so-called scena, in which an emotionally charged recitative precedes an aria in the empfindsam style. I should like to add a few further comments on the use of mordants, compact trills, appoggiaturas and double appoggiaturas in recitative and explain them with the aid of examples.

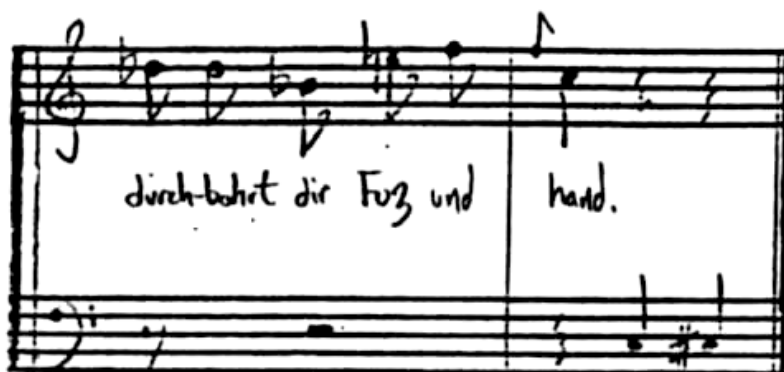
Bisyllabic phrases or cadences are usually set by composers in one of two different ways:"

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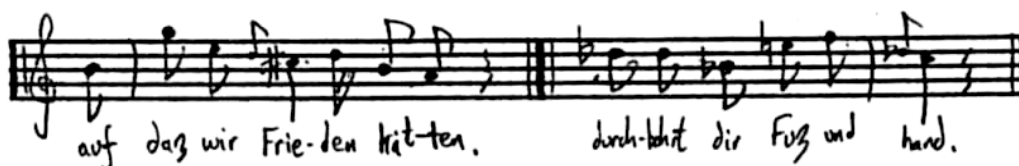
<sup>43</sup> facsimile edition published by Edition Peters, Leipzig, 1976



"Custom now dictates that it is always b) that is sung. Even where monosyllables are involved, the fourth above is heard as an appoggiatura on the final syllable."



"If such cases occur frequently, the singer must bear in mind the need for change in order not to weary his listeners through tiresome uniformity. The conjunct appoggiatura is very useful from this point of view. Both the foregoing examples could also be sung thus" (p. 100, VI, para. 13):



"It is not only appoggiaturas that are used for the purpose of accentuation in recitative, individual notes are often raised by a whole tone. Mancini gives an example of this, when several notes occur in succession at the same pitch" (p. 102, VI, para. 14).

That this type of appoggiatura was of crucial importance not only in recitative but also in the art song, symphony (cf. the bass solo and corresponding cello line in the last movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony) and other genres is clear, for instance, from the edition of Schubert's lieder superintended or influenced by his friend, the singer Johann Michael Vogl. (For examples from Figaro, see supplement.)

The New Mozart Edition includes suggestions for performing appoggiaturas in recitative, but these are necessarily different depending on the work and editor in question. They are important and, indeed, vitally necessary for singers and conductors alike, but the value and effectiveness of each appoggiatura really needs to be examined on its own individual merits. As Scheibe demands, it is the speech melody that must be the starting-point in deciding whether to approach the main note from above or below. In his 'Unterricht vom Rezitativ'<sup>44</sup>, Marpurg similarly demands this form of ascending or inferior appoggiatura in the case of questions, a practice that was self-evident in an age when music was regarded as 'tonal speech' (Klangrede) but which is now neglected, as it was neglected by the editors of Le nozze di Figaro in the New Mozart Edition.

Haydn (vide supra) demands that the accompaniment enter after the cadence, a practice which is now universally adopted, regardless of the dramaturgical context. That this does not have to be so in principle is confirmed by Quantz<sup>45</sup>: "Sometimes the accompaniment is interrupted, so that the singer has the freedom to recite at his pleasure; and the accompanying instruments enter only from time to time, namely, at caesuras when the singers has completed a period. Here the accompanists do not have to wait until the singer has pronounced the final syllable but must enter on the penultimate or suspended note in order to maintain a constant sense of animation." Telemann puts forward a similar argument in the case of theatrical recitative.

### Problems of tempo

Mozart frequently included extremely precise tempo markings in his scores, although Figaro appears to be less meticulously marked than other works, since five sections have no original markings at all. It is striking that all five missing tempo designations belong to the andante family of markings and thus to what was known to an older tradition as the 'tempo giusto', even if this

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<sup>44</sup> Kritische Briefe über die Tonkunst, Berlin, 1763, II, 253ff

<sup>45</sup> Anweisung, p. 272, XVII, 7, para. 59



marking was rarely included as such.<sup>46</sup> This would also explain why there appears to be a less precise tempo designation here.

The question of tempo will always be a matter for the conscience of the individual interpreter, since it involves conceptual and emotive issues, vocal and instrumental possibilities, the space in which the performance takes place and numerous questions of performance practice, including ornamentation, articulation, phrasing and dynamics.

A precondition for the realisation of all these various aspects is a proper critical examination of the score. The consequences of an imprecise tradition can be seen all too clearly from the example of the high-handed treatment of the alla breve sign. Even the earliest editions of Mozart's works already obscure this marking by reproducing it sometimes as printed and on other occasions as a simple C. That Mozart regarded the alla breve marking as a tempo designation is clear from his letters to his father.<sup>47</sup>

Among scholars<sup>48</sup>, there is still no consensus on this matter<sup>49</sup>, since the issue is clouded by a number of obvious errors on Mozart's part. In the Count's aria in *Figaro*, for example, the composer seems to have forgotten to change the alla breve time-signature to C at the change to the Allegro assai, since, although the conductor will still conduct two in a bar here, the result will be an Allegro assai in crotchets of 1 crotchet = 160 MM maximum if Mozart's demand for clarity is not taken into account.<sup>50</sup> In considering Mozart's alla breve time-signature, today's writers invariably start out from the assumption that a 4/4 bar must be conducted four in a bar and ♩ two in a bar. In doing so, they ignore the way in which notation has developed, inasmuch as beat and tempo were still a uniform designation, since everything was related to the 'integer valorum', with its uniform basic beat. That Mozart was still familiar with this practice, at least in part, will become clear in a moment. In his day, alla breve meant a quickening or doubling, an interpretation on which not only all theoreticians<sup>51</sup> were in agreement, so, too, were Mozart himself<sup>52</sup> and even Beethoven<sup>53</sup>.

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<sup>46</sup> See Mozart's letter to his father of 20 July 1778 and Telemann's instructions

<sup>47</sup> See W.A. Mozart to his father No. 776 of 20 February 1784 and No. 750 of 7 June 1783

<sup>48</sup> See Georg Göhler in SMZ, lxxvi (1936), 665-7 and lxxvii (1937), 22-3; Rudolf Steglich, Bericht über die musikwissenschaftliche Tagung der Internationalen Stiftung Mozarteum, Salzburg, August 1931, Leipzig, 1932, p. 172-8

<sup>49</sup> Max Rudolf, Mozart-Jahrbuch, 1976/7, p. 218

<sup>50</sup> See his letter to his father of 17 January 1778 and Leopold's letter to his daughter of 4 January 1786 No. 916

<sup>51</sup> including Quantz, Leopold Mozart, Marpurg, Türk and Kirnberger

<sup>52</sup> See his letters of 7 June 1783 and 20 February 1784

<sup>53</sup> See his letter to Breitkopf & Härtel of 17 July 1812

In Figaro itself, alla breve does not play such a great role, since it is used only four times (or five, if one includes its later use in the overture in Schlesinger's edition). But it is clear from the duet for Susanna and the Count (Nr. 17) that the very meaning of the music is distorted if this additional tempo marking is missing, as it is in the Schlesinger edition of ca. 1822. This edition, of which we shall have more to say in a moment, suppresses the alla breve marking and gives a metronome marking of 1 crotchet = 92. At this speed the whole duet loses the tingling tension of the Count's erotic hopes and turns Susanna's dangerous game into a pleasurable pastime.

Today's interpreters tend to adopt a more or less similar tempo, and the same is true of the Allegro maestoso of the Count's aria (Nr. 18), in which the alla breve marking has been missing in many editions since Schlesinger first omitted it, with the result that, at Schlesinger's tempo of 1 crotchet = 108, the Meastoso tends to become an end in itself.

The most important area in which today's tempi differ from those intended by Mozart concerns the tempo often described as tempo giusto<sup>54</sup>, of which Telemann has the following to say<sup>55</sup>: "those pieces have a moderate tempo in which there is no instruction at the beginning." Mozart was already more precise than this and often wrote "Larghetto, Andante, Moderato" or "Molto andante".

In his doctoral dissertation<sup>56</sup> Rudolf Elvers provided evidence to support the previously expressed view that moderate tempi had become progressively slower since Mozart's day. If one relates Quantz's tempo markings to an average pulse of 1 crotchet = 72 (Quantz sets out from 80, but this results in tempi that are, in part, unplayable), his suggestions can still be related to Mozart, especially to the latter's early works. Compare this with the untenable theory advanced by Willem Retse Talsma in his Wiedergeburt der Klassiker, according to which only every second beat is counted, an assumption that results in intolerably slow tempi.

The Andante remains a problem, since Quantz gives no pulse beat for it. But since he includes the Moderato under the heading of tempi dictated by the rate of the human pulse and since even the only difference that Marpurg draws between them<sup>57</sup> is that the Andante is 'not so slow' and the Moderato 'not so fast', it is possible to deduce the speed of the Andante from this. An explanation of the Andante is also found in Friedrich Nicolai's Beschreibung

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<sup>54</sup> See Mozart's letter to Leopold of 20 July 1778 No. 466

<sup>55</sup> in his preface to his *Harmonischer Gottes-Dienst*, Hamburg 1725/26

<sup>56</sup> *Untersuchen zu den Tempi in Mozarts Instrumentalmusik*, Berlin 1952

<sup>57</sup> in his *Anleitung zur Musik überhaupt und zur Singkunst besonders*, Berlin 1763

einer Reise durch Deutschland und die Schweiz im Jahre 1781<sup>58</sup>: "A subtle, but perceptible difference between the Viennese and Berlin delivery can be heard in the case of the Andante (...). Thus it has a lighter step in Vienna. Anyone who has heard a Hasse Andante played in Dresden and Berlin (...) will understand what I mean. In Dresden it is played more hesitatingly than in Berlin. But in Vienna the step is even lighter than in Dresden. 'Hopping' would be going too far and would also have distasteful associations, which I am far from having in mind."

It may be inferred from this that a 'Viennese' Andante is entirely comparable to Quantz's Moderato, which would set the basic beat of an Andante at 1 crotchet = 72, depending on the structure and time-signature. That such generalisations are highly dangerous without a concrete example is clear from an investigation of the various examples from Figaro, since it is always the 'smallest note value' that must be taken as the starting-point.<sup>59</sup>

In the following table, S = Schlesinger, H = Haenchen

#### Figaro

No. 16, bar 605	6/8	S dotted crotchet = 84	H dotted crotchet = 72
No. 18, bar 14	4/4	S crotchet = 76	H crotchet = 80
No. 20, bar 26(1)	2/4	S quaver = 80	H quaver = 82
No. 29, bar 275	6/8	S dotted crotchet = 76	H dotted crotchet = 66
No. 29, bar 421	4/4	S crotchet = 84	H crotchet = 76

Also to be included in this series of tempi with a basic pulse of around MM = 72 are those tempi in triple time that Quantz calculates on the basis of the basic pulse in such a way that the beat falls on the 1st and 3rd beats of the first bar and on the 2nd beat of the second bar, thereby signifying a doubling of the tempo. Later<sup>60</sup> he also describes speeding up by a third at faster tempi, and this seems to apply to Mozart, too:

No. 23, bar 132	3/4	S crotchet = 100	H crotchet = 100
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The speeding up of an alla breve Andante is clear in

No. 26, bar 1	♩	S crotchet = 120	H crotchet = 120
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<sup>58</sup> Berlin-Stettin 1786, IV, 541ff

<sup>59</sup> See Mozart's letter to his father of 23/25 October 1777; Leopold's letter to his son of 29 January 1778; Mozart's letter to his father of 20 July 1778; and Mozart's letter to his sister of 20 April 1782

<sup>60</sup> Quantz p. 265

Andante movements with a demisemiquaver structure must be slower, in keeping with Mozart's comments quoted above:

No. 16, bar 398    2/4                      S quaver = 132    H quaver = 120

In comparison with other late works by the composer, it is striking that he often notates such structures in 2/4-time, which therefore reckon on being beaten as 4/8, without, however, abandoning the stress relationships of a 2/4 metre. But if one compares a number of Andante tempi as interpreted by today's practitioners with the metronome markings given by Schlesinger in 1822, the tendency to slow down becomes extraordinarily apparent. No. 29, bar 275, for example, is taken by Barenboim at dotted crotchet = 54 and by Erich Kleiber at dotted crotchet = 50, while Kleiber takes No. 23, bar 132, at dotted crotchet = 86.

Equally serious is the difference in the case of the Grazioso of No. 22, a tempo designation related to the Andante that is given by Schlesinger as dotted crotchet = 76, and taken by Haenchen as dotted crotchet = 72, by Erich Kleiber as dotted crotchet = 58 and by Barenboim as dotted crotchet = 60.

As Elvers noted, the above-mentioned practice of a uniform basic pulse was valid in part for Mozart, too, although it never had the overwhelming legitimacy that the principle had enjoyed several generations before him. There is no doubt that a mechanical approach to tempo markings is just as wrong-headed as a completely free one<sup>61</sup>. Large-scale forms in particular can be explained and elucidated by means of organic tempo relations (1:2, 2:1, 1:3, 3:1, 2:3, 3:2). In the second-act finale in *Figaro* (No. 16), the whole complex of tempi can be related to straightforward tempo relations with only slight modifications. Only a designation such as 'Più allegro' (bar 783) appears to be merely a modification of the previous tempo.

Bar	Tempo	Type	Predominant structure	Haenchen MM
1	Allegro	4/4	quavers	minim = 100
126	Molto andante	3/8	semiquavers	quaver = 100
167	Allegro	4/4	quavers	minim = 100
328	Allegro	3/8	quavers	dotted crotchet = 96
398	Andante	2/4	demisemiquavers	quaver = 108
467	Allegro molto	4/4	quaver triplets	minim = 108
605	Andante	6/8	two in a bar	dotted crotchet = 72

<sup>61</sup> See Leopold Mozart's letter to his daughter of 13 May 1786 No. 947: "... It's not that the music is difficult but that it requires a lot of rehearsing to find the true tempo and correct expression in every case"

697 Allegro assai 4/4 two in a bar/quavers minim = 116

The tempo designation 'Molto andante' requires particular attention. In modern interpretations it is often translated as 'very slow', whereas it ought to be understood to mean 'at a good walking pace', so that Susanna's imitative 'Signore' at the musical repeat of the Count's astonished question 'Susanna?', can be effectively underlined. Another example of a 'Molto andante' passage is a section of the melodrama in Thamos, where the transition from Andante to Molto andante clearly demands a speeding up of the tempo both on the grounds of the music's structure and in terms of the textual content, an important detail that is otherwise lost in the lyricism of an unduly slow tempo. Since Figaro includes only a single (non-autograph) Larghetto, it may be mentioned merely in passing that for Mozart Larghetto was evidently virtually synonymous with Andante. When entering works in his autograph Verzeichnis, he often described as a Larghetto a movement designated as an Andante in the corresponding full score.

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# Appendix (Vorschläge)

## I

Notation	Ausführung	Beispiele „Entführung aus dem Serail“	Beispiele „Le Nozze di Figaro“ (Alle Nummern nach NMH)
1		z.B. Nr. 4 Takt 28 z.B. Nr. 6 Takt 66 z.B. Nr. 16 Takt 147	Nr. 16 Takt 430
2		z.B. Nr. 4 Takt 44 z.B. Nr. 15 Takt 491 z.B. Nr. 16 Takt 30 Kann auch länger (s.u.)	Nr. 11 Takt 43 Nr. 13 Takt 98 Nr. 18 Takt 28 (Arie)
3	antizipiert und subtrahiert ausführbar	z.B. Nr. 1 Takt 11 (dort subtrahiert) Nr. 4 Takt 5 Nr. 8 Takt 75 aber Nr. 10 Takt 45 siehe Violinen Nr. 11a Takt 9 (dort antizipiert)	Nr. 2 Takt 95 Nr. 18 Takt 30 Nr. 12 Takt 43 Nr. 28 Takt 41 Nr. 16 Takt 144 Nr. 29 Takt 401
4		z.B. Nr. 17 Takt 152 Nr. 20 Takt 5 (Duetto) Nr. 20 Takt 76	Nr. 10 Takt 3 Nr. 29 Takt 2 Nr. 19 Takt 13 Nr. 29 Takt 20 Nr. 23 Takt 139
5		z.B. Nr. 6 Takt 42 z.B. Nr. 10 Takt 28	Nr. 25 Takt 62
6		z.B. Nr. 6 Takt 101/102 usw.	Nr. 18 Takt 20 Nr. 25 Takt 32
7		z.B. Nr. 2 Takt 24 z.B. Nr. 6 Takt 19 z.B. Nr. 8 Takt 27 z.B. Nr. 12 Takt 88	Nr. 28 Takt 35 Nr. 19 Takt 30 (gegen Synkopen T. 32)
8		z.B. Nr. 17 Takt 64 z.B. Nr. 20 Takt 53	Nr. 29 Takt 428
9		z.B. Nr. 6 Takt 2, 14, 1 Nr. 6 Takt 40 Nr. 6 Takt 59 Nr. 10 Takt 76	Nr. 12 Takt 24 Nr. 21 Takt 13
10		z.B. Nr. 6 Takt 11 Nr. 8 Takt 2, 10 usw.	
11		z.B. Nr. 16 Takt 2, 13	
12			Nr. 21 Takt 19

W.A.MOZART (KV 293e) 19 Kadenzen zu drei Arien von J.Chr.Bach(Abschrift nach der

Handschrift L. Mozarts, Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kultur-

S.1: zu "Cara la dolce" <sup>Handschrift E. Nozari's, Staatsbibliothek</sup> besitzt, Berlin (West), Mus.ms.15570

Fiamma"

Quel Caro  
amabile Volto  
Aria Alleghretto

aus "Adriano in Siria"

(Werte so notiert)

— # — ° — ga sua beltà.

— — — — ga La (Va — ga sua beltà)

anch'io -

verro

✓anch is -

verr - 0.)

anch'io

Verro.



anch'io — — — — —  
 verro  
 se m'alten  
 ani ma bella anchio  
 (s. 10)  
 2. *Cara la dolce*  
*Fiamò di Bach*  
*Aria Cantabile*  
*in F*  
 Ca — — — — — ra  
 ca — — — — — ra  
 ca — — — — — ra  
 Co — — — — — stan — — — — —  
 — — — — — te agnor Sarò  
 co — — — — — (stan) — — — — —  
 — — — — — te agnor Sarò.  
 Co stan — — — — — — — — — — — te agnor Sarò.

(Textverteilung unklar)  
 zu "Catone in Utica"  
 I, 5

## IV

costan - - - - - te agnor Saro

Ida parte  
gia - - - - - cambia.

(gia) - - - - - cambia

Figaro Nr. 28a  
KV 577 (NMF S. 613)  
(cen) - - - - - de!

W.A.Mozart (KV 294) (NMA II, 7, 2) Auszierungsvariante der Arie "Non so d'onde viene"

Komponiert: 24.2.78 in Mannheim für A. Weber (Vgl. Brief vom 28.2.88)

*Andante sostenuto*

14 Non sò d'onde vie - ne quel te - ne-roaf-fet-to, quel te - ne - roaf-fetto, quel

21 mo-to-, chei-gno-to mi na-sce nel petto, quel gel, che le vene scor-

27 ren-do mi va. Non sò d'onde vie-ne, non sò d'onde

34 vic-ne quel te - ne-roaf-fetto, quel mo-to, chei-gno-to mi nasce nel pet-to, quel

42 gel, che le ve-ne scor-ren-do mi va. Non sò d'onde vie-ne quel te - ne-

49 roaf-fetto, quel mo-to, chei-gno-to mi na-sce - nel pet-to, quel gel, che le



56

ve-ne scor-ren do, scor-ren - do mi

61

va, quel gel, che le ve-ne scor-ren - do-mi va, quel gel, che scor-

68

ren - do - mi

KV420 NMH II, 7, 3 S. 66 kadenzierende Koloratur-Varianten aus Mozarts Umkreis:

164

- lar a conso-lar

Mozart

- lar, a con - so - lar

*Adagio*

Inventio  
*Erfindung*

Executio  
*Ausführung*

25