The Dramatic Functions of the Ensemble in the Operas of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

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THE DRAMATIC FUNCTIONS OF THE ENSEMBLE IN THE OPERAS
OF WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
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in

The Department of Speech

by

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FOREWORD

The following study, though hopefully of interest to anyone concerned with the question of operatic dramaturgy and especially the dramatic problem of the ensemble, will perhaps be of most assistance to two groups of persons engaged in operatic production: (1) the singers, and (2) the stage directors. Both of these categories of artists are (or at least should be) vitally concerned with the dramatic problems inherent in operatic scores. Among these problems, that of the ensemble is often particularly puzzling. It is hoped that this study will assist them in their search for theatrical solutions.

Portions of Chapter I of this study originally appeared in my thesis Shakespeare, Nicolai, Verdi and "The Merry Wives of Windsor" (Unpublished Master's Thesis, Louisiana State University, 1966).
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ABSTRACT

Opera is not solely a musical but also a dramatic form. However, in many operas there seem to be moments in which "the drama stops and the music takes over." Prominent among such moments are ensembles, those numbers or sections of operatic scores in which two or more soloists sing together simultaneously. In an effort to determine whether or not such numbers (and especially those passages in which the characters are actually singing simultaneously rather than engaging in musical dialogue) are simply "musical episodes" devoid of dramatic significance, the entire corpus of the ensembles (and finales) of the operas of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was studied. Mozart's works were chosen for several reasons: (1) he is a masterful musical dramatist, at least in his mature opere buffe and Singspiele, (2) his mature operas contain a great number and variety of ensembles, and (3) in many ways, he represents the culmination of eighteenth century operatic ensemble writing.

The study revealed that many of the simultaneous passages of Mozart's ensembles are definitely a part, not only of the drama, but of the action of the operas. Lines sung simultaneously are sometimes used just as solo dialogue lines would be, especially in Così fan tutte and Die Zauberflöte. In other cases, simultaneous singing is used to vividly depict a fight, or argument, or conflict.
of some kind. However, even when the action itself pauses while
the characters sing together simultaneously, it cannot be said that
the drama stops, since the characters are reacting to the events
of the plot or the situation in which they find themselves. The
simultaneous passages in such cases perform two functions that are
definitely dramatic, not simply musical: (1) the reactions of
the characters are explicitly presented to the audience, as is
done in an aside or soliloquy in a spoken drama, and (2) the
importance of the event or situation to which the characters are
reacting is indicated to the audience, at least in some measure.
None of the ensembles of Mozart's operas, even his very early ones,
is completely devoid of dramatic significance.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Opera is not solely or even in some cases primarily (such as in the very first operas) a musical form. It is rather a theatrical form, a more or less complete musical setting of some sort of play, presented in a theatre (as opposed to a concert hall) and utilizing as much of the full paraphernalia of theatrical presentation as the producers deem wise, artistic, and financially feasible. This is not to say that operas are not often (and quite successfully) presented in concert form, just as legitimate plays may be presented in "readings" or simply read in the quiet of one's home. But such concert versions, as Eugene Ormandy recently remarked, are preferable only to not performing the opera at all, since, when librettists and composers think of their works as primarily concerts, they write oratorios or cantatas, not operas. It is true that there are certain works that have been deliberately conceived as something in between a concert and a theatrical production (such as Stravinsky's Oedipus Rex) and it is also true that some static operas might not lose much (for a modern audience) from an oratorio type performance, but this does not invalidate the theatrical presentation of theatrically effective operas any more than the fact that Seneca's plays are closet dramas

invalidates the staging of Sophocles. As H. D. F. Kitto has remarked:

It would be possible to exhume hundreds of operas quite devoid of drama, but though they may be easily in the majority, they do not prove that Opera is undramatic. The best operas are dramatic; the failures are no evidence at all. ¹

The concept of opera as musical drama has been a persistent theme in its development. As is well known, opera was invented in an attempt to emulate Greek tragedy,² and at various times reforms have been thought necessary to revive the ideal of opera as the musical expression of a meaningful drama. Even the much maligned librettists Zeno and Metastasio, under the influence of French neo-classical dramatic theory, "sought to purge the opera of erratically motivated plots"³ that had become common in the seventeenth century. The famous reform of Gluck and the even more famous reform of Wagner, despite their widely differing results, were both motivated by the ideal of music-drama, as each of these composers understood that ideal. In the famous preface to Alceste, Gluck says:

I have striven to restrict music to its true office of serving poetry by means of expression and by following the situations of the story, without interrupting the action or stifling it with a useless superfluity of


²See the comments by Rinuccini, the first librettist, and Peri and Caccini, the first opera composers, in Oliver Strunk (ed.), Source Readings in Music History (New York: W. W. Norton, 1950), pp. 367-392.

ornaments; and I believed that it should do this in
the same way as telling colours affect a correct
and well-ordered drawing, by a well-assorted con-
trast in light and shade, which serves to animate the
figures without altering their contours.\footnote{The entire preface is quoted in Alfred Einstein, Gluck, trans.
makes the point that Gluck's librettist Calazbigi probably wrote the
preface, although it is signed by Gluck.}

Wagner wrote extensively on this subject, especially in his
\textit{Opus und Drama} (1850-51). Though his ideas are wide ranging and
complex, his basic objection to the old style oper\texta he saw himself as
reforming may be summarized as follows:

A means of expression (music) had been converted
into the object; . . . . the real object of expres-
sion (drama) had been converted into a means.\footnote{\textit{Opera and Drama}, trans. Edwin Evans (2 vols.; London: William
Reeves, n.d.), Vol. I, p. 169.}

This same ideal of opera as musical drama is the motivating force
behind the opera-in-English movement in the United State today. Herbert
Graf, a well known producer and stage director, had this to say in 1951:

Because grand opera is performed in America mostly in
foreign languages, the American public when enjoying
opera is relying primarily on its sound. Therefore,
 opera to its American audience is essentially a means
of providing beautiful music, while the drama serves
merely as a frame to make this sensual experience
possible. Vocal quality and quantity, rather than
their function as a means for the expression of the
underlying drama, are the focal point of interest,
and the meaning of the words, the acting, and the
staging take a place of secondary importance.\footnote{\textit{Opera for the People} (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota
Press, 1951), p. 19.}

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The person who declares, "I just want to enjoy the
music in an opera and don't need to understand the
words," simply does not know what opera is. He can
mean hardly more than that he sits waiting through
long stretches of dramatic music for some lyric "numbers" which he enjoys only superficially for the sake of their melody and vocal effects and without experiencing their true motivation. This is a far cry from the real function of a theater and the intentions of its great masters.1

Graf goes on to argue strongly for opera in English as one means of realizing the intentions of the composers. He would agree that:

An opera score must be studied with imagination as well as attention. It will not do merely to read the music as if it were a symphony or a series of songs accompanied by an orchestra. One must at the same time imagine the work as it appears in performance, with the stage action, the costumes, and the scenery.2

If it is agreed that an opera is a drama of some sort, how does the form of the libretto differ from that of a play, if at all? There is at least one opera, Pelleas and Melisande, which is, for all intents and purposes, a play set to music. But most dramas require considerable adaptation before they are suitable for libretti. The obvious and principal reason is that it generally takes longer to sing something than to say it—the exception of the patter aria having little effect on this general statement, since such segments are limited to comic operas and then appear only in certain short passages. The fact that music demands extra time means that a libretto must be considerably simpler than a play would be, and what is usually sacrificed is philosophic discussion and subtle characterization. However, the music adds a dimension of direct emotional impact that is impossible even to poetry. As Joseph Kerman puts it:

1Ibid., p. 47.
2Grout, p. 3.
The speed and mental pliability of words give verse drama an intellectual brilliance impossible to opera . . . . Poetry is much more precise in the treatment of specific matters; narration, discussion, and subtleties of character development come naturally to verse drama, but have to be treated with circumspection in opera . . . . however even the most passionate of speeches exists on a level of emotional reserve that music automatically passes. Music can be immediate and simple in the presentation of emotional states or shades. In an opera people can give themselves over to sensibility; in a play nobody ever quite stops thinking.\(^1\)

For example, consider the case of Iago. In Shakespeare's play he is a complex person whose motives are explained in a number of ways and whose character is one of the most interesting aspects of the play. In Boito's and Verdi's adaptation, however, he becomes a black villain—only his jealousy of Cassio remains to serve as a springboard to his evil-doing, which he perpetrates because it is his destiny and the will of the cruel god who has fashioned him in his image. This we are told in the famous Credo which, though it certainly lacks the subtlety of Shakespeare's characterization, has a direct impact that is lacking in the original—from that point on we are not surprised to discover that the operatic Iago is capable of any monstrosity, whereas Shakespeare implies that his Ancient gets caught in the web of his own conspiracy—a man who never meant things to go quite so far, but is forced to pursue the effects of his own duplicity to fatal conclusions whose seriousness he had not foreseen.

Are there any other differences between a play and a libretto? Grout thinks so:

\(^1\)Kerman, p. 12-13. Mr. Kerman is particularly concerned with poetic drama, but I believe the remarks quoted here are equally applicable to prose drama. His ideas on operatic dramaturgy will be discussed more fully a little later in this study.
The difference is one of emphasis. A play centers about characters and a plot; it may contain episodes which could be omitted without damaging its unity or continuity, but if this is the case, it is, strictly speaking, a defect in the structure. An opera libretto, on the other hand, may almost be said to center about the episodes; at least, it admits and even requires many portions which contribute little or nothing to characterization or to the development of the action, such as dances, choruses, instrumental or vocal ensembles, and spectacular stage effects. Even the solo songs (arias) are often, from a dramatic point of view, mere lyrical interruptions of the plot; they correspond, in a way, to soliloquies in spoken drama. All these things, which (on a comparable scale at least) would be out of place in a spoken drama, are the very life blood of opera. Composers may accept them frankly as episodes or may try to make them contribute in a greater or lesser degree to the depiction of characters or the development of the dramatic idea ...  

This view would seem to be corroborated by Giuseppe Verdi himself. As he wrote to one of his librettists, Antonio Somma:

Of course, anything can be put to music, but not always with good effect. In composing music you need stanzas to write cantabiles, stanzas to write ensembles, stanzas for largos, for allegros, etc., etc., and all varied enough so that none of it turns out cold or monotonous.  

Granting all this, is it not possible and even desirable for an opera to use the so-called episodes for artistic variety while still centering on the characters and plot? For an opera to center on such episodes surely would be as much a defect in its structure as it would be in a play—such an opera would be more of a variety show than a musical drama. Of course, Grout is taking a historical view and his

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1Grout, p. 4.

remarks are perhaps applicable to a large number (or even a majority) of operas, but it is to be noted that he hedges a bit, which is all to the good since the artistic value of the opera as a whole, in my opinion, may well be said to be the inverse of the preponderance of "portions that contribute little or nothing to characterization or development of the action." Note also that in stating that these episodes would be out of place in a play, he qualifies his statement by adding "on a comparable scale." Indeed, the last sentence quoted is an important one: it is possible for the "episodes" to be used for dramatic purposes by librettists and composers. And, while opera may make more use of such things, they are all (with one exception, about which more later) not only possible but often useful and perhaps even necessary in plays. An examination of each item Grout mentions might be useful to illustrate this last point.

The aria is certainly the most common of operatic "episodes," and Grout is absolutely right in saying that it is often merely a lyrical interruption of the plot. When this is true, however, surely such an interruption is just as much "strictly speaking a defect in the structure" of the opera as a comparable episode would be in a play. For example, George Marek believes that "Di Provenza il mar, il suol," as effective and popular a baritone aria as it is, is a defect in the structure of the second act of La Traviata. Whether he is right or not is debatable, of course, but the very fact that such debate is possible illustrates the point that an aria can be an effective and necessary aid in delineating character and/or developing plot. An

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1See the Introduction to the edition of Dumas' Camille published to accompany the RCA Victor recording of La Traviata (LM 6040), p. vi.
excellent example is Iago's aforementioned "Credo." Without it the audience would not understand the Boito-Verdi Iago nearly so well and his actions would be both incomprehensible and unbelievable. The same might be said for King Philip's aria at the beginning of Act III of the four act version of Don Carlo. Such arias, in which the character tells us something about himself or verbalizes his reaction to something that has happened in the course of the plot, are (as Grout mentions) exact parallels to the soliloquies that are so common in Elizabethan drama. Hamlet's "to be or not to be" or "0 that this too too solid flesh might melt" speeches perform exactly the same dramatic function, and Boito's Credo might almost be one of the soliloquies by that redoubtable villain, Richard III.

Proceeding further, "spectacular stage effects" are as useful in plays as in operas, when the intent is to aid the drama rather than just dazzle the audience. The "quaint device" that causes a table laden with food to disappear in Act II, Scene 3, of The Tempest is a problem a modern technical director must exert all his ingenuity to solve. And the storm that gives the above play its name is as much a spectacular stage effect as any in an opera, be it by Rossini or Wagner. A battle scene (as in Henry V) or a coronation (as in Henry VI, part 3) in Shakespeare can, when properly done, be fully as spectacular as the triumphal march from Aida. Again the main question is whether or not such effects aid or hinder the essential drama of either the play or the opera.

As for dances, they are certainly more prevalent in opera than in spoken drama because of the obvious fact that no special arrangements must be made to provide the accompaniment for the dancers, since an
orchestra is one of the basic components of opera production anyway. And opera has certainly been thought of as centering about the ballet, as we can gather from Wagner's experiences with the first Paris production of Tannhäuser. However, when used in a logical place for a logical purpose, the dance can add to the dramatic impact of the overall work. Wagner, in his accounts of his aforementioned troubles in Paris, agreed that the Venusberg scene would be strengthened by the addition of more extensive dance, but objected strongly to inserting a ballet in an inappropriate place merely to suit late arriving balletomanes. Dance is not only appropriate but dramatically effective in such situations as the final scene of A Masked Ball and the ballroom scene of Don Giovanni. And, though it seems to me that American musical comedy, especially such a work as Bernstein's West Side Story, is ahead of most operas in this respect, Salome's "Dance of the Seven Veils" is an example of dance being used as a device to further plot development. It should be noted that dance has also been effectively used in spoken plays, such as Molière's Les Précieuses Ridicules.

Choruses are of course regular features of Greek drama. In the original productions they were apparently sung, at least in part, but in modern productions they are spoken, with great dramatic impact. A recent example of the effectiveness of a speaking chorus in a play is T. S. Eliot's Murder in the Cathedral. Innumerable examples of

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dramatic use of the chorus in opera might be cited, among which the choral scenes in *Boris Godunov* are outstanding.

Instrumental pieces are extensively used in plays, as overtures, background music and entr'actes. Rare is the production of a play in which instrumental music does not play some part, not nearly as extensive as in opera, of course, but performing the same basic functions of setting the mood, depicting the characters or situations, or foreshadowing or recalling incidents in the plot.

The point of all this discussion is that an opera as well as a play can "center about characters and a plot," and that the "episodes," no matter what their beauty when considered individually, can make some sort of a contribution to the whole effect of the underlying drama; if they do not, they are just as open to the accusation of being "defects in the structure" as they would be if they appeared in a spoken play. Of course, one might not regard "episodes" as defects in an opera or a play; however, if they are so regarded in the latter, then they certainly should be so regarded in the former, if opera is indeed musical drama. Surely Grout is absolutely right in saying:

> Neither the poetry or music of an opera is to be judged as if it existed by itself. The music is good not if it happens to make a successful concert piece but primarily if it is appropriate and adequate to the particular situation in the opera where it occurs, and if it contributes something which the other elements cannot supply. If it sounds well in concert form, so much the better, but this is not essential.\(^1\)

We are now left with one operatic "episode" whose parallel is not readily found in plays. The vocal ensemble, therefore, perhaps

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\(^1\)Grout, p. 16.
deserves a closer look than we have taken at the other "episodes."

An ensemble, of course, is that section of an opera in which two or more soloists sing (for at least part of the piece) at the same time, sometimes to the same, but often to different, texts. Duets, trios, quartets, quintets, sextets, etc. (to any of which a chorus may be added) are regular and prominent sections of operatic scores, sections that are practically impossible in play scripts. If, in a play, two or more characters speak different texts at the same time, such a passage can only be used to depict some sort of chaos—a violent argument perhaps or the murmuring of a crowd—and cannot be very extended without confusing the audience. Of course, certain modern dramatists, especially the Absurdists, may want to create a chaotic effect, and therefore (like Ionesco in *The Bald Soprano*) sometimes deliberately use simultaneous speaking for such a purpose. Operatic ensembles, however, occur in all sorts of situations, are often quite long, and the effect is generally not chaotic at all. Two or more parts sounding together is one of the basic devices in Western music, and music can be used by skillful composers to make at least relatively clear contrasting or even conflicting views or feelings of several characters singing at the same time. What is more, ensembles are often, and usually rightfully, considered as musical high points of the works in which they appear. Leonard Bernstein sums up these comments this way:

Now we come to a new function of music in opera, another expansion of reality, and that is simultaneous singing. This is one of the great delights of opera: just think of ensemble numbers like the Quartet from *Rigoletto*, the Sextet from *Lucia*, the Trio from *Der Rosenkavalier*. And why are
these always the high points of opera? Because they provide a thrill that no other art form can provide: the thrill of being able to hear several emotional statements at once. You could never do it in a play. People just can't speak simultaneously—that is, if they want to be heard. It would only be a jumble . . .

But if ensembles are often musical high points of operatic scores, what may be said of their dramatic function? The fact of the matter is that they have often been regarded as perfect examples of "episodes" which are "mere lyrical interruptions of the plot," to recall Grout's comment once again. The following represents such a view. Speaking of operatic production, the English critic Victor Gollancz says:

... in one respect only is a sort of stylised simplicity allowable and even imperative. This is when all action comes to an end, and the peculiar genius of opera ceases to have anything in common with that of an ordinary spoken play: everything is held up while the characters, in an ensemble, musically illumine the dramatic situation. When that happens, the singers must formally take up their positions, and remain not only motionless but gestureless while they sing what the composer has told them to. Examples are the canon quartet in Fidelio, the trio in Rosenkavalier, and the quintet in Die Meistersinger. 2

Mention of Die Meistersinger leads to a consideration of the views on the ensemble of the most famous of all opera theorists, Richard Wagner. As might be expected of such an implacable enemy of traditional operatic forms, he objected strenuously to just such moments as Gollancz has cited. His perfect art work of the future will have no

place for such traditional numbers:

... I must necessarily pass forward to a gradual but complete upheaval of the traditional operatic form. This opera form was never, of its very nature, a form embracing the whole Drama, but rather an arbitrary conglomeration of separate smaller forms of song, whose fortuitous concatenation of Arias, Duos, Trios, &c., with Choruses and so called ensemble pieces, made out the actual edifice of Opera. In the poetic fashioning of my stuffs, it was henceforth impossible for me to contemplate a filling of these ready molded forms, but solely a bringing of the drama's broader Object to the cognisance of the Feeling.

Wagner's basic objection is precisely that such numbers do interrupt the stage action. In a conversation with Rossini, in 1860, which has been recorded for posterity by their mutual friend Edmond Miehotte, he puts his objections perhaps a little more clearly than is common in his more formal theorizing:

"Those bravura arias, those insipid duets manufactured fatally on the same model, and how many other hors d'oeuvres that interrupt the stage action without reason! Then the septets! For in every opera that was to be respected, it was necessary to have a solemn septet in which the drama's characters, setting aside the meaning of their roles, formed a line across the front of the stage—all reconciled!—to come to a common accord (of often what accords, good Lord!) in order to supply the public with one of those stale banalities . . . ."²

What is perhaps surprising about this conversation is that Rossini, whose works certainly exemplify the very attributes that Wagner is attacking, agrees, pleading only that composers have to

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please their public:

"And do you know what we called that in my time in Italy? The row of artichokes. I assure you that I was perfectly aware of the silliness of the thing. It always gave me the impression of a line of porters come to sing in order to earn a tip. But what could you hope for? It was the custom; a concession that one had to make to the public, which otherwise would have thrown sliced potatoes at us... or even some that hadn't been sliced!"¹

Thus two composers whose operatic compositions are so very different agree that the ensemble can be one of the most undramatic aspects of opera. But it is not quite fair to Wagner to maintain, as has been done, that he completely excluded ensemble singing from his dramatico-musical conception of the art-work of the future.²

It is true, as Ernest Newman has pointed out, that there are many discrepancies between Wagner's theories and his practice,³ and it is even possible to maintain that the greatness of Wagner's works is inversely proportional to his strict adherence to his doctrines,⁴ but he never really intended to completely exclude ensemble singing from the art work of the future. It is rather the old "empty" use of ensemble forms that he condemned, as he maintains that "the lyric situation has... to grow out of the drama,"⁵ and that ensembles

¹Ibid., p. 289. It should be remembered that by 1860 Rossini had been a retired opera composer for some time, his last work for the stage, William Tell, having appeared in 1829.


⁵Opera and Drama, p. 546.
are allowable where the dramatic situation requires them, providing that the composer does not conceive of an ensemble "... as a lyric mass, but as a clearly distinguishable association of independent individualities," and, in fact, "this is precisely where his highest power ... will be put to proof" in causing "the individuality of each participant to be made recognizable as a definite, as well as melodic, utterance; and this, moreover, in the same kind of harmonic tone combination."¹

Thus Wagner admits that there is a place for ensembles in his art work of the future, provided only that the dramatic situation requires them and that the individuality of the characters be made apparent within the musical web. His aforementioned quintet from Die Meistersinger may meet both these criteria, but it is difficult to see much difference between it and the traditional ensemble forms that he attacked. In both cases the action seems to come to an abrupt halt. What is more, Gollancz's description of what he considers the only possible valid staging of Wagner's quintet even sounds quite like a row of artichokes, and Gollancz is not a neophyte in the realm of opera-going--in fact, he has been avidly engaged in it since 1909,² so that his observations carry the weight of long experience in observing opera produced in the theatre.

His assertions, however, are diametrically opposed to the practice of such modern operatic stage directors as Boris Goldovsky. Goldovsky

¹Ibid., pp. 547-48. Stein also recognizes that Wagner leaves the door open for the use of ensembles, but he regards this as "parenthetical" and "hedging" on Wagner's part. See Stein, p. 78.

²Gollancz, p. 50.
does not agree that it is necessary to stage ensembles too statically. Also citing the quintet from Die Meistersinger and the quartet from Fidelio, he maintains that in such ensembles "neither the words nor the vocal lines justify the rigor mortis that one so often sees implanted on the faces and in the limbs of the singers." ¹ His theoretical basis for this assertion is a thorough rejection of the idea that, in an ensemble, "drama stands still and music takes over"; in fact, he insists that ensembles "offer their own very special staging opportunities." ² In the course of his book, he discusses possible stagings for ensembles from such operas as The Marriage of Figaro, Così Fan Tutte, Don Giovanni, Hansel and Gretel, The Bartered Bride, Falstaff, Rigoletto, and The Barber of Seville, and in each case his ideas are imaginative and plausible. ³

An examination of his discussion of these ensembles reveals that his basic solution of the dramatic problem posed by the cessation of the action is simply to refuse to allow it to cease. He maintains that it is the stage director's business to "develop or invent additional details to justify" any apparent delay in the action. ⁴ In other words, an ensemble should be regarded not as a "mere lyric

²Ibid., p. 291.
³See especially Chapter 8, "Vocal Ensembles and Choral Scenes," pp. 291-325; the portion of Chapter 9 entitled "When music and drama seem mismatched," pp. 339-343; and the discussion of the first act finale of The Barber of Seville, pp. 384-392.
⁴Ibid., p. 340.
interruption of the plot,¹ but as an opportunity for the complete
development of all of the details of action useful in the staging
of the opera.

Now, what is interesting about Goldovsky's solution of the
dramatic problem of the ensemble is the fact that it is based on the
same fundamental concept of drama that has led to the view that the
ensemble is undramatic since it interrupts the action, as it usually
does. Goldovsky's answer to this criticism is to add to the details
of the action so that an ensemble is not an interruption but a devel-
opment of it. The basic concept of drama in both cases is the same:
drama is action.

This, of course, is a very Aristotelian concept. Furthermore,
there seems to be an obvious corollary to this theorem: that which
does not contribute to plot action is undramatic. It is this concept
and its application to the operatic ensemble that needs to be
thoroughly investigated before any meaningful conclusion about the
dramatic function of any specific ensemble may be reached. An
attempt at such an investigation will be made in the next chapter.

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¹Grout, p. 4.
CHAPTER II

SOME THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is certainly possible to adhere to a non-Aristotelian concept of drama; in fact, in light of present dramatic practice such a concept may even be necessary. For example, the British critic Kenneth Tynan, after being confronted by Waiting for Godot, asserted that the most fundamental definition of drama was not to be found in any book, since that Absurdist play proved that it is "basically a means of spending two hours in the dark without being bored."¹

This is a most appealing idea, since it presents a ready solution to the problem of the dramatic function of the operatic ensemble. One may spend two or even more hours in a darkened concert hall enjoying every minute of a symphonic, choral, or any other sort of musical program, so the entire question as to whether or not ensembles make any contribution to the drama of an opera vanishes into thin air. According to such a theory, all that is necessary is that the music of the ensemble be interesting and it cannot be faulted as undramatic. Unfortunately, such a definition of drama may just possibly perhaps be a shade too broad to be of any real use. Strict adherence to it would perforce cause not only musical but even some athletic (not to mention courtship) activities to be classified as dramas. Indeed,

such events may be, and often are, called "dramatic," but surely Tynan would not maintain that they are dramas in the theatrical sense, which is what he is attempting to define.

There is another non-Aristotelian view of drama that deserves more serious consideration, however, since it has been applied specifically to an attempt to arrive at an understanding of opera as a musical drama. This attempt is made in the previously mentioned book by Joseph Kerman entitled Opera as Drama, which is, in my opinion, the best such endeavor so far, not excluding Wagner's voluminous remarks. The leit-motif of Kerman's book is the statement that "in opera, the dramatist is the composer." What is meant is not that the composer may be a vital force in the production of the libretto, although Kerman of course knows that such composers as Wagner wrote their own and others, such as Verdi, exercised a great deal of control over the form and even the details of the final text. Nor does Kerman mean that the composer assumes the final responsibility for the libretto, which he must at least theoretically approve before he finishes its setting, since the final product does, in the end, go forth into the world under his name, not the librettist's. Rather, Kerman means that the "true" drama of the work is determined solely by the composer and not by the librettist at all. In order to explain this, Kerman first states what he believes drama is not--it is not, he says, strict naturalism, or "exclusively, a matter of effective deployment of plot."¹ This may seem a little naive in our post-Absurdist

¹Kerman, p. 7.
age, especially when it is remembered that Expressionism sprang up almost simultaneously with the realism that Kerman, writing in the early 1950's, calls "our immediate" dramatic tradition. ¹ Of course, Kerman recognizes that what he terms Naturalism is historically not the only dramatic tradition, and indeed, this is the basis for his concept of a musical dramaturgy. For the other modes of spoken drama, he asserts, have been for the most part poetic modes, and this brings him to a basic analogy between the dramatic functions of music and poetry—in poetic drama and opera the "drama is articulated on its most serious level by an imaginative medium, poetry in one case, music in the other."² After quoting T. S. Eliot's Poetry and Drama to support his thesis, he sums up his argument:

The function of dramatic poetry is to supply certain kinds of meaning to the drama, meanings that enrich immeasurably, and enrich dramatically, and that cannot be presented in any other way. What is essentially at issue is the response of the persons in the play to the elements of the action. In this area poetry can do more than prose discussion or the placement of actors into physical and psychological relationships. The particular aspect or weight of such relationships, of events and episodes, is determined by the quality of the verse; and in the largest sense the dramatic form is articulated by poetry in conjunction with the plot structure. The same can be said of music.³

Here, at least, Kerman's approach to drama might seem to differ from Aristotle's only in the matter of emphasis, but the theoretical results of such a difference are far more drastic than is obvious at

¹Ibid.
²Ibid., p. 8.
³Ibid., p. 9.
first glance. Aristotle maintained that, of his six elements of drama (Plot, Character, Diction, Thought, Spectacle, and Song), by far the "most important of all is the structure of the incidents"—that is, the Plot. Aristotle, of course, was not unaware of the dramatic importance of the depiction of character; in fact, he rates Character as second only to Plot in importance, but also maintains that this in large measure is due to the fact that it, along with Thought, serves as the primary source for the actions of the Plot:

"... these—thought and character—are the two natural causes from which actions spring." There is absolutely no doubt that Plot, not Character, is the most important dramatically:

Dramatic action, therefore, is not with a view to the representation of character; character comes in as a subsidiary to the actions. Hence the incidents and the plot are the end of a tragedy; and the end is the chief thing of all.

Kerman's emphasis is exactly the opposite. He of course recognizes that the plot has some significance, but for him its sole raison d'être is to provide the events and situations to which the characters in the work respond. And it is in their response to the plot, not in the plot itself, that true drama is to be found. What Kerman calls "those all important feelings" (i.e. of the characters in response to the action) make the difference between "scenario and

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2. Ibid., p. 25.

work of art." In sum, while the most important aspect of drama for Aristotle is the working out of the plot, for Kerman it is the revelation of the feelings of the characters in response to the plot.

This leads to another difference of opinion. For Aristotle, Diction and Song rank only fourth and fifth in the hierarchy of his six elements, while Plot, of course, is placed in the number one position. For Kerman, however, either poetry or music or both are extremely important, since only through them may the response of the characters be expressed in a meaningful way. In his view, the quality of the poetry or music is of much greater dramatic importance than the structure of the incidents, i.e. the plot. In fact, poetry and music are of such great importance dramatically (in Kerman's opinion) that he comes very close to saying that prose plays cannot be dramatic at all.

Not only is music as capable as poetry of providing true drama, but in some ways Kerman thinks that it is superior. He points out that though poetry can handle some things, such as narration, discussion, and subtleties of character development in a more precise manner, music does a much better job in the essential expression of emotion than poetry possibly can, since "in spite of all the flexibility and clarity of poetry, even the most passionate of

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1 Kerman, p. 12.


3 Kerman, p. 9.
speeches exists on a level of emotional reserve that music automatically passes."¹ Indeed, Kerman seems to imply not only that poetic drama is superior to prose drama, but that music drama, despite the few slight advantages that the spoken form might hold over it, is superior to poetic drama. Now this, as a matter of fact, is a very Wagnerian concept, despite Kerman's insistence that his book "is far from Wagnerian."² Indeed, he is certainly not willing to develop this concept, as Wagner explicitly did, into the proposition that music drama, the Gesamtkunstwerk, is inherently more artistic than the greatest examples of "pure" drama or "pure" music³—in fact, he does not even hint at such an idea. Instead, music and poetry are seen to be different, but equally vital to true dramatic expression:

... in spite of the differences, I would emphasize again that the imaginative function of music in drama and that of poetry in drama are fundamentally the same. Each art has the final responsibility for the success of the drama, for it is within their capacity to define the responses of the characters to deeds and situations. Like poetry, music can reveal the quality of action, and thus determine dramatic form in the most serious sense.⁴

This insistence that the response of the characters to the action is the essence of drama brings up another interesting point about Kerman's musico-dramatic theory. It is not only, at least to some

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²Ibid., p. 3.
³The Art Work of the Future, p. 141. The clearest organization of Wagner's expressions of the ideas that led to this conclusion may be found in Goldman and Sprinchnom (eds.), Wagner on Music and Drama. The organization is the editors'.
⁴Kerman, p. 13.
extent, Wagnerian, but it is at least partially Metastasian as well—
or perhaps it would be better to say that Metastasio's libretti are
in one sense Kermanesque in practice. Now Wagner and Metastasio
are strange bedfellows, so such a statement perhaps calls for some
explanation.

Pietro Metastasio (1698-1782) is opera history's most influential
librettist, a position challenged only by the nineteenth century's
prolific Eugene Scribe. His texts, set over and over again by a
variety of composers, including Hasse, Gluck, and Mozart, set the
style and form of the eighteenth century's operatic equivalent of
tragedy, the opera seria. What is pertinent to this discussion,
however, is the form in which each scene was written. Typically,
the dramatic action takes place in recitative and the musical numbers
are (usually) arias by the principal characters that are expressly
designed to depict their response to the action. This almost sounds
like a reiteration of Kerman's exegesis of the essence of drama.
In fact Kerman recognizes that the Metastasian texts have definite
dramatic possibilities:

None of them, perhaps, will do as a whole, but
within them scene after scene trembles with
emotion and dramatic life. Though the dramatic
construction of these scenes is stereotyped and
artless, even unworkably bare, the aria at the
end does everything that is wanted in the little
situation.²

¹Metastasio's libretti were considered by his contemporaries to
have great literary merit, so much so that a collected edition was
published immediately after his death. This is the Opere del signor
Pietro Metastasio, con dissertazioni, e osservazioni (15 vols.;
Nizza: Presso la Societa Tipographica, 1783-85).

²Kerman, p. 64.
Kerman is certainly not a complete Metastasian—indeed, it would be most surprising if any modern dramatic theorist could be. He complains that the overall Metastasian dramatic rhythm:

is impassive and highly predictable. Each scene runs its appointed course to the exit aria, each act balances its scenes, each opera shuffles the standard contrasts.¹

In other words, Metastasio's neo-classic concern with formal balance appears merely artificial now. Also, in Kerman's view, the Metastasian format had the effect of making things too easy for the composer, who was left with no dramatic problems to solve, but rather merely had to furnish the required number of arias of the proper sort. And, in practice, the whole corpus of works of this type was flawed by the tyranny of the virtuoso singers, who really reigned over the eighteenth century operatic world, pampered by composers and librettists alike.² However, Metastasio's practice seems in general to conform to Kerman's theory. This is not to say that Metastasio's basic dramatic theory was the same as Kerman's. As a matter of fact, the librettist knew and venerated Aristotle, and the opera reform of which he was the culmination was designed to subject the libretto to the precepts of The Poetics as they were then understood.³ What is more, he objected to the fact that the music of the composers and the virtuosity of the singers overshadowed his texts, and was pleased that they were also successful as spoken plays.⁴ In theory then,

¹Ibid., p. 63.
²Ibid., pp. 63-64.
³Grout, pp. 185-87.
⁴These feelings are expressed in a letter written in 1766. An English translation appears in Weisstein, pp. 100-104.
he was Aristotelian, and by far the greater part of any of his libretti is taken up with the recitative passages—that is, the sections in which the action occurs. A typical aria text is usually, in fact, only two stanzas of four lines each. However, when the libretto was set to music, a complete reversal occurred. In the score, the arias occupy a much larger amount of space than the recitatives, since the brief statements of the character's response to the action became the basis of elaborately structured arias.¹

The emphasis in such an opera as a whole, then, is on the character's reaction to the events of the plot, although the emphasis in the libretto itself is on the plot structure. It is for this reason that I have been careful to compare Kerman's theory to the Metastasian operatic practice; by which I mean, not Metastasio's dramatic theory itself, but rather the form it took when his libretti were actually transformed into operas by the composers of his time. To sum up: the emphasis in a Metastasian opera is on the response of the characters to the events and situations of the plot. It is the quality of this response with which the composer is basically concerned and this is reflected in the form of the end product. Such operas are completely in line with Kerman's basic theories.

I do not mean to imply that Metastasio was the first to include in his libretti the means for the composer to explore his characters' emotional responses to the events and situations of the plot. Such passages have been available to opera composers from the beginning

¹See Grout, p. 187.
of the history of the genre, as may be seen by consulting Peri's, Caccini's, and Monteverdi's scores, as well as Kerman's commentary on their practice.\(^1\) However, Metastasio played a prominent role in accentuating the difference between such passages and the action from which they arose by rigidly organizing his libretti on the basis of this dichotomy. For that reason, I intend to appropriate his name for a special purpose. In the rest of this study, the term "Metastasian" shall describe a passage or section of any libretto or score that is wholly concerned with depicting a character's (or characters’) emotional response to the situation in which he finds himself.

Such a term will be found to be extremely useful in a study of the dramatic functions of the ensemble. For example, the following point is now quite readily made: those ensembles that commentators such as Gollancz designate as static, since (despite Goldovsky’s protests to the contrary) the "drama" (that is, the action) seems to stop and the music takes over, are Metastasian in the sense explained above. This has an important implication. It is not necessary to agree with Kerman that the quality of the characters’ response is the most important aspect of drama to see that surely it must be considered, to some extent at least, a dramatic element. Therefore, Metastasian ensembles (or arias or choruses, for that matter) do have their place in the dramatic scheme: the drama

\(^1\)Kerman, pp. 25-38.
cannot be said to stop when the plot action pauses, but must be understood to include those Metastasian passages in which "the music takes over."¹

I have taken this much space to make this point because I believe it to be basic to the dramatic problem of the ensemble. Unless such a proposition as that outlined above is accepted, many ensembles may simply be dismissed as having no dramatic function whatsoever, unless, as Goldovsky maintains is possible, ways can be found to extend or develop the action to include them. Such an approach may well be a valuable technique for enlivening a stage production, so long as the business employed is in accord with the text and the music, as Goldovsky himself, who is a conductor as well as a stage director, is well aware. All of the examples of stagings that he describes in Bringing Opera to Life are carefully thought out on this basis. But such stage business is not inherent in the text or score of a Metastasian ensemble, and a less careful stage director might easily devise business that is not in accord with what the librettist and composer have written, simply for the sake of "action." What is more, the dramatic function of an ensemble is dependent only upon the piece itself, upon its music and words, not on any stage business that might be devised for it. The only purpose of stage business in any case, in my opinion, is to present the drama inherent in the work as forcefully and as clearly to the

¹The phrase "Metastasian ensemble" would normally be almost self-contradictory, since very few ensembles appear in Metastasio's libretti. If the word "Metastasian" is used in the sense outlined above, however, no such contradiction exists.
audience as possible through use of visual stimuli that reinforce the auditory stimuli provided by the librettist and the composer.

When all of this is said, however, only a limited objective has been achieved. Such ensembles as those mentioned by Gollancz—the *Fidelio* quartet, the *Rosenkavalier* trio, and the *Meistersinger* quintet—have been shown to have a dramatic function. It was necessary that this fact be demonstrated in order to justify studying this type of ensemble from a dramatic standpoint in the first place, hence the trouble taken in this study to do so. However, once such a conclusion has been reached, it is only the starting point for an inquiry into the dramatic uses and possibilities of ensembles. There are ensembles that are not simply Metastasian. What are their dramatic functions? Do even Metastasian ensembles serve no other purpose than to give the characters a moment in which to vocalize their response to the plot, or are they of any importance to the form of the plot itself? Such questions cannot be answered without first examining a significant corpus of ensembles. And, in selecting the corpus to be studied, no better choice could be made than the ensembles contained in the operas of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.
CHAPTER III

WHY MOZART?

Mozart is the logical choice for such a study. In the first place, his position as a musical dramatist is unassailable, so much so that the question "Why Mozart?" is almost the equivalent of asking "Why Shakespeare?" of anyone who chooses to discuss any aspect of that author's dramatic technique. There are more definite reasons for choosing Mozart in a study of the operatic ensemble, however. In the first place, he wrote a great many ensembles—in fact, his mature operas abound in them, as will shortly be demonstrated. In the second place, he represents the culmination of the eighteenth century development of the ensemble.

The Italian opera seria emphasized solo singing to the exclusion of almost all ensembles except the duet, but a number of factors combined to allow the development of the ensemble in the Italian comic opera, the opera buffa. One of these was the regular use of the bass voice in the comic genre. Basses have been associated with comedy almost from the beginnings of opera—Charon in Monteverdi's Orfeo (1607) has at least comic possibilities and his namesake in Landi's La Morte d'Orfeo (1619), who is also a bass, is definitely a comic character. The libretto reforms of Apostolo Zeno and Metastasio banished the bass along with comedy from serious opera

1Grout, p. 249. This statement may be verified by an examination of Metastasio's libretti. See the Opere del signor Pietro Metastasio.
at the beginning of the eighteenth century, but they both found refuge in the newly emerging opera buffa. Basses, of course, provide a contrast in register that facilitates ensemble writing, but a second factor was perhaps even more decisive in the development of ensembles in the opera buffa.

In the seventeenth century, the "doctrine of affections" held sway over musical aesthetics. Briefly, this theory stated that the function of any given piece of music was to communicate a particular affection, (state of emotion) to the listener, and that only one emotion could be represented at a time. Under such circumstances an ensemble could occur only in a situation in which the characters expressed the same emotion—as in, for example, a love duet. This doctrine continued to dominate opera seria for a good part of the eighteenth century. Opera buffa, however, was a more popular genre and much less bound by aesthetic theory than its more serious and "artistic" counterpart. Therefore, it was more responsive to technical musical innovations, at least one of which was decisive in the development of the ensemble:

Baroque scoring of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries requires wind and strings to play the same, contrapuntal style of music. During the eighteenth century new methods of orchestration gradually emerged. These include the use of slow

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notes in the wind--against faster notes in the strings—to bind the over-all texture and provide more variable color effects. Similarly, slow-over fast-note patterns came to be employed to distinguish different characters in an ensemble. There is thus some evidence to suggest that advances in orchestration had their influence over advances in operatic characterization. Once composers were sure of these new techniques, they seem to have welcomed the opportunity to write more ensembles. The proportion of ensembles to vocal solos increased sharply in the late eighteenth century opera.¹

This tendency toward ensemble writing eventually forced its way into opera seria also. Paisiello (1740-1816), the author of the famous pre-Rossini setting of The Barber of Seville, is an example of a composer who used extended ensembles in serious works.² As for Mozart, by the end of his brief life, he thought of ensembles as being as desirable in opera seria as in opera buffa. This is shown by the fact that, when he received the commission to compose Metastasio's La Clemenza di Tito³ for the coronation of the Austrian Emperor, Ludwig II, as King of Bohemia, he had the Dresden court poet Caterino Mazzolà alter the libretto, primarily by adding three duets, three trios, a quintet and a sextet--despite the fact that the commission was only received in August, 1791, and the performance was to take place on September 6. These alterations led Mozart to give Mazzolà credit for making the libretto into a "real opera" in


²Grout, p. 251.

³This libretto, as was true of all of Metastasio's, was extremely popular with 18th century composers. At least 20 settings, including one by Gluck, were composed. See Harold Rosenthal and John Warrack, Concise Oxford Dictionary of Opera, (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 79.
his catalogue entry for Tito. Earlier, he had had to defend including a quartet in another opera seria, Idomeneo, since the experienced and conservative tenor Raaff, who created the title role, was sure that such an ensemble would not be effective on stage, and it was only after the quartet was fully rehearsed that he admitted the effectiveness of what Mozart himself thought was the best piece in the opera. Modern commentators agree with the composer. Einstein, for example, calls it "perhaps the most deeply felt and stirring piece in the whole opera."

But even in the opera buffa, up until Mozart, "the principal form is the solo aria; there may be an occasional duet, perhaps a quartet or two and the usual finales, but arias will be in a large majority." In comparing Le nozze di Figaro with Martin's Una Cosa Rara, the libretto of which is also by Mozart's librettist Lorenzo da Ponte, Dent finds that ensembles make up half of the total of musical numbers in the former, whereas in the latter they amount to only about one third. What is more, the proportions in Don Giovanni are about the

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3 Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 701-702.

4 Mozart, His Character, His Work, p. 406.


6 Ibid., p. 109.
same as in *Figaro*, and *Cosi Fan Tutte* is one of the champion ensemble operas of all time, as its seven duets, five trios, one quartet, two quintets, one sextet, and two finales (each of which, as Dent points out, contains every possible combination of the six solo voices) far outnumber the twelve arias.

Perhaps this is the place to comment on the finale, which was an important and extremely influential special form of ensemble—or, rather, a combination of ensembles. As the *opera buffa* developed in the early part of the eighteenth century, one of its most prominent features quickly became the finale, an extended ensemble piece that served to end an act with as much bustle as possible.\(^1\) As Mozart himself said, finales should "wind up with a great deal of noise, which is always appropriate at the end of an act. The more noise the better, . . . so that the audience may not have time to cool down with their applause."\(^3\) But the finale quickly became more than just a rousing finish to set the audience applauding. It developed into a vehicle for "carrying the action forward while at the same time evolving a satisfactory musical form."\(^4\) This certainly would not have been possible without the developments in orchestration.


\(^2\) For an excellent account of the historical development of the finale as well as other types of eighteenth century ensembles see Dent, "Ensembles and Finales in 18th Century Italian Opera," *Sammelbande der internationalen Musikgesellschaft*, XI (1909-10), pp. 543-59; XII (1910-11), pp. 112-38.


\(^4\) Grout, p. 249.
technique mentioned above, but by Mozart's time the finale had grown in importance to such an extent that it had developed elaborate conventions of its own. Da Ponte has vividly described what must have been many librettists' thoughts on facing the writing of a finale:

The finale, besides having to be closely bound up with the rest of the opera, is a kind of little comedy or play by itself demanding a fresh plot and some special interest. It is here chiefly that the genius of the Kapellmeister, the worth of the singers and the greatest dramatic effect must show themselves. There is no recitative, everything is sung, and every kind of singing has to be introduced; adagio, allegro, andante, amabile, armonioso, strepitoso, arcastrepltoso, strepitosissimo, with which nearly always the finale closes. This in technical musical language is called the chiusa, or streotto. I know not whether because in it the play draws to a close, or because it generally puts the brain of the poor poet who has to write the words into such straits not once but a hundred times. According to theatrical dogma, in the finale all the singers must appear on the stage, even if there were three hundred of them, one at a time, or two, or three, or six, or ten, or sixty at a time, to sing solos or duets or trios or sestets or sessantets. And if the plot of the play does not allow of it, then the poet must find a way to make it do so, in despite of good sense and reason and all the Aristotles on earth.  

In Mozart's mature operas, the finales are extremely long. In Figaro, two thirds of Act II is taken up by the finale, as is half of Act IV, while in Die Zauberflöte nearly half the opera consists of the finales to the two acts.  

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2 This has been pointed out by Gerald Abraham in H. C. Robbins Landon and Donald Mitchell (eds.), The Mozart Companion (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), p. 316.
each of their first acts take up about half the act, and, while the
second act finale of Don Giovanni occupies "only" one fifth of its
act, the second act finale of Così is over half again as long as
the rest of its act.\(^1\) It was facts such as these that led Dent to
the conclusion that:

> the finale is really the foundation of all continuous
opera technique. The modern opera, durchkomponiert
as the Germans would call it, i.e. continuous music
all the time, with the minimum of absolute recitative, is simply the finale extended backwards to
the beginning.\(^2\)

And it is certainly true that such a durchkomponiert technique became
the operatic standard in the nineteenth century, so much so that such
popular works as Carmen and Faust, originally opéra-comiques with
spoken dialogue, were supplied with through-composed (i.e. durch-
komponiert) recitatives to bring them in line with other "serious"
operas,\(^2\) and have (generally) continued to be performed in these
versions. The durchkomponiert style remains dominant in this
century, despite such deliberate throw-backs to past procedure as

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\(^1\) Acceptance of the theory that Don Giovanni was originally
planned in four acts and that the Second Act Sextet would then have
been a finale only reinforces the point, of course. See Dent,
Mozart's Operas, pp. 141-42.

\(^2\) Ibid., p. 161.

\(^3\) Faust's recitatives were added by Gounod himself about a year
after the first production in 1859, but Carmen's recitatives were
composed by the New Orleans native Ernest Guiraud for the first per-
formance of the opera outside of France (in Vienna Oct. 23, 1875).
It is interesting to note that Bizet died (June 3, 1875) before his
work was so altered. See Alfred Loewenberg, Annals of Opera, 1597-
pp. 939 and 1043.
of operatic composition—operetta and musical comedy, as well as works influenced by their technique (such as Douglas Moore's *The Devil and Daniel Webster*)—have continued to use spoken dialogue.

Mozart, of course, did not deliberately set out to influence the future theory and practice of operatic composition. Rather, he was intent on producing the most effective musico-dramatic works possible, in order to ensure his fame as a composer and, hopefully, better his financial situation. However, nothing could be further from the truth than Wagner's notion that Mozart composed any libretto handed him without questioning its value, despite the fact that this mistaken idea has been repeated by some commentators well into this century. Mozart himself flatly contradicts such a notion. In fact, he wrote his father in 1783 that:

I have looked through at least a hundred libretti and more, but I have hardly found single one with which I am satisfied; that is to say, so many alterations would have to be made here and there, that even if a poet would undertake to make them, it would be easier for him to write a completely new text—which indeed it is always best to do.

That such a mistaken idea of Mozart's operatic practice and theories persisted for such a long time is perhaps due to an oft quoted remark of his. Writing to his father on October 13, 1781, he commented that "... in an opera the poetry must be altogether

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the obedient daughter of the music."¹ This quotation, taken out of context and not seen in the light of the many other references to the dramatic problems of operatic composition that pepper Mozart's correspondence, might well lead one to the supposition that he cared little about the quality of his libretti. Indeed, he continues on in the same letter with an even more damning statement: "Why do Italian comic operas please everywhere—in spite of their miserable libretti—even in Paris, where I myself have witnessed their success? Just because there the music reigns supreme and when one listens to it all else is forgotten."² Aside from the fact that he might be describing operatic performances in the major opera houses of the United States today, this second comment seems to clinch the argument that Mozart, the "pure" musician, the "really naïve and inspired artist" (as Wagner put it),³ cared nothing at all for the quality of his libretti. But such an idea simply demonstrates the danger of arriving at general conclusions based on a quotation pulled out of context. Mozart spends a great deal of time in the very same letter commenting on some of the mistakes that librettists can make that would ruin an opera. Then he sums up his arguments by stating: "The best thing of all is when a good composer, who understands the stage and is talented enough to make sound suggestions, meets an able poet, that true phoenix, in that case no fears need be entertained as to the applause even of the ignorant."⁴ That Mozart himself

¹Ibid., p. 773.
²Ibid.
³Opera and Drama, Vol. I, p. 56.
understood the stage and had no qualms whatsoever in making suggestions to his librettists is shown by numerous letters that he wrote his father while he was working on the composition of Idomeneo during the last months of 1780 and the beginning of 1781.\(^1\) Mozart was in Munich at the time while his librettist, the Abbate Varesco, was in Salzburg, so Mozart relayed his instructions to the poet through his father. It is noteworthy that the 26 year old composer, though accepting suggestions that he deemed worthy,\(^2\) was sure enough of his theatrical knowledge not only to issue explicit instructions to the older poet, but to defend his decisions against criticism by his father and even (as has been noted above) his singers, who had a great deal of influence during this period of opera history. It is on the basis of these letters that Gerald Abraham makes an excellent case for a more careful consideration of Mozart's operatic aesthetic, pointing out that it was considerably closer to the ideals of Wagner's Opera und Drama than that peremptory doctrinaire ever dreamed.\(^3\)

And indeed it is comforting, if not really surprising, to learn that Mozart's musico-dramatic masterpieces were not produced by a composer who cared nothing about the dramatic effectiveness of his libretti. On the contrary, the evidence of Mozart's artistic relationship with Varesco and with Gottlieb Stephanie the Younger, the librettist of


\(^3\)The Mozart Companion, pp. 284-90. A similar view is expressed by Einstein in Mozart, His Character, His Work, pp. 383-86.
Die Entführung aus dem Serail, suggests an almost Verdi-like concern on the young composer's part with the dramatic effectiveness of the texts of his operas.

Whether or not Mozart played a significant part in shaping even the admirable libretti of Figaro, Don Giovanni, and Cosi is impossible to establish beyond a shadow of a doubt. His letters are of little help here. The same can be said of Da Ponte's Memories and, indeed, that gentleman could hardly be expected to volunteer such information. However, as Dent noted, the libretti that Da Ponte wrote for Mozart differ considerably in form from those he furnished other composers. Also, it may well be that Da Ponte was the "Italian poet" who, in 1783, brought Mozart a libretto which the composer thought he might use if the author would "trim and adjust it" in accordance with his wishes. If this supposition is true, it might possibly indicate the nature of the working relationship between the two men, but the evidence for it, though plausible, is entirely indirect.

At any rate, Mozart was definitely interested in the dramatic, as well as the musical, effectiveness of his operas. His ideas on ensemble writing, however, are barely indicated in his letters. All that can be maintained with certainty is that he was not intent on composing ensembles at all costs, since, though he had to overcome

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1 The evidence in Mozart's letters in the case of Stephanie is not so voluminous or detailed, but what there is tends to support Abraham's thesis. See especially Anderson, Vol. II, pp. 768-70, 772-73, 807-808.

Raaff's objections to retain the quartet in Idomeneo, he was quite willing to sacrifice another quartet originally planned to come near the end of the opera, on the grounds that its omission would improve the scene dramatically.\(^1\) He states his reasons for ordering the omission of another ensemble originally written into the text of Idomeneo even more explicitly:

> The second duet is to be omitted altogether—and indeed with more profit than loss to the opera. For when you read through the scene, you will see that it obviously becomes limp and cold by the addition of an aria or duet, and very gênant [sic] for the other actors who must stand by doing nothing; and besides, the noble struggle between Ilia and Idamante would be too long and thus lose its whole force.\(^2\)

Obviously, one of Mozart's concerns was that an ensemble in this particular place in the dramatic structure would hold up and thus weaken the action. Why, then, did he utilize ensembles and finales so extensively in his most mature works? Abraham thinks that:

> . . . Mozart preferred to unfold and reveal character in the musical action and contrast of ensembles rather than in the relatively, admittedly not invariably, static music of the solo aria.\(^3\)

One aspect of the above statement may seem inconsistent with the comments made earlier in this study about the ensemble. Note that Abraham contrasts the action of the ensemble with static music of

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\(^2\) Ibid., p. 663.

\(^3\) The Mozart Companion, p. 303.
the aria, whereas the ensemble has been treated thus far as being one of the most static portions of an operatic score, using the examples supplied by Gollancz as models. The answer to this seeming inconsistency is really quite simple. Mozart's stage works are "number" operas; that is, they each consist of a series of musical numbers separated from each other by recitative or spoken dialogue. Each number is then designated as to type according to what occurs within its boundaries. A duet is a number in which two singers participate, trio one in which three participate, etc. Now, the trouble arises from the fact that the word "ensemble" may be used in two different senses. On the one hand the word is used to designate the whole of any musical number in which two or more singers take part. However, the actual "ensemble" (that is "together") portions of any such number, those sections in which two or more of the participants actually sing simultaneously, may vary in length from short passages to the entire number itself. The canon quartet from Fidelio, for example, is an ensemble (musical number) which consists entirely of ensemble (simultaneous) singing except for Marcellina's opening statement of the theme. In order to avoid any possible semantic confusion on this point in the rest of this study, henceforth the term "ensemble" will be used to designate the entire musical number; the phrase "simultaneous passage" or "simultaneous section" will be used to designate those portions of the musical number in which two or more of the characters actually sing at the same time.

1 Sometimes "ensemble" is used to mean any musical number for three or more singers, which makes a special category of the duet between the aria and the ensemble. Such a fine distinction seems quite arbitrary.
The point of all of this is that there are many ensembles in which the simultaneous sections make up a considerably smaller portion of the number than in the Fidelio quartet. In such an ensemble, those sections that are not sung simultaneously function dramatically just as any other dialogue would, except that the composer has provided a definitive interpretation of the lines through the means of his music.\(^1\) Obviously, such dialogue sections can be used to further plot action, and very often are so used, especially in the finales. It is because of these dialogue sections that Abraham can speak of the "action of ensembles" in contrast with the "static music of the solo aria," which often is static in that it serves as a soliloquy.

Perhaps an example would serve to demonstrate the dual nature that ensembles are capable of exhibiting. The famous duet "La ci darem la mano" from Don Giovanni occurs as the infamous Don attempts to seduce the peasant girl Zerlina. The number is divided into two clearly defined sections by a change in meter from 2/4 to 6/8. The 2/4 section, which is the longer of the two (49 to 33 measures) is entirely musical dialogue in which plot development definitely occurs—the Don presses his suit and Zerlina waivers before the onslaught. She finally capitulates and only then does the simultaneous section begin (in 6/8). This ensemble as a whole is certainly not static, since the (for the moment) successful seduction of Zerlina occurs within its context. Therefore, the plot is

\(^1\) For a discussion of this aspect of operatic composition, see Chapter IV, "The Opera Composer as Interpreter" in my thesis, Shakespeare, Nicolai, Verdi and "The Merry Wives of Windsor" (Unpublished Master's Thesis, Louisiana State University, 1966), pp. 55-74.
definitely advanced, but that is accomplished during what is essentially musical dialogue. What, however, may be said of the simultaneous section at the end of the duet? No plot is advanced there--the action has already been completed. Apparently this section is just as static as the quartet from Fidelio is as a whole.

It is the simultaneous sections of the ensembles of Mozart's operas that will be the special emphasis of this study. The dialogue portions of the ensembles present no great problems of dramatic analysis, although Mozart's dramatic acumen in setting such sections of his text can be studied with both profit and delight. However, the dramatic functions of the simultaneous sections of the ensembles is not nearly so obvious. Are all such sections in Mozart Metastasian? If so, is that enough to justify them dramatically? If not, what is their nature, and what, if anything, is their contribution to the drama?

The last two chapters have ended in questions. Only a closer look at Mozart's operatic output can provide the answers.
CHAPTER IV

THE ENSEMBLES OF THE LITTLE KNOWN OPERAS

The old complete edition of Mozart's works\(^1\) lists twenty-two separate compositions as "operas," including in this number three uncompleted works: Zaïde, L'oca del Cairo, and Lo sposo deluso. Technically, there should be another title listed, since Mozart began work on an opera buffa libretto by Giuseppe Petrosellini entitled Il Regno delle Amazzoni in 1784. However, he broke off after barely sketching a hundred measures of the first number,\(^2\) so this fragment may safely be ignored. It is not even listed in the latest edition of the Köchel Verzeichnis.

Two of the compositions listed in the old complete edition may also be disregarded, although for entirely different reasons. Thamos, König in Aegypten is not an opera of any sort at all, but rather a series of incidental pieces (choruses and entr'actes) written by Mozart in 1779 for the play of the same name by Tobias Philipp Baron von Gebler, and later revised and expanded for Karl Martin Plumicke's Lanassa.\(^3\) The other work that may be disregarded is the very first one listed as an opera in the old complete edition,


\(^{2}\)Einstein, Mozart, His Character, His Work, pp. 434-35.

\(^{3}\)Einstein, Mozart, His Character, His Work, pp. 450-51.
Die Schuldigkeit des ersten Gebots, which was composed in Salzburg in 1767. Its text, by Ignaz Anton von Weiser, is divided into three parts, only the first of which was set by the eleven year old Mozart—parts two and three having been composed by Michael Haydn (the younger brother of the more famous Joseph) and Anton Adlgasser, respectively. Part one is included in the opera section of the old complete edition since the foreword to its libretto describes it as a "geistliches Singspiel."¹ However, Mozart’s father, Leopold, noted it in his catalogue as "ein Oratorium,"² and other contemporary references to the work also refer to it as an oratorio.³ Also, its form has little in common with the theatrical Singspiel of the 1860’s since it contains secco recitative rather than spoken dialogue.⁴ All of these facts indicate that this work should not be considered an opera, but rather a German oratorio, and therefore outside of the limits of this discussion. In this connection, it is comforting to note that the Neue Mozart-Ausgabe⁵ lists neither Die Schuldigkeit

¹Kochel, p. 51.
²Ibid., p. 49.
⁴The term Singspiel was initially the German equivalent of the Italian dramma per musica, and was applied in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries both to works with recitative and those utilizing spoken dialogue along with musical numbers, but by the second half of the eighteenth century it was restricted to the latter type of work, at least when applied to theatrical pieces. The development of this type of musical drama was greatly influenced by both the English ballad opera and the French opéra-comique in the mid-eighteenth century. See Grout, pp. 263-68, 374-91 for further details.
nor Thomas in its "Werkgruppen 5, Opern und Singspiele."

There are, then, a total of twenty, not twenty-two, operas by Mozart. They were composed over a large portion of his brief life: the first, *Apollo et Hyacinthus*, being written when he was only eleven, while the last two, *Die Zauberflöte* and *La Clemenza di Tito*, were completed in 1791, just a few months before the composer's early death. Mozart was fascinated by the musical theatre throughout his career, and his operas are an extremely significant portion of his total output.¹ A complete chronological list will be found in Table I of the Appendix.

These twenty works are in three languages (German, Italian, and Latin) and represent a variety of eighteenth century operatic types (opera seria, opera buffa, and Singspiel). However, for modern commentators, they fall naturally into two distinct categories: those works that are a regular part of the world's active operatic repertory and those that are not. The first of these categories contains only five works: *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, *Cosi fan tutte*, and *Die Zauberflöte*; while the second includes the other fifteen. Of course, some of the latter are performed more often than others—*Bastien und Bastienne* and *Idomeneo*, for example, are revived much more frequently than *La finta semplice* and *Mitridate*—but a performance of any of them would be considered a historical revival and somewhat of a curiosity (except perhaps at the annual Mozart festival in Salzburg), whereas

¹So much so that Roland Tenschert could entitle his study of Mozart and his operas: *Mozart: Ein Leben für die Oper* (Vienna: Wilhelm Frick Verlage, 1941).
a performance of any one of the "big five" would simply be a normal event in almost any opera house's season.

Information on the five best known operas is readily available. Their plots are summarized in almost all of the myriads of opera plot synopsis books. Vocal scores complete with English translations are available from such publishers as G. Schirmer, Boosey and Hawkes, and International. The current (June, 1969) Schwann record catalogue lists several recordings of each of them as presently available in the United States—in fact, there are four complete recordings of Die Entführung currently on the market, five of Die Zauberflöte, six of Così, seven of Figaro, and eight of the grand champion, Don Giovanni. Each of these recorded editions includes a libretto in the original and an English translation. There are even two books available that provide the complete original texts along with translations for those who do not have access to one in any other form.¹

Information on the fifteen other works is far less readily available. Therefore, they will each be discussed briefly, some idea of their plot provided, and some mention made of the ensembles that appear in their scores.

¹ The translations in these two volumes were done for quite different purposes. The five versions in W. H. Auden et. al. (trans.), The Great Operas of Mozart (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1964) were originally done for the scores of the operas as published by G. Schirmer and therefore are "singing translations" designed to fit Mozart's music. The English versions that appear in Robert Pack and Marjorie Lelash (trans.), Mozart's Librettos (Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1961), by contrast, are specifically meant to be literal translations of the original texts.
1. *Apollo et Hyacinthus* (1767)

This work, Mozart's only opera in Latin, was not meant to stand by itself, but was written to be performed in conjunction with another dramatic work. It was customary for scenic performances to be given by students at the school in Salzburg and in the spring of 1767 the major work performed by the Syntax Class (of which Mozart was a member) was the Very Reverend Professor Father Rufinus Widl's *Clementia Croesi*, a five act Latin tragedy. As was also customary, its performance was accompanied by the presentation of a musical work that served as prelude and intermezzi—in this case *Apollo et Hyacinthus*. The two works were combined as follows: the Intrada and Nos. 1-3 of the opera (designated "Prologus" were performed before Act I of the play; nos. 4-6 (designated "Chorus Iamus") between Acts II and III; and Nos. 7-9 (designated "Chorus IIIdus") between Acts IV and V. The opera's libretto, which was also by Widl, treats the myth of Apollo and Hyacinth with a great deal of freedom. According to Ovid (*Metamorphoses*, Book X) the youth Hyacinth is beloved by Apollo but is accidentally killed by him in the course of a discus-throwing contest, whereupon Apollo in sorrow changes him into the flower that bears his name. In Widl's text, Apollo loves and wishes to marry Melia, daughter of King Oebalus of Lacedaemonia and sister of Hyacinthus. However, Melia is also loved by Zephyrus, who reports to her and her father that the god has killed Hyacinthus. This, of course, makes the deity unacceptable.

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1 See Köchel, p. 55; Deutsch, pp. 75-76.
as a suitor, an impression that seems to be confirmed when he causes Zephyrus to be borne away by the winds. However, the dying Hyacinthus is carried in and announces that his real murderer is Zephyrus. Oebalus and Melia dread the anger of the offended god, but he forgives them, changes Hyacinthus into the flower, and the betrothal is reinstated.

Such eminent writers as Dent and Einstein dismiss this work as unworthy of any comment at all, but its ensembles do exhibit some interesting features. There are only three, two duets and a final trio. The first duet occurs at the point in the plot when Melia believes that Apollo has killed her brother and unjustly gotten rid of Zephyrus. In it, she angrily rejects and dismisses him, while he declares his love and bewails her cruelty. The second duet occurs after Oebalus and Melia learn the truth, and is an expression of their dread of the anger of the offended god. After all the complications of the plot have been resolved, the three remaining characters (Melia, Apollo, and Oebalus) join in the final trio, which expresses the general happiness that things worked out so well in the end.

It should be noted that the first duet does embody a basic plot conflict and is the first example of an attempt by Mozart to depict contrasting emotions in an ensemble. It is almost entirely a musical dialogue, with only brief simultaneous passages, the words of which are repetitions of some of the dialogue text. The form of the piece

\[\text{Mozart's Operas, p. 19; Mozart, His Character, His Work, p. 395.}\]
is also interesting. It is a conventional da capo, but the young Mozart had the good sense to use only the relatively calm pleading of Apollo as the text of the second (Moderato) section, so that the return to the Allegro effectively indicates that Melia is not convinced by his protestations and remains as angry as ever. The piece is over long and repetitious, but the boy composer's dramatic instinct is basically sound.

The second duet is a complete contrast to the first. In it the two characters are expressing similar, indeed practically identical, emotions. Mozart again has the dramatic sense to reflect this in his music, by not only making the melodic lines almost identical, but in treating them throughout imitatively. Jahn notes, citing this duet, that Mozart's use of imitative counterpoint is much greater in this work than in any of his earlier ones, an early indication that dramatic situations led him to discover appropriate musical expression.

Little need be said at this point about the final trio. It is entirely Metastasian, since all the complications of the plot have been completely resolved before it commences. The three remaining characters simply express their joy at the final outcome. It will be found that all of Mozart's completed operas end with a similar ensemble, except for a few that conclude with a chorus that performs the same function. All of these ensembles will be discussed as a group in due course.

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2. \textit{La finta semplice} (1768) and \textit{La finta giardiniera} (1775)

Mozart wrote his first two \textit{opere buffe} before he was out of his teens. Despite the rather considerable time gap between them, which is reflected in a corresponding increase in musical quality (Mozart was, after all, a hoary old man of 19 when the second one was completed), these two works will be considered together since their ensembles, and particularly the simultaneous sections within the ensembles, are quite similar dramatically.

\textit{La finta semplice} is Mozart's first full length opera. It was intended for the Imperial Theatre in Vienna and was actually put into rehearsal, but the theatre manager, Giuseppe Afflisio\textsuperscript{1} was successful in preventing the performance, despite an angrily protesting petition from Leopold Mozart to the Emperor.\textsuperscript{2} The opera, whose text is an alteration by Marco Coltellini of a libretto by Carlo Goldoni, was eventually performed at Salzburg on May 1, 1769. The plot, briefly, is as follows:

The beautiful lady Giacinta is loved by and loves Fracasso, a Hungarian captain, who is quartered with her rich brothers, Cassandro and Polidoro. Fracasso's servant, Simone, and Giacinta's maid, Ninetta, are also (naturally) lovers. In order to trick the tyrannical Cassandro and the stupid Polidoro into consenting to their marriage, the lovers arrange that Fracasso's sister Rosina, who conveniently arrives for a visit, shall make both brothers fall in

\textsuperscript{1}This impresario's name is variously given as Afflisio and Affligio. For example, Köchel, Dent, and Einstein have Afflisio; Jahn and Deutsch have Affligio.

\textsuperscript{2}A translation of this petition appears in Deutsch, pp. 80-84.
love with her, which she accomplishes by using the tactic of feigned simplicity (à la Norina in *Don Pasquale*)—hence the title of the work. The bulk of the plot is a series of farcical scenes consisting of the complications arising from this dual romance. Finally, the brothers are informed that Giacinta and Ninetta have run away, taking with them all the family gold and jewels, and are induced to promise the girls in marriage to anyone who will undertake to bring them (and the valuables) back. Fracasso and Simone accomplish this feat with amazing ease, Rosina finally picks Cassandro as her husband and the opera ends in general rejoicing.

The work is typical of the *opere buffe* of the first two-thirds of the eighteenth century in that there is a scarcity of ensembles. Indeed, except for the three finales that end the acts, it is as much an aria opera as any *opera seria*, containing as it does only one duet and one quartet but twenty one arias.\(^1\)

The quartet is the first number in the opera. This might seem odd in a work that is so devoid of ensembles, except that such pieces, called *introduzioni*, had become a conventional feature of the *opera buffa* by the middle of the eighteenth century. At first such a number was more a part of the overture than the beginning of the opera proper, in fact the overture would often lead directly into the *introduzione* without a break, as is true of the overture and *introduzione* of *La finta semplice*. These ensembles were also functionally a part of the overture in that they were designed to

\(^1\) For a comparative tabulation of the number of arias versus the number of various types of ensembles in Mozart's works, see Table II of the Appendix.
provide a sparkling vocal piece that would help establish the general mood of the work rather than commence the exposition of the plot. However, toward the latter part of the century, the introduzione was influenced more and more by the finale, until it became a sort of "initial finale" in which plot exposition was accomplished within the context of continuous music. 1 Two of the best examples of this fully developed type of introduzione are the first numbers of Mozart's Die Zauberflöte and Don Giovanni, especially the latter. The introduzione of La finta semplice, on the other hand, is an excellent example of the early type.

Most of it is simply a hymn of praise for the joy of love, sung homophonically² and to the same text by four lovers—Giacinta, Fracasso, Ninetta, and Simone. Each of them does have a brief solo section, in which something of his or her character is revealed, which does provide a hint of exposition, but this occurs only in the solo passages, not the simultaneous sections. The real exposition begins with the following recitative. The purpose of the ensemble, and particularly its simultaneous sections, is simply to complete the overture, both literally and in the sense that it aids in


² Homophonic passages are those in which the vocal lines are written in block harmony, moving together in identical, or practically identical, rhythms. The typical Protestant church hymn is a good example of homophonic writing.
establishing the general mood of the work to follow.

The one duet in the score needs hardly any comment at all. The occasion, one of the farcical complications of the plot, is a proposed duel between the belligerent Fracasso and the cowardly Cassandro, initiated on the pretext that the latter has insulted Rosina. This is really quite a funny little scene, with many opportunities for comic acting. Perhaps the number is even good enough to be called, as it is by Einstein, "a little masterpiece." However, it is written entirely in melodic dialogue, with no simultaneous singing at all, except for one completely unimportant measure in which both characters exclaim "si, eccomi qua!" at the same time. Therefore, this number is of no use at all in a discussion of the dramatic function of simultaneous sections of Mozart's ensembles.

Much the same might be said of the three finales, which are, of course, the first of Mozart's opera buffa finales. They are not nearly as complex musically as his mature finales, as might be expected when the age of the composer is kept in mind. Notable plot development occurs in all three of them, particularly the second, as it is in this number that the brothers are informed that their sister has absconded with their money, and the third, in which the complications of plot are finally resolved. Each of them is primarily a through composed dialogue scene, consisting of a string of musical sections that vary in tempo and key as the events of the plot change. They each end with a completely homophonic, Metastasian simultaneous section designed primarily to bring each act to a rousing musical

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1Mozart, His Character, His Work, p. 394.
conclusion. In the case of the last finale, this section functions exactly like the final trio in Apollo et Hyacinthus—that is, it occurs after all the complications of the plot have been resolved and expresses the corporate joy that everything has worked out so well. Except for these concluding simultaneous sections, there are very few passages in which the characters actually sing together, and these are generally quite brief, although they are somewhat more extended in the last finale than in the first two. Each of these passages is homophonic except one. The exception occurs in a little trio in the last finale in which Rosina and Cassandro (singing the same text) make fun of Polidoro, who laments the fact that he has lost Rosina to his brother when he expected to get her for himself. This is the only case in the entire opera of one character being distinguished from others during a simultaneous passage.

Mozart's second opera buffa, La finta giardiniera, was composed on a commission from Elector Maximilian Joseph for his court in Munich. It is just as much an aria opera as its predecessor, containing only an introduzione, two duets, and three finales, the last of which is quite brief, being equivalent to only the last section of the third finale of La finta semplice. The opera's overall form, then, is quite similar to the earlier work.

However, the same cannot be said of the subject matter. La finta semplice is a farce, pure and simple, and Einstein is probably right to maintain that it is a direct descendant of the commedia dell'arte.¹

¹Ibid., pp. 390-95.
La finta giardiniera, however, though retaining certain commedia elements (as, indeed, do such works as The Barber of Seville, The Marriage of Figaro, and Don Pasquale) is another sort of story altogether. Its anonymous libretto is quite possibly by Renato Calzabigi, Gluck's reform librettist, and it is a sentimental comedy of the type popular in both opera and legitimate theatre during the latter half of the eighteenth century. Its plot is a rather peculiar one:

The Count Belfiore has wounded his beloved, the Marchesa Violante, in a fit of jealousy and believes that she is dead. The lady, however, accompanied by her valet, has fled to the palace of the Podestà of Lagonero where, disguised as gardeners, they call themselves Sandrina and Nardo. The Podestà has fallen in love with the beautiful "gardeness" and woos her passionately while his maid Serpetta chases him and Nardo in turn pursues her. Who should arrive at this point but Count Belfiore, who is supposed to marry the Podestà's niece Arminda, much to the chagrin of Ramiro, who desperately loves her. "Sandrina," who still loves the Count, is also heartbroken by this turn of events. Everybody loves somebody who loves somebody else.

But the plot is considerable thicker than that. The Count recognizes "Sandrina" right away, but she steadfastly denies her true identity. Ramiro, in order to stop the Count's wedding to Arminda, brings word that Belfiore has killed his mistress, whereupon the Podestà, motivated as much by jealousy as righteousness (the Count's

\[1\] Köchel, p. 224.
attentions to Sandrina are obvious), decides to try him for murder. He is acquitted, however, when Sandrina reveals that she is the supposedly murdered Violante. This would seem to clear everything up, but it is only the middle of the second act, so Sandrina continues to tell the Count that she is not Violante after all, but that she has lied to save his life. These events are so horrendous that the Count and Sandrina (who really, of course, still love each other) promptly go stark raving mad. In the end, they regain their sanity, everything is straightened out, and everyone ends up with the proper lover, except the poor Podestà, who is left without a mate. The final line up is: Sandrina-Belfiore, Arminda-Ramiro, and Serpetta-Nardo. Which only goes to prove that true love (and the proper social distinctions) will triumph in the end.

The first of the ensembles in this score is an introduzione that is of exactly the same type as the one that opens La finta semplice. It contains two homophonic simultaneous sections, one that opens and one that closes the piece. In between, each of the five participating characters (Sandrina, Serpetta, Ramiro, the Podestà, and Nardo) has a brief solo statement which together furnish perhaps just a little more expository information than the La finta semplice introduzione. The audience learns that Ramiro is melancholy, but not why; that the Podestà is wooing Sandrina who does not return his affection and indeed seems quite depressed; and that Nardo loves Serpetta who has her eye on the Podestà. The opening and closing simultaneous sections serve to indicate that the work will be
basically a gay one despite the melancholy statement of Ramiro and Sandrina, who, by the way, join in singing the joyful sentiments expressed in the simultaneous sections along with all the other characters with no apparent compunction.\footnote{The text of the simultaneous sections of this ensemble may be translated as: "Such exultation, such happy moments, such a lovely countryside. Here love and delight are found everywhere."} This is the last introduzione of this type that Mozart was to write.

The next ensemble that occurs in La finta giardiniera is the finale to the first act. Grout thinks highly of this finale, maintaining that "the development of the action is combined with character differentiation and musical continuity, giving a foretaste of the finales of Figaro and Don Giovanni."\footnote{Grout, p. 277.} There is some truth in this assertion. The music of this finale, while not top rate Mozart, is quite delightful. However, more than Grout intended should not be read into his statement. A foretaste is not the same as a complete aesthetic dinner, which is what the Figaro and Don Giovanni finales are.

Grout does not mention the second act finale, but since it is quite similar to the first act's, they shall be considered together. The most obvious thing about them is the importance they play in the development of the plot. A brief synopsis of the action in each will demonstrate this fact.

The first finale commences at a particularly crucial moment: the Count has just seen Sandrina for the first time and is sure that he...
recognizes her as the supposedly dead Violante. Observed by the surprised Arminda and Ramiro, he questions her, but she steadfastly maintains that she is only a servant. Serpetta, seeing an opportunity to discredit Sandrina in the eyes of the Podesta, informs him that the Count is courting his beloved Sandrina. Despite the attempts by Nardo to dissuade him from believing the gossip, the Podesta observes the tete-a-tete with his own eyes, and the act ends on a note of general consternation.

The significant action of the second act is the trial and acquittal of the Count, all of which is carried on in a recitative. However, since Sandrina continues to insist to the Count that she is not Violante, the situation is basically the same when the second finale begins as it was when the first one ended. After the trial, Sandrina flees from the Count, and he follows her. The rest of the company, discovering that they are gone, go to look for them. The finale itself takes place in a "luogo deserto ed alpestre con grotta oscura practicable" (a deserted and mountainous place with a dark, practical grotto). The characters enter one by one, each looking for his respective lover, but unable to see in the darkness. The action then is reminiscent of the mistaken identities of the fourth act finale of Figaro, but is even more complicated. The Podesta and Arminda mistake each other for Sandrina and the Count, and fall in each other's arms. Exactly the same thing happens to Serpetta and the Count, while Nardo mistakes Sandrina for Serpetta, although she realizes who he is by his voice. This is the state of affairs when Ramiro arrives on the scene, with a light, whereupon everyone
is dumbfounded to recognize his mistake. What is more, Arminda and
the Podestà turn upon the Count and Sandrina, accuse them of faith-
lessness and abuse them. This promptly drives Sandrina and the
Count insane, and they spend the rest of the act believing that they
are Medusa and Alcides and thinking that they hear the music of
nymphs and Sirens. The rest of the company lapses into consternation
at this development, and at this point the act ends.

Both of these finales, then, contain a great deal of action
important to the plot, as is also true of the three finales of *La
finta semplice*. All of the plot development, however, takes place
in musical dialogue. The simultaneous passages are all quite brief,
and are typically completely Metastasian in function. This aspect
of these finales will be discussed more fully later in this study
when the practice of these early finales is compared with that of the
finales of the mature *opere buffe*.

The simultaneous sections of the two duets are also Metastasian.
Both of these duets occur in the third act and the participants in
each of them are the Count and Sandrina. The first one is a sort of
continuation of the preceding finale. The Count and Sandrina are
both still insane, and Nardo, in order to get away from them, has
just convinced them that the sun and moon are fighting over a star.
The bulk of the duet is an extended homophonic presto section in
which they express their terror at the fact that the world is coming
to an end. As ludicrous as this situation seems, it was certainly
meant to be quite comical. Einstein points out that the eighteenth
the 18th century considered all evidences of madness extremely funny, and, in this case at least, he is doubtlessly correct, since Mozart composed it as a comic scene. The two mad lovers' outcries are set to brief, disjointed phrases and accompanied by repeated orchestral forte pianos and tremolos. The resultant over-frantic quality is definitely comic in effect. This simultaneous section is completely Metastasian, although in this case, the two lovers are reacting to an imagined situation.

The second duet is the important one as far as plot development is concerned. The Count and Sandrina, no doubt exhausted by their flight, are discovered sleeping in the Podesta's garden. They awake almost simultaneously and it is obvious that they have been completely cured of their madness, apparently by nothing more powerful than a good rest. In the **recitativo accompagnato** that precedes the duet, they recognize each other and Sandrina finally admits to the Count that she is really Violante but declares that she has decided to marry the Podesta. As the duet proper begins, the Count declares his love for her, but agrees to leave if she persists in her decision. They each start to go but find that they are unable to part from one another again. Gradually their determination breaks down until finally they declare their mutual love. This is the climactic moment of the whole plot, and this fact is emphasized musically by an extended and quite lovely simultaneous section in which the two lovers express their joy at being reunited. Although they sing the same text, this section is more contrapuntal vocally than any other

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1 ^Mozart. His Character. His Work, p. 416.\textsuperscript{1}
in the score, and the counterpoint is imitative, as befits the fact that they are expressing the same emotion. The first part of the duet, by contrast, is in dialogue form and it is in this section that all of the plot action takes place, since the aforementioned simultaneous section commences precisely at the same point the plot development ends, i.e. right where they decide they cannot leave each other after all. The dialogue of the first part of the duet is, however, interspersed with brief, usually homophonic, simultaneous asides in which they express their consternation at the course events are taking. In sum then, this number is quite as Metastasian in its dramaturgy as the finales. The action is carried on in the dialogue sections and the ensemble passages are used to express the characters' reactions to the events.

After this duet, the opera is, for all practical purposes, over. There is only one more brief recitative in which all misunderstandings are cleared up and all the other characters (except the Podesta) are distributed to their respective lovers. The last finale follows immediately. It is a brief, almost completely homophonic ensemble in which, the action being over, all the characters (including the Podesta) join in singing of their happiness at the way things turned out. It corresponds exactly to the final trio of Apollo et Hyacinthus and the last section of the last finale of La finta semplice.

3. **Bastien und Bastienne** (1768)

Mozart's third stage work in order of composition is his first Singspiel. **Bastien und Bastienne** was composed just a few months after
the completion of *La finta semplice* for a private performance in the house of Dr. Anton Mesmer, a family friend of the Mozarts. Its libretto is an explicit example of the influence of the French on the development of the Singspiel, since it is a translation of an adaptation of Rousseau's *Le devin du village* (1752).¹ The story is simplicity itself: Bastienne bemoans Bastien's inconstancy and seeks the advice of the magician Colas. He advises her to pretend to be fickle herself. Needless to say, the plan works, and the two lovers are happily reunited. That is the whole length and depth of the plot of Mozart's first Singspiel.

This little one act work is today the most popular of the operas Mozart wrote before his twentieth birthday especially since its relative lack of vocal difficulties makes it suitable for student workshop productions. There are even three recordings of it listed in the current Schwann catalogue. As Einstein says about the plot: "it is all so childlike, so well suited to the age and genius of the lad composing the music for it, that it became a charming little piece with sufficient vitality to keep it alive up to the present."² At least part of its notoriety, however, is due to the resemblance between the theme of its Intrada and that of the first movement of Beethoven's *Eroica* Symphony.

The work contains three ensembles: two duets and a final trio. The first duet is between Bastienne and Colas. He has just given

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² Mozart, His Character, His Work, p. 450.
her his sage advice and she promises to follow it faithfully. The number is quite short and almost entirely musical dialogue, with only a brief (six measure) section of simultaneous singing at the end, in which some of the earlier dialogue text is repeated.

Much more interesting from a dramatic point of view is the second duet. Bastienne has applied Colas' advice to the problem at hand. Bastien, in desperation, threatens to go and kill himself if she does not relent, but does not budge from the spot. As the duet starts, Bastienne bids him go right ahead, but, when he repeats his threats and starts to leave, she cannot resist calling him back. After a few more mutual recriminations, the two lovers tentatively voice their true feelings about each other and finally become reconciled, all within the confines of a single, though multi-sectioned duet. This piece is notable for several reasons. First and foremost, the pivotal incident of the plot takes place within the musical context of an ensemble. This number is the best early example of Mozart's ability to handle plot development and musical expression simultaneously, and was not to be matched until La finta giardiniera, six years later. The boy's skill at musical characterization is also amazingly high. Note, for example, the contrast between Bastienne's angry opening statement and Bastien's sorrowful one, especially the fact that one of Mozart's devices for achieving the contrast is a purely musical one: the inversion of the figure sung by Bastienne is used by Bastien. Another example of the young Mozart's understanding of the psychology of the characters in this
simple tale is the way he has set Bastienne's call to Bastien as he starts to leave—it is both brief and piano, at once suited to the fact that she does not want him to go but also does not want to make her feelings too obvious, and the equally important fact that she is a little afraid that he really might leave. Also, the halting nature of the lovers' initial attempts at coming to a new understanding is indicated musically be breaking up their lines into brief sections, which are then treated by exact repetitions of the same melodic fragment. It is also noteworthy that Mozart has composed the exact moment when the reconciliation occurs. After the lovers have tentatively indicated that they each might reaffirm their affection, a moment of suspense is created by a fermata on a questioning rest, and then each of them plunges ahead with a brief phrase that finally commits them to a reconciliation. An abrupt change of tempo to Andantino indicates that the reconciliation has, for all intents and purposes, already occurred. The lovers then pledge their faithfulness anew and sing of their happiness.

After all of this is said, however, it must be observed that the dramatic virtues of this duet are almost all caused by Mozart's handling of musical dialogue. There is very little actual simultaneous singing and, when it occurs, the treatment is homophonic rather than contrapuntal—the two characters not only sing the same rhythms in block harmony, but actually sing exactly the same text in each instance. There is, therefore, no attempt at individual characterization during these simultaneous sections. All that can
be done in such an instance is to make sure that these homophonic sections occur at appropriate points—that is, that they occur when it is necessary, or at least plausible, that the characters would be expressing the same emotions in the same words. The two simultaneous sections of this duet at least meet that criterion. The first one occurs when they have apparently decided to renounce each other, and in it they proclaim that they will each choose another lover, since variety in love is desirable. What is appropriate dramatically about this section is that not only is it the most vehement of their mutual protestations of disregard, but that it occurs immediately before the first tentative attempts at reconciliation which are therefore emphasized by the contrast. The second simultaneous section occurs at the very end of the duet when all has been resolved. The two lovers are here literally as well as figuratively in harmony with one another again and express their happiness.

The final trio follows immediately. Colas appears and declares that their love has been restored and that, thanks to his magic, nothing will henceforth disturb it. Bastien and Bastienne sing his praises and the little opera ends as Colas rather immodestly joins them.

4. The remainder of the youthful opere serie

Most of the stage works written by Mozart in his teens were opere serie or some variation of that genre, such as serenate. Apollo et Hyancinthus, of course, is of the same general type, though set apart from the others by its Latin text. Mozart's youthful Italian opere serie are Mitridate (1770), Ascanio in Alba (1771),
Il sogno di Scipione (1772), Lucio Silla (1772), and Il Re pastore (1775). Together they represent the bulk of the boy composer's endeavors at writing for the stage, but today they seem to be the most dated of his dramatic compositions (along with their sister composition Apollo et Hyacinthus) despite the fact that there is some interesting music in each of them.

The first of these works is Mitridate, Re di Ponto, which was commissioned by Count Firmian, Governor-General of Lombardy, and first performed in Milan on December 26, 1770. The libretto is an excellent one of its type, and Einstein laments the fact that Leopold, or some other responsible person, did not warn the boy composer that an effective setting was beyond his present powers and that the text should be carefully saved as it was "the best libretto for an opera seria" that he would ever have. Much of the reason for the libretto's effectiveness was that the author, Cigna-Santi, based it closely on an Italian translation by Giuseppe Parini of the tragedy Mithridate by Racine, which is one of that author's best, though not most famous, plays. At any rate, the production of Mozart's opera was a great success. It had twenty-two consecutive performances and received an excellent review in the "Gassetta di Milano."
However, as might be expected in an *opera seria* of this date, there is a scarcity of ensembles. There are, in fact, only two: the duet that concludes the second act and the final quintet—otherwise, the score is a succession of arias.

The duet, however, occupies a strategic position in the plot, besides ending an act. Mitridate, the anti-Roman king of Pontus in Asia Minor, has just discovered that his betrothed Aspasia is in love with his son Sifare, and that their passion is mutual. The two lovers are, of course, in an awful predicament, so much so that Sifare proposes a suicide pact, which Aspasia cannot bring herself to enter, not because she fears death herself but because she cannot bear to see her beloved die. What is interesting about the duet is that its first (Adagio) section advances this idea, in melodic dialogue form, thus being important to the plot and the characterization and a more dramatic than usual extension of the *recitativo accompagnato* that precedes it. This sort of procedure is rather unusual in an *opera seria* of this date. The credit for this goes mostly to the librettist, however, rather than the boy composer—many of the arias are also designed to be "action arias." The concluding Allegro is the simultaneous section, and it finishes the act on a stirring musical note. In it the lovers (singing the same text) declare their undying affection and curse the stars for their cruel fate.

The other ensemble that occurs in this opera is the final quintet. In the preceding recitative, the dying Mitridate blesses the marriage of Aspasia and Sifare, and his formerly villainous
other son, Farnace, is forgiven and given in marriage to Ismene, daughter of the King of Parti, who has loved him all the while. After all of this is accomplished, Mitridate is carried off after exclaiming "moro felice appieno" (I die full of happiness), which is perhaps the closest thing to a happy ending that is possible when the main character must expire. After all of this action, the four lovers, along with the faithful courtier Arvate, abruptly launch into the quintet, which is quite brief, completely homophonic, and forte. Its text is a statement of defiance to Rome, and it is obviously supposed to end the opera on a heroic note, and to demonstrate that all the characters, despite their former differences, are now united against a common foe, the Romans.

The success of Mitridate led to Mozart's being commissioned by Count Firmian, on behalf of the Empress, to write a serenata teatrale to be a part of the celebrations surrounding the wedding of the Archduke Ferdinand and Princess Maria Beatrice Ricciarda d'Este of Modena. Normally, a serenata of this sort was interpolated between the acts of a complete opera seria, but for this august occasion, Mozart's work was expanded so as to take up a whole evening, and the principal opera seria, Hasse's setting of Metastasio's Ruggiero, was performed on another night. Such serenate are in some ways comparable to the masques of the Stuart court in England. They normally combined a minimum of dramatic interest with a maximum of flattery for the representatives of the nobility in whose honor they were written. This is definitely true of the libretto Giuseppe Parini provided Mozart. The betrothed couple was represented on
stage as Ascanio, the grandson of Venus, and Silvia, a shepherdess descended from Hercules. As Einstein notes "the only complication of the plot . . . results from the fact that Venus forbids her grandson to reveal himself at once as the chosen one."¹ There is only one ensemble in the entire work, a trio for Silvia, Ascanio, and the priest Aeeste, but it does occur at the climax of what little plot there is. In the recitative immediately preceding, Venus has finally revealed to Silvia the identity of her future husband. The incredulous shepherdess asks Ascanio why he hasn't said anything to her previously (a perfectly natural question), and the first part of the trio (Andante) is taken up with Silvia's questioning and Ascanio's and Aeeste's reassurances. A tempo change to Allegro indicates that she is convinced and accepts her happiness (of which she at first could not dream of being worthy). The bulk of the Allegro is then made up of expression of happiness and thanks to the goddess. In a brief recitative, Venus then exhorts the royal couple to reign justly and there follows what would be called a reprise in a Broadway musical, as a shortened version of the Allegro of the trio is repeated. This, incidentally, is the last number in the opera except for a final chorus that gives an opportunity for the pageantry, dancing, and general rejoicing of the assembled company.

Mozart's next dramatic work was another occasional piece, this time for Salzburg, for the consecration of Hieronymus Colloredo as

¹Mozart, His Character, His Work, p. 399.
Bishop. *Il sogno di Scipione* is Mozart's first setting of a libretto by Metastasio himself, but contains no ensembles at all, not even a duet.\(^1\)

Mozart's next *opera seria*, *Lucio Silla*, was dedicated to the Archduke and his consort whose marriage had been celebrated by *Ascanio in Alba*. The work, despite a number of repeat performances, was not really successful, and Dent describes it as "a mediocre opera, not even as good as *Mitridate*."\(^2\) It contains two ensembles, a duet and a trio, along with brief ensemble sections included in the final chorus. Though the ensembles are few, they occur at strategic places. The plot, briefly, is as follows: the Roman dictator Lucio Silla desires the beautiful Giuna, who is betrothed to the banished Cecilio. Silla presses his suit, and the distressed Giuna goes to pray for help at the tomb of her father. Cecilio, who has risked his life by returning to Rome in secret, suddenly appears before her. Giuna cannot believe her eyes, stating in an impassioned *recitativo accompagnato* that it must be a spirit that she sees. The duet commences without any sort of formal orchestral introduction, thus sustaining the dramatic tension which might well have been lost during a conventional instrumental prelude. In the first section, which is all musical dialogue, Cecilio convinces her that it is really he and not a ghost that she sees. Once Giuna is certain

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\(^1\) A brief synopsis of what little plot it has is provided by Einstein, *Mozart, His Character, His Work*, pp. 399-400.

\(^2\) *Mozart's Operas*, p. 25.
that her lover has really returned, they sing of their joy at being together once again in a long and brilliant molto allegro simultaneous section that draws the first act to a close.

The second act also ends with an ensemble—the trio. Cecilio, who, along with his friend Cinna, has been plotting against Silla, has been arrested. The trio commences as Silla threatens his enemy, who, joined by Giuna, defies him. The most noteworthy thing about this trio is that for a good part of it the dictator is clearly differentiated musically from the two lovers, as befits the situation, although there are some simultaneous sections and a touch of fugato that briefly negate this differentiation. There is at least some justification for these passages. In them, the lovers proclaim that their mutual constancy consoles them, while Silla states in an aside that this very constancy dismays him. Therefore the subject, if not the reaction of all of the characters, is the same, and Mozart has chosen to accentuate that fact musically. All of the simultaneous sections of this trio are, however, completely Metastasian.

A brief word must be said about the final number of the opera. Silla suddenly shows himself to be a man of noble heart, renounces his dictatorial ways, and blesses the double wedding of Giuna and Cecilio and Cinna and his (Silla's) sister Celia. Then occurs the finale, in which the Chorus (the populace of Rome) celebrates Silla's magnanimous actions. However, the form of the piece is a sort of rondo, as the reiterated choral sections are interspersed with solo singing, following this plan: Chorus, duet, duet, Chorus,
quartet, Chorus. At no time do the soloists sing simultaneously with the chorus, although in production they all (except for Silla) might perhaps sing the appropriate choral part. The first duet is sung by Giuna and Cecilio, the second by Cinna and Silla, and these four make up the quartet, Celia being strangely silent. The soloists simply enlarge upon the sentiments of the chorus, rejoicing in the fact that the liberty of Rome has been re-established and that "virtue and pity have triumphed over a base love."

The last of Mozart's youthful opere serie is another occasional piece, Il Re pastore, written in 1775 for the festivities attending the Salzburg visit of the Archduke Maximilian Franz, the youngest son of the Empress. This is the second setting by Mozart of a text by Metastasio, in this case one of the poet's later but (here I agree with Einstein) one of his worst libretti. It is extremely sententious, containing "veritable torrents of noble sentiments, and words of wisdom about the duties of a ruler drip unceasingly, sweet as syrup."¹ What little plot there is concerns the love of Aminta, a shepherd (who, unbeknownst even to himself, is the sole heir of the King of Sidon) and Elisa (a "nobile Ninfa di Fenicia"). Toward the end of the first act, Aminta is informed of his true status, and the duet (between the two lovers) that concludes the act is an expression of their concern that the affairs of state will interfere with their love. This is not exactly the height of dramatic tension. In the second act the lovers do indeed have their troubles,

¹Mozart, His Character, His Work, p. 402.
but, in the end they, along with another pair of lovers, Agenore and Tamiri, are united under the patronage of Alexander the Great. After the plot is resolved, there is a finale in which all five characters sing of their happiness at the outcome, at first together, then in various groupings, then finally all together again.

5. The fragments and Der Schauspieldirektor (1786)

II Re pastore was the last opera written by Mozart as a teenager. His next stage composition was not begun until 1779, when he had reached the ripe old age of twenty-three. It is the Singspiel fragment now known as Zaïde, although that title was not given it by Mozart, but by a certain J. Anton Andre, who bought the manuscript from the composer's widow, and eventually published it in 1838. Mozart began the work in hope of having it performed in Vienna, an aspiration that was foiled by the closing of the theatres upon the death of the Empress on November 29, 1780. There are three brief subsequent references to it in Mozart's letters,¹ the last of which indicates that he had come to the conclusion that such a work was not suited for Vienna after all, since it is a serious, moral Singspiel and the Viennese would stand for nothing but comedy. The project was then dropped in favor of Die Entführung aus dem Serail, which is almost, though not quite, a comic version of the earlier work.

The autograph score of Zaïde did not resurface until it was found in Mozart's estate in 1798 and, unfortunately, the text of the

spoken dialogue had been lost in the intervening years. This makes the details of the plot rather difficult to reconstruct, although the broad outlines are clear enough, since the musical numbers for almost all of two acts are extant. The subject is strongly reminiscent of Die Entführung: Soliman, an all powerful sultan, is enamored of Zaïde, one of the seraglio concubines, who loves a Spanish Christian slave, Gomatz, instead of her lord and master. Aided by the sympathetic Alazim, who is apparently an official of the Sultan's court, the two young lovers escape, only to be recaptured and sentenced to death by the infuriated Sultan. The extant fragment ends here, but no doubt a happy ending would have been brought about through an act of clemency on the part of the Sultan, putting him in the same category as his benevolent compatriots Mitridate, Lucio Silla, Pasha Selim, and Titus, to mention only those in Mozart's works.

There is one aspect of Zaïde that is unique in Mozart and therefore deserves some mention even though it is outside of the main subject of this study. This is Mozart's only work that contains sections of "melodrama"—and that term is not here intended to be understood in its modern sense, but rather in its original meaning of dialogue spoken to the accompaniment of instrumental music.

Mozart had been introduced to this technique in 1778, when he saw

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1 For further details on the history of Zaïde, see Einstein, Mozart, His Character, His Work, pp. 452-54; Jahn, Vol. II, pp. 115-16.

2 The most famous examples of this type of melodrama are the gravedigging scene in Beethoven's Fidelio and the Wolf's Glen scene in Weber's Der Freischütz.
the Medea of Georg Benda (1722-95), its foremost exponent. He was so delighted with the dramatic effectiveness of such a practice that for a while, at least, he believed that most recitative should be replaced by melodrama. Zaide, however, is the only work in which he tried the technique himself and then he confined it to two scenes.

Zaide is also important in Mozart's development in ensemble writing. The extant score contains three—a duet, a trio, and a quartet. The music of each of them is excellent. Particularly apparent is the increased flexibility of the handling of the solo lines within the ensembles. Musical dialogue, counterpoint, and homophony alternate with a freedom that is not found in any of the previous operas, even in the finales of La finta giardiniera. The Zaide ensembles are musically a great deal more like the ensembles of the great masterworks that were to follow than like their predecessors, which is perhaps a reflection of the fact that this is the first stage work written by Mozart in his twenties.

The duet, however, needs only a few comments. It is a love duet between Zaide and Gomatz, apparently occurring just after a dialogue in which they first declare their love for each other. It is simply an extended expression of joy, set in alternate dialogue, counterpoint and homophony. The trio, on the other hand, is the last number of the first act and is therefore a sort of finale, although it does not include nearly as much action as the


2Mozart himself was convinced of the high quality of the music for Zaide as a whole. See Anderson, Vol. II, p. 725.
typical opera buffa finale. It apparently occurs just after a dialogue in which Allazim promises to help the lovers escape. In the first (Andantino) section, the lovers express their joy at the prospect of freedom and Allazim encourages them, all in musical dialogue. Then Zaïde has a moment of fear and Gomatz and Allazim both bolster her courage. A change in tempo (to Allegro) indicates their success, and the remainder of the number is sung simultaneously and is completely Metastasian. Gomatz and Zaïde express the desire that they might find rest and peace after so much torment and pain, while Allazim voices almost identical sentiments. On this note the act ends.

The quartet is in some ways the despairing equivalent of the hopeful trio. The lovers have been recaptured and brought before the Sultan who sentences them both to death despite their pleadings for clemency and the entreaties of Allazim. This quartet is by far the most interesting of the Zaïde ensembles from a dramatic point of view. Because of this fact it will be analyzed in some detail in the next chapter.

The composition of Zaïde was interrupted by the commission for Idomeneo (about which more anon) and finally halted altogether by Mozart's acceptance of the libretto of Die Entführung aus dem Serail. After the completion of these two works—an opera seria and a Singspiel, Mozart turned again to opera buffa, a genre he had not attempted since La finta giardiniera. He would have preferred to
continue composing German works, but conditions in Vienna did not allow this course of action, since the Emperor had dissolved the German opera company at the end of the carnival of 1783, and reestablished an Italian company in its stead. In 1784, German opera was almost extinct in Vienna and even though it was officially reinstated the following year, all the best singers, even those of German origin, remained with the Italian troupe. Under these circumstances there was not much hope for the success of a new Singspiel, and Mozart was practically forced to compose opera buffa if he wanted to write for the stage at all. However, he could not find a suitable libretto and finally wrote to his father in Salzburg and proposed that Varesco, the librettist of Idomeneo, write one for him unless the Abbé was "still very much annoyed . . . about the Munich opera." The good Abbé consented to the proposal and Mozart began work on the text that he supplied. A brief idea of the basic plot situation will demonstrate how desperate Mozart was for a libretto, since he at least initially accepted this scenario.

Don Pippo, a haughtly old fool, intends to marry his daughter Celidora off to a nobleman, although she loves Biondello. To prevent the lovers from eloping, Don Pippo has locked his daughter and her companion Lavina up in a fortified and heavily guarded tower surrounded

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3 Anderson, Vol. II, p. 848. The "Munich opera" is of course Idomeneo, in which, as mentioned before, Mozart had demanded many text changes.
by a moat, but has also been induced to promise Biondello Calidora's hand in marriage if he can gain access to her within a year.

Biondello's friend, Calandrino, who incidentally loves Lavina, has constructed a mechanical goose large enough to contain a man. The plan is to have the goose exhibited as a curio from Egypt--hence the title L'oca del Cairo (The Goose from Cairo)--and sail the concealed Biondello across the moat in it to the tower, thereby winning the bet.¹

Mozart set to work on the text, but soon became convinced that alterations were imperative if the opera were ever to succeed. He was particularly uncertain about the whole business of the goose, but there were also many other changes, both major and minor, that he felt were necessary.² The whole project was soon dropped, probably either because Varesco refused to make the necessary changes or Mozart simply came to the conclusion that the whole idea was irredeemable.

At any rate, all of the score that exists are sketches of the numbers of the first act, which was to include two duets, a quartet, and a large finale for seven principals and chorus (as well as several arias). For each of the ensembles, the voice parts appear to be complete, although the accompaniment is merely sketched in.

Both of the duets are for the opera's other pair of lovers, Don Pippo's major domo, Chichibio, and maid, Auretta, who both,

¹For further details, see Jahn, Vol. III, pp. 53-54.

incidentally, support Biondello in his endeavors. The first one (which apparently was to be the first number in the opera) is a duet of comic jealousy and reconciliation, while in the second, they discuss ways of aiding Biondello. Both of these numbers combine dialogue with simultaneous sections of varying lengths. The quartet is a double love duet for the imprisoned ladies and their lovers which is carried on at somewhat of a disadvantage since they are separated by the moat. There is a considerable amount of simultaneous singing in this number. In general, it depicts the unity of feeling of the two determined pairs of lovers, whose hopes are not shaken by the fact that the goose has not yet arrived and that the final day of the year of trial has. (Of course, the goose was to have shown up in the second act.) The two men resolve to get to their sweethearts by building a bridge across the moat, and go off to get workmen to help them construct it.

The finale depicts the actual attempt at constructing the bridge. Unfortunately Auretta and Chichibio have not distracted Don Pippo as they should have done, and he arrives on the scene and calls out his guards, thwarting the attempted elopement. This finale is an imposing musical edifice even in its unfinished condition, and Einstein goes so far as to call it "Mozart's first great buffo finale." There is not nearly so much variety of incident as occurs in the La finta giardiniera finales, but the alternation of dialogue with simultaneous sections is far more flexible, and it builds up

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1Mozart, His Character, His Work, p. 420.
to a much greater musical climax, in which the chorus, as well as each of the seven principals, has an independent part, making it unique among Mozart's *opera buffa* finales in that respect. More shall be said about this finale, especially its ending, in the next chapter.

There is another *opera buffa* fragment that dates from about the same period of Mozart's life as *L'oca del Cairo*. *Lo sposo deluso* is not mentioned by name in any of the extant letters, although it may well have been the opera brought to him by the "Italian poet" in the spring of 1783, in which case the author of the libretto is quite possibly Lorenzo da Ponte, as has been previously mentioned. At any rate, the score of this fragment is even less complete than that of *L'oca del Cairo*, since only the overture and the first four numbers were preserved among Mozart's papers. Of the four vocal pieces, two are ensembles and both are almost entirely complete (as is the overture) while the two arias are only briefly sketched out.

The first number of the opera is a quartet. Bocconio, a rich and foolish old man, has decided to get married (like his descendant, Don Pasquale) and is taunted about his suitability as a bridegroom by his misogynist friend Pulcherio, his niece Bettina, and her intended Don Asdrubale. This quartet is the first of Mozart's "finale-type" *introduzioni*. It is connected musically with the overture, but is full of dialogue and action, in contrast to the *introduzioni* of *La finta semplice* and *La finta giardiniera*. A good deal of expository information is supplied within the context of this quartet, mostly in musical dialogue.
Immediately after the termination of the quartet, Bocconio's bride-to-be, Eugenia, who is described in the cast of characters as being "of somewhat capricious temperament," arrives. Coincidentally, she and Don Asdrubale had once been engaged, but had been separated from each other by a misunderstanding. They are naturally flabbergasted to see each other again (she had believed that he was dead), and Bocconio is bewildered by their consternation. This is the situation that leads to the second ensemble of the score, a completely Metastasian trio in which each of them expresses his or her reaction to this unexpected turn of events.

These two ensembles contain both excellent music and apt musical characterizations. Mozart must not have been satisfied with the libretto as a whole, however, since he apparently did not proceed past the trio in his composition. However, both L'oca del Cairo and Lo sposo deluso may be studied with profit as trial runs for Mozart's great opera buffa masterpieces. He was now musically and dramatically ready; all that was needed was the right libretto, which was to come along two years later in the form of da Ponte's Le nozze di Figaro.

There is another work that may conveniently be discussed here, since, though it is not by any means a fragment, it is a play in which Mozart's contribution is not nearly as extensive as in any of his other stage works. This is Der Schauspieldirektor, written on order of the Emperor Joseph II to be a part of a "pleasure festival" in
honor of a state visit of the Governor-General of the Austrian Netherlands in February of 1786. The date is, of course, quite significant. By this time Mozart had written both *Idomeneo* and *Die Entführung*, as well as the fragments discussed above, and was nearing the completion of *Le nozze di Figaro*, which was premiered in May of the same year. In other words, Mozart was at the height of his powers. Unfortunately, this little occasional piece provided him with scant opportunity to exercise them. It is not really an opera in the sense that *Zaïde* and *Die Entführung* are, but rather a short play in which most of the roles are non-singing ones and in which the music appears only in the last four of the ten French scenes. There are only four musical numbers, excluding the overture, but of that total two are ensembles, a trio and a quartet. The script, which is by the same Stephanie who wrote the text for *Die Entführung*, is a rather loosely connected series of humorous episodes depicting the tribulations of a theatrical manager in his efforts to recruit a dramatic and operatic company for his play house. He makes the mistake of recruiting two temperamental sopranos, a Madame Herz and a Mademoiselle Silberklang, each of whom desires to be designated the company's prima donna. The trio is a musical argument between the two ladies, plus the unsuccessful attempts at mediation by the

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1 See Deutsch, pp. 261-67.

2 Only the musical numbers, not the play script, are printed in the old Complete Works edition. For the complete work, see the Philharmonia Partituren edition of *Der Schauspieldirektor* (Partitur No. 46; Vienna: Universal Edition, n.d.).
company's tenor, Monsieur Vogelsang. There is a great deal of excellent contrapuntal writing throughout the piece—in fact, it is top notch Mozart. What is interesting from the dramatic point of view is that this counterpoint is not merely musical decoration, but serves definite dramatic functions. In the first place, the two ladies are quarreling violently, so much so that it is only natural that they try to shout (or in this case, sing) each other down. This is literally demonstrated by having their lines overlap as one tries to vocally top the other. And, it is also natural that as they reach the height of their fury Monsieur Vogelsang should attempt to quiet them both down—the result being a contrapuntal treatment of all three vocal lines that is dramatically plausible. Also, despite the fact that during the number each lady demonstrates her specialty, which is slow legato singing in the case of Madame Herz and brilliant coloratura in the case of Mademoiselle Silberklang, the counterpoint between the two is often imitative. This too is dramatically plausible—the ladies each make exactly the same claims of superiority and demands for recognition, and this is reflected by the imitative treatment of the two vocal lines. All in all, this number is a marvelous depiction of a musical quarrel, and the ensemble technique is admirably suited to render it as clearly and concisely as possible.

The other ensemble in the score is a closing number, a schlussgesang as it is called in the score. All of the quarrels have finally been resolved by the impresario (a part that was
originally played by Stephanie himself, by the way) and the three singers, joined briefly by Buff, the company comedian, express the general satisfaction. This is another of those concluding ensembles that lie outside of the plot proper. This particular one, however, is a special type: a vaudeville. This protean word in this case means a special type of musical ensemble in which each character sings a different verse alone, followed in each instance by a refrain which is sung by the whole company. Such a form was not an uncommon one to use for a final ensemble, and at least two works that are quite famous and popular today end with a vaudeville: Rossini's *Barber of Seville* and, of course, Mozart's own *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*.

6. *Idomeneo* (1781) and *La Clemenza di Tito* (1791).

Despite the fact that these two works are separated by ten years, they may be conveniently grouped together because they are Mozart's only mature *opere serie*. Both are the result of a commission—*Idomeneo* was requested by Elector Carl Theodor for the Munich carnival of 1781, and Mozart had to interrupt work on *Die Zauberflöte* to fulfill the order to compose a new setting of Metastasio's old libretto *La Clemenza di Tito* (1734) for the coronation of Emperor Leopold II as King of Bohemia. They are the only two of Mozart's mature full length operas that are hardly ever performed today.

Mention was made in the previous chapter of Mozart's part in molding the libretto of *Idomeneo*. The final result is a text that is not completely like those of Metastasio, Varesco's model.  

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However, although the chorus plays an unusually large part for an opera seria, the work is primarily an aria opera, with only three ensembles: a trio in Act II and a duet and quartet in Act III.

The plot, briefly, is as follows: Idomeneo, king of Crete, encounters great storms at sea while returning from the Trojan War. He vows to sacrifice the first person he meets on shore in order to appease Neptune. That person turns out to be his son Idamante. Idomeneo, without telling Idamante the real reason, arranges for him to leave the island on the pretext of escorting the Princess Electra, who is in love with the young prince, back to Argos. Idamante is dismayed at this prospect, since he is in love with Ilia, a captured Trojan princess. Meanwhile Neptune, having learned of the plot to thwart his will, causes a sea monster to ravage Crete. Idomeneo is forced to confess that he has not fulfilled his vow and that Idamante must be sacrificed. Idamante is ready to meet his fate, but Ilia offers to die in his stead—at which point a voice from Heaven proclaims that he has been saved through her unselfish love. Idomeneo is pardoned, but deposed as king and Idamante and Ilia assume the throne together.

The first ensemble in this mass of mixed-up mythology is the trio for Idomeneo, Idamante, and Electra that occurs at the point in the plot where the king orders his son to escort the princess back to Argos. Electra, of course, is elated at the prospect, but both Idomeneo and Idamante are downcast; the former at the idea of losing his son, the latter at the forced separation from Ilia. The first part of the trio is mostly musical dialogue in which the prince
and Electra take leave of his father and he in turn blesses them, although there is a brief simultaneous passage in which they all pray for help from heaven. The main simultaneous section, however, begins with a tempo change to Allegro con brio. In it, all three characters sing the same words: "May this confusion come to an end, Heaven's compassion will hold out its hand." The music to this section is excellent, but the sentiments expressed are only applicable to the situation in which each character finds himself in the most general way—it is Metastasian, but there is no attempt, either in words or music, to preserve the individuality of the characters. The duet is a somewhat different matter. Idamante has resolved to try to slay the sea monster. Ilia, who has hitherto denied that she loves him, is shocked into confessing it by the prospect of his danger. There is a brief section of musical dialogue in which Idamante expresses his joy at this event and Ilia promises to be his wife, and then they sing of their happiness simultaneously. At least here the sentiments expressed are completely applicable to both characters.

The last ensemble in this opera is its musical high point, the quartet, the number that Einstein calls "the first really great ensemble in the history of the opera seria."¹ It follows the duet in the score. In the intervening recitative Idomeneo, who along with Electra has overheard the lovers' expressions of happiness, insists that Idamante must flee Crete at once without telling him

¹Mozart, His Character, His Work, p. 406.
exactly why. Ilia says that she wants to follow her beloved in exile, and the quartet commences as Idamante tells her to stay in Crete and live in peace rather than follow him on his homeless wanderings. Ilia reaffirms her intention to follow him, whereupon Electra reacts to this situation with anger, as Idomeneo does with sorrow. In the simultaneous sections, the characters either sing such generalized sentiments as "my heart is breaking, it is not possible to suffer more," or repeat the text they had during the opening dialogue section. One unusual and dramatically appropriate touch occurs at the very end of this ensemble. All four characters finish singing together what would normally be the last vocal phrase of the ensemble, but then Idamante repeats one of his opening lines to Ilia. "Farewell, I go wandering all alone," completely solo and then exits. The quartet comes to an end without any further singing. This is the last ensemble in *Idomeneo*, which ends with a chorus.

As was mentioned in the last chapter, Mozart had the court poet Mazzola drastically revise the old libretto of *La Clemenza di Tito* in a somewhat desperate attempt to bring it up to date. Mozart himself seems to have been quite satisfied with the result, since he credited Mazzola with making the work into a real opera, but its plot seems today to be even more old fashioned than that of *Idomeneo*.

Vitellia, daughter of the deceased Roman Emperor Vitellius, is enraged because the new Emperor, Titus, has not chosen her to be his wife. She therefore persuades Sextus, who is madly in love with her, to assassinate his ruler and friend. Meanwhile, Titus has
chosen Servillia, Sextus' sister, as his queen, but relinquishes her when she tells him that she loves Annius—which is his first act of clemency, as Dent points out. He then decides to marry Vitellia after all, and sends his general Publius to inform her of his intention. Publius arrives too late since Sextus has already left to set fire to Rome and murder Titus. He accomplishes only the first of these two objectives, however, since he mistakenly wounds another man instead of the Emperor. He is then captured and sentenced to death by the Senate, but does not implicate Vitellia. Titus has already decided to pardon Sextus when Vitellia comes forward and confesses that she was the instigator of the conspiracy. Titus proceeds to pardon her also, and the opera ends with general rejoicing.

The first ensemble in the score is also the first musical number, a duet for Vitellia and Sextus. In the preceding recitative, she threatens to leave him if he refuses to carry out her wishes and kill Titus. The duet starts as he capitulates. The first section is completely musical dialogue, in which he swears to follow her wishes and she repeats her desire for Titus' death. The tempo changes to Allegro for the Metastasian simultaneous section in which they both sing this text: "A thousand passions are battling within me; there is nowhere a more tormented soul than mine."

The second duet is aptly labeled a duettino. It is extremely brief and entirely simultaneous. Annius has just asked Sextus to

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1 Dent, Mozart's Operas, p. 213.
petition the Emperor for the marriage of Annius and Servilia; and the two men sing briefly of their friendship, asking heaven to bless each other.

The third ensemble is also a duet. Titus has announced his choice of Servilia for his own bride and the broken-hearted Annius goes to tell her that he must renounce her. The two lovers then sing a duet in which she proclaims that she will always love him. The final simultaneous section is an expression by both of them of the power of true love.

The next ensemble, a trio, occurs at a crucial point in the plot. Vitellia has just sent Sextus off to murder Titus when Publius and Annius arrive to tell her that she is the Emperor's new choice for his bride. In the trio, Vitellia reacts with horror at what she has done, while Annius and Publius attribute her confusion to the sudden joyful news that she has received. This is the first time in this opera that one character is distinguished from another musically in the course of a simultaneous section. Annius and Publius sing together, but Vitellia's musical line contrasts with their completely.

The first act (there are only two) ends with a finale that is definitely modeled on the opera buffa type finale. Sextus has set the city aflame and believes that he has killed Titus. All of the other characters (except Titus, of course) join him on stage and discuss the strange events while the chorus (the people of Rome) laments in the background. There is a good deal of musical dialogue as the various characters tell each other what they know of the
terrifying events, plus several short Metastasian simultaneous sections as they vocalize their reactions, and then the act ends as all of the soloists and the chorus combine to sing of this "day of sorrow." No less an authority than Dent regards this finale as being very important since it is "the first in which Mozart has combined both solo voices and chorus too in a great ensemble."¹ This statement is only true, however, if the completed operas are considered, since Mozart's first big finale with soloists and chorus is in reality the first act finale of the unfinished L'oca del Cairo. However, it is true, as Dent goes on to point out, that the chorus in the Clemenza di Tito finale is a factor in the drama, increasing the horror of the situation by musically representing the entire population of the burning city.

The second act contains two trios as well as the last finale. The first trio occurs when Publius comes to arrest Sextus. Before he is led off, he bids farewell to Vitellia, telling her that he loves her even in this plight. She reacts with horror, not only because he is going to be condemned for obeying her commands, but even more because she believes that he will tell of her part in the conspiracy and she will be exposed. Publius interprets her agitation as being merely evidence of compassion for Sextus.

The next trio is the beginning of the confrontation between Titus and the arrested Sextus. Sextus cannot bring himself to look at the man he has wronged, and Titus cannot help but pity his

¹Mozart's Operas, p. 214.
erstwhile friend. Publius, the third participant in the trio, observes this and comments (for the benefit of the audience) that Titus obviously still loves Sextus despite his crime. The tempo changes to Allegro for the simultaneous section, in which Titus and Publius both repeatedly observe the fact that "the traitor trembles and dares not raise his eyes" while Sextus, whose melodic line is clearly contrasted with theirs, states that it would be impossible to suffer any more than he is at that moment.

The last finale begins immediately after Titus (in an accompanied recitative) proclaims pardon for all and sundry. It commences with a statement by Sextus that he cannot ever pardon himself, which Titus answers by saying that true repentance is worth more than constant loyalty. All the soloists and the chorus then join in praising Titus' limitless goodness while Titus himself prays that the gods will cut short his days the moment that his main concern is no longer the good of Rome. This ensemble, in particular, embodies the purpose for which this opera was commissioned in the first place: praise and propaganda for the monarchy at a time when the crowned heads of Europe were shaken by the French Revolution, which had occurred a mere two years earlier, in 1789.

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This completes the roster of all of the ensembles of Mozart's lesser known operas. It might seem that the emphasis in this rather lengthy discussion has been misplaced, since none of the five best, and best known, works has been mentioned except in passing. However, this approach was adopted precisely because these five works are
well known, while those discussed in this chapter are not. In other words, for the remainder of this study, some knowledge of the plots of, and the ensembles contained in, the five famous operas will be assumed. It was precisely because no such assumption could reasonably be made about Mozart's fifteen other stage works that this chapter was written.
CHAPTER V

THE VARIETIES AND FUNCTIONS OF THE SIMULTANEOUS PASSAGES

Certain questions posed earlier in this study about the nature of the simultaneous passages in Mozart's ensembles have yet to be answered. The discussion so far has perhaps implied that such passages must perforce be Metastasian in nature, just as the canon quartet from Fidelio is. However, examination of Mozart's ensembles reveals the fact that though a great many of the simultaneous sections and passages are in fact Metastasian, many are not.¹

In the first place, simultaneous passages may be used as a part of dialogue in exactly the same way that a solo line would be. All that is necessary for this to be possible is that it be plausible that two (or more) characters deliver a given line at the same time. Some of the best examples of this use of simultaneous singing are found in Così fan tutte. In the very first trio, for instance, Ferrando and Guglielmo speak the same dialogue lines on two different occasions. The first time Don Alfonso tries to break off the discussion about the constancy of women, both of the young soldiers reply with one voice that they refuse to end the argument and that whoever hints that their sweethearts might be unfaithful just because they are women must prove it. Don Alfonso tries again to stop the

¹It is important, of course, to keep in mind the special sense in which the word "Metastasian" is being used in this study. See above, p. 27.
matter from going any further by suggesting that they forget about such proofs, but he is interrupted by the youths' proclamation that they demand them or else their friendship with a man who would imply such vile things about their sweethearts is at an end, and, in fact, he must answer for the calumny with his sword. All of this is extremely important expository information, which is delivered completely within the context of the trio. Each of the lines cited above that are sung simultaneously by Ferrando and Guglielmo might very well have been delivered by either one of them alone, but this procedure not only would not have been as interesting musically, but not as effective dramatically either. Mozart's device of having them sing these lines together demonstrates explicitly that their feelings about this particular subject are completely identical. What is more, the conflict between the two young men and Don Alfonso is also made more obvious by the combination of their two voices against his solo.

Other instances of the use of simultaneous dialogue lines may easily be found in Così. Almost every ensemble furnishes some examples. Usually it is the two young soldiers or the two sisters who speak together as one, although sometimes Don Alfonso and Despina are paired for brief dialogue passages. This practice is even carried into the recitatives—the two boys sing together in the very first recitative, as both they and the two girls also do in the recitative preceding the second quintet. This is not the first instance of simultaneous recitative in Mozart, however, since a brief example occurs in Figaro in the recitative following the third act.
sextet. This is more Metastasian in nature, however, since the four characters involved (Figaro, Susanna, Marcellina and Bartolo) are all expressing satisfaction that the Count has been bamboozled.

Simultaneous dialogue of the type under consideration is more prevalent in Così than in any of Mozart's other operas because the situations so often allow either Ferrando and Guglielmo or Fiordiligi and Dorabella to have exactly the same lines. Consider the last scene of the second finale (almost any other ensemble in the opera provides at least some equally apt examples). The two boys have just "returned to Naples," much to the chagrin of their faithless sweethearts, and the "Albanians" have been hidden. The boys first announce, singing together, that they are glad to be home, and explain that the King has called their unit back from the campaign, which is why they have "returned" so soon. A little later, after Despina has been discovered in her lawyer disguise and Alfonso has given them the marriage contract between the girls and the "Albanians," they appear to fly into a rage and accuse their fiancées of faithlessness. The two girls, also singing together, confess their guilt and ask that they be slain on the spot since they deserve no mercy. Ferrando and Guglielmo (together) ask for an explanation, whereupon the girls (together) claim that Don Alfonso and Despina had tricked them into their crime.

Scenes such as this in Così demonstrate how readily dialogue lines may be sung simultaneously, provided that the situation is such that two or more characters may plausibly have the same line at the same time. This type of non-Metastasian use of simultaneous singing
occurs in some of the other operas, but not nearly so frequently as in Così. For examples, see the entrance of Antonio in the second act finale of Figaro and the entrance of Zerlina and Masetto in the second act sextet of Don Giovanni. There is another example in Figaro which is related to, but not quite the same as, the simultaneous dialogue lines under discussion. In the first act trio, immediately after Susanna has recovered from her fainting spell, both the Count and Basilio reassure her, singing simultaneously, but to slightly different sets of words. This brief passage demonstrates that the characters involved in simultaneous dialogue addressed to a third party do not necessarily have to sing the same text, but the words tend to be obscured by such a practice. Therefore procedure used in Così, where the characters involved sing exactly the same line, is the usual practice.

Cosi fan tutte, as mentioned above, exhibits this type of simultaneous dialogue line more often than any of the other operas. In fact, not only do the two young men and their two fiancées often sing dialogue lines at the same time, but, since the members of each pair often find themselves in the same situations and their outlook on life and love is basically the same, the Metastasian asides that they sing during the course of an ensemble are often identical also. This may briefly be demonstrated in the same scene from the last finale that was discussed above. When their old lovers arrive back from the "campaign" so unexpectedly, the two ladies are both speechless with amazement, as they obligingly tell the audience in a simultaneous aside. A little later, when the notary is revealed to
be Despina, the two young men exhibit the same reaction (glee), as do the two ladies (bewilderment) which is made clear by the handling of the four vocal parts. This quite brief simultaneous section also includes Despina's chortle of pride at her own cleverness, which is carefully differentiated musically from the other four (that is, two sets of two) vocal lines. The parallel Metastasian reactions of the two girls on the one hand and the two men on the other can also be found throughout the opera in practically every ensemble. This, added to the simultaneous singing of dialogue lines, has a somewhat unfortunate side effect dramatically, in that it tends to negate the individuality of these four characters. The personalities of two girls seem to merge into one since they frequently say the same things and react in the same ways—and the same is true of the two men. This is the reason for comments such as Dent's that "the four lovers are utterly unreal; they are more like marionettes than human beings." And yet the four lovers do have individual characteristics, and their personalities are carefully distinguished in a variety of perhaps too subtle ways throughout the opera. Dorabella is the more flighty of the two girls, much less concerned with really being faithful, as is demonstrated by the fact that she actively convinces her sister that a flirtation with the "Albanians" would not really be reprehensible. What is more, once Dorabella has committed herself to such

1The term "parallel" can be used here in two senses, since each pair of characters often sings in thirds.

2Mozart's Operas, p. 192.
a course of action, she has no regrets, and succumbs forthwith to Guglielmo's advances. Fiordiligi at first cannot go through with the flirtation that her sister had urged, and even concocts the wild plan of dressing up like a soldier and running off to join her fiance in order to escape the genuinely terrible temptation presented by Ferrando.

As for the two men, their personalities are even more carefully distinguished. Ferrando is the true romantic of the two. Guglielmo is more of an egotist, a man convinced that his fiancee could not be untrue simply because it is inconceivable that any woman could be faithless to a Guglielmo. They are both naive, of course, and both shocked when their sweethearts so easily yield to the advances they make in their disguises, but Ferrando recovers more quickly, while Guglielmo nurses his bruised ego all the way to the marriage canon of the last finale, where he sulks alone while Ferrando joins the girls with all sincerity in a toast in which they propose that the past be forgotten. Ferrando has learned Don Alfonso's lesson well, and does not regret what he cannot change. Guglielmo cannot forget the blow dealt to his self esteem.

The trouble is that these distinctions between the characters of the four lovers are really made clear only in the recitatives, although the various arias reinforce them by implication. The above mentioned canon quartet is the only ensemble in which any of the four is clearly distinguished from his companion, and it occurs when the opera is nearly over. In all the rest of the ensembles the
personalities of the two men and the two girls seem to merge, for the reasons cited above. And, since this score is dominated by ensembles, the similarities in the characters are therefore quite obvious, while the differences between them tend to be obscured. The overall effect is to depersonalize the four lovers.

However, this is not a fatal flaw in the dramaturgy of the opera, and in fact such an effect is in keeping with the mood and manner of the work as a whole. It is an extremely artificial comedy, and its structure is carefully and deliberately contrived. In its non-realistic world the similarities between the lovers are more important than their differences, and their function is primarily to dramatically illustrate the quite realistic philosophy of Don Alfonso: that everyone is human, perfection is an unattainable ideal, and the best and most reasonable course of action is to accept things as they really are. The four lovers are primarily intended to represent youthful idealistic naivete and the very depersonalization that is the product of the technique of simultaneous singing helps to make this fact clear.

There is another of Mozart's operas in which simultaneous delivery of dialogue lines is even more obviously used to achieve a depersonalization of the characters involved. In Die Zauberflöte, the three Genii, the three Ladies, and the two Men in Armor do not function as individuals but as units. It is true that the three Ladies are briefly shown to have human traits in the very first scene, when each of them is attracted to Tamino and tries to get the other two to leave him alone with her. But for the most part they
are simply agents of the Queen of the Night, and therefore sing their dialogue lines together. The three Genii, although they converse among themselves in order to give the audience the necessary information to prepare it for Parina's suicide attempt, are even more obviously an impersonal unit rather than three individuals. They are a benevolent magic force, not three real boys, and this is reflected in the simultaneous dialogue composed for them. Much the same can be said for the two Men in Armor. They are representatives of the Temple, and always sing as a unit. The principle of depersonalization by simultaneous singing of dialogue is the same in all three cases.

There is a second, entirely different, use of non-Metastasian simultaneous singing that is frequently used by Mozart. The simultaneous delivery of different lines can be a most effective musical depiction of a fight or argument of some kind. One ensemble that uses such a technique, the trio in *Der Schauspieldirektor*, has already been commented on, but many other examples are available in the other operas. Some of the best of these examples are found in *Die Entführung*, perhaps because of the presence of the belligerent Osmin in the roster of characters. This redoubtable individual engages in a more or less (mostly more) violent disagreement with someone in every ensemble in which he takes part, except for the "Bacchus" duet with Pedrillo in which his unusual congeniality is the product of the quantity of wine he has consumed. In the course of the opera, he argues first with Belmonte (the duet, no. 2 in the score), then has a violent fight with Belmonte and Pedrillo to keep
them out of the palace, which he loses (the trio, no. 7), and is unable to impose his will upon the spirited Blonde (the duet, no. 9). In each of these instances, the clash of wills is aptly treated by the contrapuntal clash of the vocal lines of the combatants, a device admirably suited to musically depict the conflict being presented on stage.

Die Entführung and Der Schauspieldirektor are not the only works in which some sort of argument is depicted musically by simultaneous singing, although Mozart passed up several opportunities in his youthful operas. The duet between Apollo and Melia in Apollo et Hyacinthus contains only the very briefest hints of simultaneous singing, none of which contribute to the drama since they are not contrapuntal and therefore do not musically reflect the difference of opinion between the two characters involved. Bastien and Bastienne sing only homophonically in their duet and so their argument is shown only in musical dialogue. The duel scene from La finta semplice contains no simultaneous singing whatsoever except for the one homophonic exclamation by the two characters involved, although the situation could have been most effectively treated contrapuntally. These examples indicate that the very young Mozart did not yet realize the dramatic effectiveness of counterpoint as the musical equivalent of a difference of opinion.

The mature Mozart, however, exploited this property of simultaneous singing to its fullest extent. Besides the examples mentioned above, many others are found throughout his mature works. One good example is the argument between Don Giovanni and Leporello
that occurs at the beginning of the second act of the opera that bears the Don's name. Perhaps the most subtle of the passages based on this principle occurs in Le nozze di Figaro. The first act duet between Marcellina and Susanna is a musico-dramatic depiction of cattiness that helps to establish the initial relationship between the two characters. Most of the simultaneous singing in this duet is Metastasian in function, consisting of asides in which Marcellina reacts to a statement made by her antagonist and Susanna delivers her general opinion of the older woman. However, there is one quite brief simultaneous passage (in fact, the very first one of the duet) that is not Metastasian at all. The two ladies have been deferring most politely to each other in the brief musical dialogue that opens the number, when they both sing a statement that is essentially simply a continuation of that tactic—each of them says quite pointedly that she knows her duty and is never impolite. Mozart has set this brief and simple statement in a most ingenious way. The counterpoint is imitative, and each melodic line is a descending sequence. Marcellina starts first and Susanna echos her and then the phrase is repeated, but with the parts reversed, so that Susanna begins and Marcellina echos her in turn. The effects of this procedure are: (1) rigid formality, reflected in the formal treatment of the vocal lines, (2) the mockery of each character by the other in turn, reflected in the imitative entrances, (3) the condescending attitude of each of the women, reflected in the strictly parallel descent of the vocal lines, and (4) the fact that each has the same opinion of the other, suggested by both the imitation and
the reversal of the vocal lines that occurs during the repetition. This is only a brief episode within this duet—the whole passage is only eight measures long, but it demonstrates how surely the mature Mozart was able to grasp a dramatic situation, even one of minor importance, and portray it musically.

On the other end of the spectrum, probably the least subtle and certainly the biggest portrayal of an argument in Mozart's operas occurs at the end of the *L'oca del Cairo* finale, when six of the soloists are ranged against Don Pippo and his full chorus of guards, with both sides shouting at the other, "You'll see who wins!"

It is truly a monumental musical difference of opinion.

These, then, are two of the ways that Mozart uses non-Metastasian simultaneous singing: in the place of solo dialogue lines, and to depict musically some sort of argument or fight or other conflict. However, there is yet another type of simultaneous passage that is quite common in Mozart's operas and appears not to be Metastasian. This is the sort of thing represented by the 6/8 section of the "La ci darem la mano" duet from *Don Giovanni* that was mentioned earlier. After Zerlina has capitulated to the Don's charm, the two characters sing the following line together: "Let us go, my love, to soothe the pangs of an innocent love." They are speaking to each other, which means that this line is in some way a part of the dialogue and therefore apparently not Metastasian. (Lines and speeches are most clearly Metastasian when they are asides or soliloquies, which this line clearly is not.) But neither is it either of the types of simultaneously sung dialogue discussed above,
for in the first type the persons involved were addressing some third party, not talking to each other, while in the second type the characters were disagreeing in some way, not agreeing among themselves. This then, is a third type of simultaneous musical dialogue line. It is found in some of the larger ensembles, for example the quartet from Die Entführung and the third trio of Così, but it is most common in duets. In fact it occurs as at least part of the last section of these duets from the following works:

(1) In Bastien und Bastienne, that of the two title characters;
(2) In Mitridate, that of Sifare and Aspasia;
(3) In Lucio Silla, that of Cecilio and Giuna;
(4) In La finta giardiniera, the second duet between the Count and Sandrina;
(5) In Il Re pastore, that of Aminta and Elisa;
(6) In Zaide, that of Gomatz and Zaide;
(7) In Idomeneo, that of Idamante and Ilia;
(8) In Die Entführung, that of Belmonte and Costanze;
(9) In L'oca del Cairo, both of those of Chichibio and Auretta;
(10) In Figaro, the first duet of Figaro and Susanna;
(11) In Don Giovanni, that of Don Giovanni and Zerlina (as mentioned above);
(12) In Così, that of Guglielmo and Dorabella and that of Ferrando and Fiordiligi;
(13) In Die Zauberflöte, that of Papageno and Papagena;
(14) In La Clemenza di Tito, that of Sextus and Annius, and that of Annius and Servilia.
This sort of simultaneous section has a definite dramatic purpose. In a sense it is the inverse of the type that depicts an argument, since it is used to show that the characters involved are figuratively as well as literally in harmony; that, at least at the moment at hand, they agree with each other completely. Such a section is most effective when it demonstrates a state of agreement that follows a state of conflict. This is the function of the concluding 6/8 section of "La ci darem la mano." In the first part of the duet, as mentioned before, Don Giovanni urges his suit on the hesitant Zerlina. The simultaneous section begins immediately upon Zerlina's capitulation and therefore musically illustrates the new relationship between the two—they are in complete agreement as to the next course of action to take. The Don's comments about an "innocent love" are obviously cynical, but Zerlina does not know this, and so he sings with as much at least apparent sincerity as she does.

Other examples drawn from the list above illustrate the same point. The duet of Bastien and Bastienne is mostly concerned with their argument, but the concluding simultaneous section musically demonstrates their reconciliation. The Ferrando-Fiordiligi duet includes the extremely important plot development of the final capitulation of Fiordiligi, and the final simultaneous section after the tempo change to Andante demonstrates that she and Ferrando are now lovers. Similar comments could be made about any one of the duets listed above. One final question remains, however, about this type of simultaneous passage: Are these sections really non-Metastasian? Technically, the answer is perhaps yes. There is
certainly a difference between two characters singing a line of
dialogue addressed to each other and two characters singing a pair
of simultaneous asides, even though each of the asides might have
the same text, indicating that their reactions to the situation at
hand is precisely the same. This difference is illustrated nicely
by the two duets from La finta giardiniera. The participants in
both are the same: the Count and Sandrina. Both of these numbers
end with a fairly lengthy simultaneous section in which both of the
characters sing the same text. In the first duet, this simply
indicates that in their mad state, their reaction to Nardo's story
about the sun and moon fighting and the stars falling happens to
be the same—one of sheer terror. They do not speak to each other
at all and in fact seem to be oblivious of each other's presence.
That their reaction is entirely the same is a coincidence, a
perfectly plausible one considering the situation, but still a
coincidence. It does not indicate any sort of conscious rapport
between the two. This simultaneous section is obviously and
solely Metastasian.

The final section of the second duet is quite different. It
is precisely like the one that ends the Bastien-Bastienne duet, in
that it musically illustrates the fact that a reconciliation has been
achieved. Here the characters have attained a conscious rapport,
and that is reflected in the simultaneous section by the fact that
they sing the same lines to each other. What is demonstrated in
this type of simultaneous section is the relationship between the two
persons involved, not merely that they happen to react to the same situation in the same way.

And yet, perhaps this type of simultaneous section is not really non-Metastasian after all. The fact is that in every such case, the characters are expressing their reactions to some situation in the plot—they just happen to be expressing their feelings about it to each other rather than to themselves. These sections, therefore, are functionally just as Metastasian as the type illustrated by the first duet from La finta giardiniera. For example, Don Giovanni, Zerlina, Ferrando, and Fiordiligi are all reacting to a successful seduction; Bastien, Bastienne, Count Belfiore, and Sandrina are all reacting to a successful reconciliation. What is more, it is not always easy to classify simultaneous passages into one or the other of the two types being discussed. The primary test is the determination of whether the characters' lines are addressed to each other or are asides, and sometimes this can be quite difficult. For example, the second act duet between Fiordiligi and Dorabella from Così fan tutte should perhaps be included in the above list. The reason it is not is that the lines sung are not clearly either dialogue or asides—they could be either or both. Actually this ambiguity is to the advantage of a director staging such a number. He can treat the various repetitions of the lines as being different things, alternating dialogue and asides in order to achieve variety in movement and the stage positions of the singers. Fortunately, such a procedure can also easily be used with most of the duets listed above, since quite often at least part of the texts of their
simultaneous sections can be interpreted as either asides or dialogue. For example, when Belmonte and Constanze, who believe that they will be executed by the Pasha, sing "With you, beloved, I will gladly die," they are clearly speaking to each other. When, however, they continue by exclaiming "O what blessedness! To die with one's beloved is a blessed delight," they could be speaking either to themselves or to each other, but in either case, they are clearly vocalizing their response to the situation in which they find themselves, and so the effect of both sets of lines is ultimately Metastasian.

There is another indication, although an oblique one, that the type of simultaneous dialogue being discussed here functions in exactly the same manner as a clearly Metastasian aside. The persons responsible for singing translations, even the best and most responsible among them, tend to mix the two categories up or to simply exchange one for the other. One example should suffice to demonstrate this tendency.

In the duet that occurs in Don Giovanni after the body of the dead Commendatore is discovered, Donna Anna has Don Ottavio swear that he will avenge the murder of her father. She makes him repeat the oath twice, and after each repetition, they both sing the following words:

Che giuramenti o Dei!
Che barbaro momento!
Fra cento affanni e cento
Vammi ondeggiando il cor!

This literally means something like:
O God, what an oath! What a dreadful moment!
My heart wavers with a hundred afflictions!

These lines are clearly asides. However, in at least two English singing translations they have been strangely altered. E. J. Dent renders them as:

By all that we hold sacred,
We pledge our oath of vengeance!
This be our single purpose,
This be our only thought,
Until my (your) father's murd'rer
To justice we have brought.  

W. H. Auden and Chester Kallman translate them as:

Though cunning as a serpent
He fly from retribution;
Our righteous wrath shall find him,
Blood shall for blood be poured.
No ocean deep shall hide him.
Nor subterranean cavern;
Our righteous wrath shall find him,
Death be his just reward.  

Of course, singing translations of opera libretti can never be literal, since the words would not fit the given rhythm and accents of the music. In this case, however, the translators have altered the nature of the lines. The original Italian is quite definitely a simultaneous aside. Dent's translation, by contrast, is almost certainly simultaneous dialogue. Perhaps parts of it might be treated by a stage director as an aside, but a more likely interpretation is that Anna and Ottavio are speaking to each other.

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2 The Great Operas of Mozart, p. 171. There are many more lines in the translation than in the original because the translators have taken advantage of text repetitions to write additional words, as did Dent, although to a lesser extent.
The lines supplied by Auden and Kallman are more obviously ambiguous in this respect. The two characters could be delivering asides, or speaking to each other, or both. These three sets of words, then, each give a somewhat different effect at this point in *Don Giovanni*. However, in each case, the characters are expressing their reaction to the plot situation. Therefore, regardless of the differences that these three texts exhibit, they are equally Metastasian.

Incidentally, in my opinion, Mozart's music for this section has a drive and a forceful character about it that fits the determined nature of the two English translations better than the rather timorous original. This is a subjective judgment that would be impossible to prove beyond a shadow of a doubt, but it must have been shared by the translators concerned or they would not have written the lines they did. Perhaps Mozart realized that determination on the part of Anna and Ottavio would be more natural in such a situation than the quite conventional and rather less than forceful aside that da Ponte furnished him at this point, and deliberately over-rode the spirit of the words with his music. On the other hand, he did set the words as they stand in the score and did not demand that they be changed, as his relationship with Varesco demonstrates that he was perfectly capable of doing. Perhaps I, along with Dent, Kallman, and Auden, am simply misinterpreting his music at this point. Each listener, and each stage director, must decide for himself.

There is yet another, completely different, sort of simultaneous passage that appears in Mozart's operas, which might be called
semi-Metastasian. In this type of passage one or more of the characters involved continues or repeats the dialogue in which the participants in the scene have been engaged, while another (or other) character(s) is engaged in an aside that reflects his reaction to the situation at this point. This type of simultaneous passage is clearly illustrated by the ending of the second Susanna-Figaro duet in the first scene of *Le nozze di Figaro*. Susanna has just hinted (rather broadly) that the Count has ulterior motives for giving them a bedroom so close to his own. She then promises to spell out the reasons for her objection even more clearly if Figaro will discard his suspicions about her conduct in the matter; whereupon that worthy gentleman, after observing that he does indeed want her to go on with her explanation, mutters in an aside that his doubts and suspicions make his blood run cold. In the concluding simultaneous section, he repeats this aside in whole or in part several times, while Susanna repeats her admonition to him not to be suspicious of her. Such a juxtaposition is not only musically effective but dramatically plausible as well. Susanna realizes that her apprehension about Figaro's reaction to her innuendos is absolutely correct, and she continues to try to talk him out of such thoughts while it is made perfectly clear to the audience that he is in fact engaged in them, since he repeats his aside over and over.

This sort of semi-Metastasian treatment of simultaneous passages is quite common in Mozart's mature operas. The ending of the first trio from *Cosi fan tutte* is another example, in which Don Alfonso
warns Ferrando and Guglielmo against pursuing the question of their fiancées' fidelity while at the same time they are exclaiming to themselves about how outraged they are that their darlings' virtue should be questioned. The juxtaposition of the young men's reaction and the very arguments to which they are reacting is again highly effective dramatically, as well as musically interesting. This technique is obviously related to the use of simultaneous singing to depict an argument or fight which was discussed above, but is more subtle in that it also presents the interior musings of one of the parties engaged in the dispute, while the other overtly continues his side of the argument.

This semi-Metastasian technique is used by Mozart as a climax of two of his biggest finales. In each of these cases, one group of characters is engaged in singing the sort of simultaneous dialogue line that was the first non-Metastasian type discussed above, while another group of characters is vocalizing its reaction to the situation. One of these two examples is the first act finale of Don Giovanni, where Donna Anna, Donna Elvira, Don Ottavio, Zerlina, and Masetto all threaten Don Giovanni with retribution, while he himself is at first dismayed and Leporello comments on his master's reaction.

Don Giovanni pulls himself together immediately before the stretto, and the change in tempo is not only a musical quickening of the pace in order to end the act with as noisy a finish as possible in order to draw the audience's applause, but also an indication of a change in the relationship of the two groups of characters. The
five avengers continue their threats as before, but Don Giovanni's
courage and audacity have now asserted themselves and he is deter­
minded to defy them. This is the situation on which the curtain falls,
and the traditional stage business of the Don cutting his way through
the crowd and escaping is an apt illustration of his determination.

The second big finale that makes use of this semi-Metastasian
technique is the one that ends the first act of Così fan tutte.
The two "Albanians," having just been brought back to life by Despina's
magnet, ask the two sisters for a kiss. Despite the urging from
Don Alfonso and Despina that they comply, the two young ladies react
in horror at the suggestion and then repeatedly tell their suitors
to get out and go to the devil—in no uncertain terms. During the
various reiterations of these instructions, the two young men observe
to themselves that this situation is extraordinarily funny. Part
of the time the two conspirators (that is, Alfonso and Despina) make
similar observations, while sometimes they repeat their efforts to
persuade the ladies to give the requested kiss. However, as the
ladies become even more furious in denouncing the "Albanians!"
audacity, the latter become concerned that perhaps their sweethearts
are protesting a bit too much, and the two conspirators become
convinced that this is the case. This is the situation when the
act ends.

Portions of this finale illustrate another way in which dialogue
lines and Metastasian asides are combined to form simultaneous
sections. There are moments (comparatively brief ones, when the
length of the entire finale is considered) in which Don Alfonso and Despina address the two sisters who in turn address the two "Albanians" who are speaking in asides—all at the same time. Perhaps the ensemble that demonstrates this type of simultaneous singing most clearly, though, is the quartet from Zaïde. This ensemble obviously occurs immediately after the moment in the lost spoken dialogue in which the Sultan condemns Gomatz and Zaïde to death for their attempted elopement. The first part of the number is entirely musical dialogue. At first Gomatz speaks to Zaïde, telling her not to weep, since their death will exalt their love. Allazim, in an aside that slightly overlaps Gomatz's last line, then laments the fate of his friends. Next. Soliman, addressing Zaïde, warns her that tears are useless. Zaïde then pleads that she alone be executed, since only she, not Gomatz, is guilty. This elicits the answer from the Sultan that both of them must die, whereupon Allazim repeats his lament. All of this is set forth in almost pure dialogue form, and the simultaneous section begins only after all of these statements have been made. Then the voices are combined in almost every possible way: first all four together; then entering individually in the same order as in the dialogue section, but with a great deal of overlapping; then in combinations of twos and threes; then all four together again, whereupon this first simultaneous sections ends on a half cadence. What is most interesting from the dramatic point of view, however, is that during all of this quite beautiful music, the characters sing exactly the same words that they had sung during the initial dialogue section, simply repeating them
over again several times. Now, since the texts are always the same, the fact that three of the characters are addressing each other never changes throughout this whole section, which is 56 measures long. Gomatz speaks to Zaide who pleads with the Sultan who answers her while Allazim laments (it is his aside alone that makes this first simultaneous section semi-Metastasian), not only over and over again, but often all at the same time. Things become even more complicated in the concluding simultaneous section. First Gomatz and Zaide each pray to Heaven that he (she) will be the only one to die--they each have the same text here and sing it in thirds, which demonstrates that their thoughts and feelings on the matter at hand are parallel. Their lines are now quite clearly Metastasian, another reason for designating this a semi-Metastasian ensemble. Then Allazim addresses Soliman, asking that the two lovers both be forgiven. The Sultan's refusal is again equally adamant. From this point to the end of the number this new material is repeated and intermixed with still more repetitions of the earlier lines of all four characters.

The second of these two sections demonstrates clearly that this type of semi-Metastasian passage is another variation of the sort of simultaneous singing that depicts some sort of dispute or argument. In fact, the whole number is basically a conflict between the Sultan and the other three on which is superimposed the added dimension of the Metastasian asides.

This technique is also used in other ensembles. One of the best examples occurs at the very beginning of Don Giovanni, in the scene
in which the Don is trying to escape from the pursuing Donna Anna. The dramatic turmoil is clearly reflected in the overlapping and interweaving of their vocal lines, as he desperately tries to free himself from her clutches and escape without revealing his identity, while she alternately threatens him and calls for help. The added dimension in this scene is the purely Metastasian muttering that Leporello continuously carries on in the background. This not only adds to the hurly-burly, but makes the tension and conflict seem even more vivid musically through the addition of a third vocal line.

Mozart uses this sort of simultaneous singing for more subtle effects than a verbal or physical battle, however. In the last finale of Don Giovanni, when Donna Elvira makes one last attempt to convince the Don to give up his sinful ways, he sings a mocking hymn of praise to wine and women which he repeats while she denounces him as a monster of iniquity. The effect is to emphasize his heartlessness by demonstrating that he simply refuses to pay any attention to her and, in fact, mocks her to her face at the very moment she is pleading for him to repent. Leporello is again in the background, and his comments on this occasion specifically refer to the hard-heartedness of his master, which is simultaneously being demonstrated by Mozart's treatment of the vocal lines of the Don and Elvira.

These examples do not exhaust the possibilities for semi-Metastasian simultaneous passages. In the larger ensembles and the finales, Metastasian asides are combined with everything from simple solo dialogue to any of the other types of simultaneous dialogue.
passages to produce moments that must be labeled semi-Metastasian. For example, the beginning of the third act sextet from Figaro contains a moment when Marcellina, Bartolo, and Figaro continue their happy dialogue (Figaro has just been revealed as his erstwhile enemies' long lost son), while the Court and Don Curzio express their surprise in the background. However, in all semi-Metastasian passages, the technique is the same: the action or situation to which some of the characters involved are reacting is extended in such a way as to allow their reaction to be presented simultaneously with the stimulus that caused it—a procedure that is dramatically quite effective.

The only type of simultaneous passage yet to be discussed is the purely Metastasian—that in which all of the characters involved are obviously expressing their reactions to the situation in simultaneous asides or soliloquies. This type of passage is quite common in Mozart's operas. Most of the finales and many of the ensembles contain examples of varying lengths. For example, the ending of the Susanna-Marcellina duet discussed above is completely Metastasian—Marcellina reacts angrily to Susanna's veiled insults, while Susanna comments to herself that the old hag makes her laugh. There are many other examples, such as the trio from Lo sposo deluso, the ending of the second act sextet from Don Giovanni, the ending of the second act finale of Le nozze di Figaro, and the trio for Fiordiligi, Dorabella, and Alfonso from the first act of Così fan tutte, to mention only a few of the most obvious of the many instances
of this type of simultaneous writing, which may vary in length from one line to an entire ensemble.

Die Zauberflöte exhibits a rather interesting sort of simultaneous singing that is perhaps best explained as being a special variation of the Metastasian type. Whenever a situation occurs or an observation is made which lends itself to the statement of some sort of moral or Masonic precept, full advantage is taken of the opportunity, usually in a sort of simultaneous aside obviously directed at the audience. However, these passages are generally at least quasi-Metastasian, since they supposedly represent the various characters' reactions to the situation in which they find themselves. Sometimes one of them falls into one of the categories of simultaneous dialogue, as in the case of the duet (No. 11) in which the two priests warn Tamino and Papageno to beware of woman's deceptions, but most of them are of the quasi-Metastasian type. The first example of this type of simultaneous passage is found in the first act quintet. When the three Ladies release Papageno from the lock that sealed his lips from lying, he and Tamino join them in observing that if the lips of every liar could be locked up, then love and brotherhood would reign in place of hatred and slander. Such moral principles are apparently shared, as this example shows, by the most divergent of characters. Papageno and Pamina have nothing in common, and yet they have a whole duet together in which they extol the virtues of married love, and in another simultaneous passage (that occurs after Papageno's magic bells have routed Monostatos and his slaves) they observe that if every good man could find such bells and rid himself of his enemies,
then the harmony of friendship would banish all grief. Of course, Masonic principles are enunciated in the solo passages of this opera also, especially in Sarastro's pronouncements, but consistently, throughout the whole work, what would be simply a simultaneous Metastasian aside in any of the other operas is transformed into a proclamation of moral precepts. In the Mozart operatic canon, such explicit moral teaching is not completely confined to Die Zauberflöte, as is shown by the end of the final ensemble of Don Giovanni and the vaudeville that ends Die Entführung. But no other work is so permeated with explicit moral teaching, and a great deal of it appears in simultaneous passages. Such passages serve to make Aristotle's third element of drama, Thought, a principal consideration in the structure of Die Zauberflöte, and it is this aspect of this strange opera that accounts for at least part of its appeal to serious minded critics from Goethe (who even began a sequel to it\(^1\)) to Einstein.\(^2\)

In most of Mozart's operas, however, the Metastasian passages carry no such heavy burden. Instead they are simply used, in Gollancz's words, to "illumine the dramatic situation" by presenting explicitly the characters' reactions to the events of the plot. This is basically the dramatic function of these simultaneous passages, but there is considerably more that may be said about Mozart's application of this principle.

\(^1\)For a discussion of Goethe and this opera see Dent, Mozart's Operas, pp. 253-54.

\(^2\)See Einstein, Mozart, His Character, His Work, pp. 462-68.
In his youthful operas, all of the characters involved in a given scene tend to react to a given situation or event in the same, and therefore most general, way, which is usually either consternation or happiness. This may be clearly seen by an examination of the Metastasian simultaneous sections of the second finale of La finta giardiniera. This is the finale that occurs when Sandrina has fled from the Count, and which begins with all of the characters groping about the darkened stage looking for each other. They cannot see what they are doing, but can hear each other stumbling around, which frightens all of them. The first simultaneous passage occurs at this point, with all of the characters singing the same text and expressing their worry and fright at this awful situation. Then the mistakes of identification are made, and each character (except Sandrina) believes that he has found his beloved. This being the case, they all express their happiness in another simultaneous passage. However, Ramiro enters, and all the other characters, hearing a new and unidentified voice, react with apprehension in the next simultaneous passage. Then Ramiro gets a light, and they all discover that they have made a terrible mistake and are each embracing the wrong party. This, of course, calls for another simultaneous outbreak of consternation.

The rest of this finale reveals the same general method of utilizing the Metastasian simultaneous sections. The reaction is always the same for all of the characters involved when they are singing together, presumably for two reasons: (1) that was the
traditional way of handling such passages, and (2) Mozart's awareness of the possibilities of counterpoint to express more than one emotion simultaneously had not yet developed sufficiently.

The mature operas exhibit much more variety and flexibility in the handling of the Metastasian passages. In the first place, they are often combined with non-Metastasian lines as discussed above. In the second place, two or even three different reactions to a given situation may be presented at the same time and made musically clear by the careful use of counterpoint. Abraham points out that Mozart never attempts to combine more than three different musical statements at once in his ensembles, so that when more than three characters are involved, they are divided into three, or more often two, groups. There is a very practical reason for this, of course. Counterpoint can differentiate between the emotional components of two different statements sung at the same time with a great deal of clarity. Three are also possible, but considerably less clear, while to attempt four would be to rapidly approach the point at which the differences in each line would be lost in the general hubbub.

This principle of dividing the characters into two groups in the big Metastasian ensembles may be easily observed in such examples

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1 Dent identifies ensembles of this general type, which he calls the "ensemble of perplexity," in the operas of Alessandro Scarlatti. See his Alessandro Scarlatti (London: Edward Arnold, 1905), pp. 43-53, and Mozart's Operas, p. 61. He uses his term to identify only ensembles that occur at serious moments, but the principle applies to comic situations as well.

as the end of the second act finale of *Figaro* and the final section of the third act sextet from the same opera. The first finale of *Così fan tutte* contains moments when the characters are divided into three groups (Fiordiligi-Dorabella, Ferrando-Guglielmo, and Despina-Don Alfonso) but even this is somewhat unwieldy, so the majority of the time Don Alfonso and Despina are given sentiments similar enough to those of Ferrando and Guglielmo to allow them to share the same basic sort of music, which is then contrasted to that of Fiordiligi and Dorabella, effectively reducing this line up from three groups to two, at least musically. The best examples of three different melodic lines being combined are in the trios, such as the Susanna-Basilio-Count trio in Act I of *Figaro*, and the Commendatore-Giovanni-Leporello trio in the first scene of *Don Giovanni*.

Of course, the division of the characters into two or three groups in the large ensembles means that within each group they are reacting in a generalized way to the situation, just as the characters in *La finta giardiniera* are. Indeed, the dramatic use of Metastasian simultaneous sections in the mature works represents a modification of the earlier technique rather than a complete renunciation of it. There are even moments in the mature ensembles when all of the characters react in as general a way as in any of the earlier examples given. In *Così*, for instance, when the "Albanians" stumble onto the stage "dying of poison," they, the two girls, and even Don Alfonso all sing a brief, mostly homophonic passage together to words that are quite appropriate for the two "victims," but only obliquely so for the girls, and are not at all suited to Don Alfonso. Such
moments in the mature operas are generally quite brief, however, and the overall effect, brought about by the increased flexibility of the contrapuntal treatment of most of the simultaneous sections, is one of dramatic appropriateness and even vraisemblance, although the techniques used are demonstrably non-realistic.

When the characters are treated individually in the simultaneous passages rather than as part of a group, their individual characteristics are reflected in their vocal lines just as it would be in solo dialogue. Leporello's frightened patter during the first scene of Don Giovanni, for example, helps to establish his less than heroic character. Dent, incidentally, denies that this example is appropriate, since the sort of patter written for Leporello here is simply a standard buffo technique and does not necessarily indicate fear.¹ He is absolutely right in this assertion, but he admits that such patter may indicate fright (among other things to be sure) and in this case, Leporello's text shows that he indeed is frightened. Therefore the patter serves to do two things: to differentiate his vocal line from the others that occur at the same time, and to indicate that his fear is that of a comic character. Both of these do help to characterize him. Also, the suitability of this portrayal of Leporello, like almost all such depictions of character in lines that are sung in simultaneous sections, must be judged in light of the information presented about the character in the rest of the opera. In fact, there is only one clear instance in Mozart's operas of

¹See Mozart's Operas, p. 155.
an aspect of characterization being developed in a Metastasian simultaneous passage that is not a reinforcement of the traits of the character as presented in the arias, recitatives, and musical dialogues of the rest of the opera. This occurs in the same scene of Don Giovanni that has just been mentioned from Leporello's point of view. The trio among the Commendatore, Giovanni, and Leporello that occurs immediately after Giovanni has mortally wounded the old man might seem to have little dramatic value. It could be omitted without losing any action whatsoever, since it contains none, and it would even be more realistic for Giovanni to take to his heels immediately instead of hanging around musing over his fallen foe. But more would be lost from such an omission than an exceptionally beautiful musical episode, which this trio of course is. Leporello continues to vocalize his distress in the background, and the dying Commendatore's gasps are admirably depicted by the short, broken phrases he sings, but the most interesting thing about this ensemble is Mozart's setting of Giovanni's lines. The flowing legato seems to indicate a compassion for his victim that is an aspect of the Don's character that is not revealed in any other situation in the opera, except perhaps, surprisingly enough, in the Metastasian section of another ensemble. This is the trio in which he seduces Donna Elvira all over again by having Leporello pretend to serenade her in his name. Kerman believes that he is as touched by her capitulation as he is by the old man's death. At any rate, all through the rest of the opera, the Don is depicted as being completely

\[1\text{Kerman, p. 83.}\]
cynical and hard-hearted. If he does feel any compassion for another person, he would try not even to admit it to himself, and so it is quite appropriate that this added dimension of his character be revealed only in his most introspective moments.

Despite this example, the Metastasian simultaneous passages in Mozart's ensembles do not necessarily help a great deal in the development of characterization, especially in those passages where the characters are reacting in quite general ways, as discussed earlier. However, such passages do help indicate for the audience the importance of the various events of the plot. In fact, once the convention of the Metastasian reaction on the part of the characters to the plot situations has been established, in a given opera, then such a reaction, either in a solo or an ensemble, is necessary in order to demonstrate that an event or situation is of any importance at all. The murder of the Commendatore is an important event, so naturally the characters react to it, in this case in an ensemble. In the first finale of *Don Giovanni*, Donna Anna, Donna Ottavio, and Donna Elvira are invited into Giovanni's house, which is a situation fraught with both danger and opportunity, since it gives them a chance to carry out their revenge, so naturally they react with a solemn trio. The fact that Figaro is the long lost son of Marcellina and Bartolo is an extremely important reversal in the plot of *Le nozze di Figaro*, so naturally the sextet ends with an extended simultaneous section in which the Count and Curzio express their frustration while the other characters express their happiness. The "departure" of the two soldiers in *Cosi* is important
to its plot, and so it generates two quintets and a trio. And so on, through the whole list of Mozart's ensembles. Even the youthful opera seria ensembles tend to occur at critical moments in the plot structure. The important moments of the mature operas may not all be highlighted by ensembles--arias sometimes are used, especially in Idomeneo and La Clemenza di Tito--and an event that is so treated musically may not be absolutely critical to the outcome of the plot, but Metastasian simultaneous sections tend to indicate the importance of the events that are being reacted to. After all, if the characters express no reaction to an event or situation, they must regard it as being of no importance, and the audience may safely do so also.

This sort of reasoning helps to explain the significance of the final ensemble and/or chorus that ends each of Mozart's operas. Every one of Mozart's stage works ends happily, even Don Giovanni (since the villain gets his just reward) and, after the plot has been finally resolved, an ensemble (or chorus or both) expresses the general satisfaction as well as sometimes proclaiming the moral that is implied by the culmination of the plot. Note that these numbers are musical depictions of the characters' reaction to the final resolution of the action. In each case, they are completely consistent with, and indeed a part of, the general musico-dramatic technique employed in the operas. They are, in the case of each opera, the ultimate Metastasian ensemble.
CONCLUSION

A knowledge of Mozart's treatment of the ensemble, especially in his mature operas, is basic to the understanding of this aspect of the dramaturgy of opera. In the first place, many of his ensembles, especially the finales, demonstrate that dramatic action may be carried on in a melodic dialogue with no sacrifice of musical interest or continuity. It is on this principle that the through-composed operas written since his time are based. Even more revealing, however, is the variety of the ways that he makes use of simultaneous singing in his ensembles. It is not true that these simultaneous passages always represent a cessation of the action of the plot. Many such passages are used in one way or another as part of the dialogue, in which case they are, in fact, a part of the action. This is particularly true of those simultaneous passages that depict some sort of argument or dispute. There is certainly no lack of action in the case of any of these passages, especially in those moments in which all of the characters involved sing simultaneously.

Mozart's Metastasian simultaneous sections are a different matter. In them, the action may cease, but the drama does not, since they are used to explicitly demonstrate the reaction of the characters to the events and situations of the plot and thereby make the importance of each situation so highlighted completely clear. These are dramatic, not just musical, considerations.
Mozart's early operas do not show the dramatic insight and deft handling of ensembles that are so characteristic of his mature works. However, in none of the latter is there an example of an ensemble that exists solely for the sake of a musical effect, although musical effectiveness is obviously one of Mozart's primary concerns. It is true that he may have miscalculated somewhat at times—it may be that the consummation of the action is delayed too long at the end of the first finale of Don Giovanni, for example, but even in that instance, the simultaneous section involved serves a dramatic, as well as a musical end—it demonstrates the audacity and courage of the Don in the face of surprise and adversity, qualities that would later lead him to his confrontation with the statue and his fate. Any miscalculation is in the execution of the specific ensemble involved, not a flaw in basic principles.

For, on at least five occasions, Mozart was able to take the conventional forms handed down to him by operatic history and mold them into a work that exhibits great musical beauty while at the same time being a dramatic entity. These five works have survived down to the present, while those of his contemporaries, and even certain others of his own, have vanished from the opera houses.

At least part of the reason for the survival of these five masterworks (as they may truly be called) is that in them, the "episode" that is called the ensemble definitely contributes "to the depiction of characters or the development of the dramatic idea."

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1 Grout, p. 4.
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________. "Ensembles and Finales in 18th Century Italian Opera." Sammelbande der internationalen Musikgesellschaft, XI (1909-10), 543-69; XII (1910-11), 112-38.


# APPENDIX

## TABLE I

THE OPERAS OF *W. A. MOZART* IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old Köchel Listing</th>
<th>Revised Köchel Listing</th>
<th>Title and Type</th>
<th>Librettist(s)</th>
<th>Date of Composition</th>
<th>Mozart's Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Apollo et Hyacinthus (Latin school comedy)</td>
<td>Father Rufinus Widl</td>
<td>1767</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>46a</td>
<td>La finta semplice (Opera buffa in three acts)</td>
<td>Carlo Goldoni (revised by Mario Coltellini)</td>
<td>1768</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>46b</td>
<td>Bastien und Bastienne (Singspiel in one act)</td>
<td>Friedrich Wilhelm Weiskern and Andreas Schachtner</td>
<td>1768</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>74a</td>
<td>Mitridate, Re di Ponto (Opera seria in three acts)</td>
<td>Vittorio Cigna-Santi</td>
<td>1770</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>111</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>Ascanio in Alba (Serenata teatrale in two acts)</td>
<td>Giuseppe Parini</td>
<td>1771</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>126</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>Il sogno di Scipione (Serenata drammatica)</td>
<td>Pietro Metastasio</td>
<td>1772</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>135</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>Lucio Silla (Dramma per musica in three acts)</td>
<td>Giovanni de Gamerra</td>
<td>1772</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>196</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>La finta giardiniera (Opera buffa in three acts)</td>
<td>Anonymous (presumably Ranieri de Calzabigi)</td>
<td>1774-75</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Köchel Listing</td>
<td>Revised Köchel Listing</td>
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<td>Librettist(s)</td>
<td>Date of Composition</td>
<td>Mozart's Age</td>
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<tr>
<td>208</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>Il Re pastore (Dramma per musica in two acts)</td>
<td>Pietro Metastasio</td>
<td>1775</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>344</td>
<td>336b</td>
<td>Untitled fragment, commonly called Zaide (Singspiel in two acts)</td>
<td>Andreas Schachtner</td>
<td>1779-80</td>
<td>24</td>
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<td>366</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>Idomeneo, Re di Creta (Opera seria in three acts)</td>
<td>Giambattista Varesco</td>
<td>1780-81</td>
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<td>384</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>Die Entführung aus dem Serail (Singspiel in three acts)</td>
<td>Christoph Bretzner, revised by Stephanie the Younger</td>
<td>1781-82</td>
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<td>422</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>L'oca del Cairo (fragment) (Dramma giocoso in two acts)</td>
<td>Giambattista Varesco</td>
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<td>27</td>
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<td>430</td>
<td>424a</td>
<td>Lo sposo deluso (fragment) Opera buffa in two acts</td>
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<td>1785-86</td>
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<td>527</td>
<td>Il dissoluto punito or Don Giovanni (Dramma giocoso in two acts)</td>
<td>Lorenzo da Ponte</td>
<td>1787</td>
<td>31</td>
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<td>621</td>
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<td>La Clemenza di Tito (Opera seria in two acts)</td>
<td>Pietro Metastasio, revised by Caterino Mazzola</td>
<td>1791</td>
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N.B. Operatic nomenclature was by no means standardized in the eighteenth century. Today works called serenata and dramma per musica may be classified as opere serie; those called Komödie mit Musik and Deutsche Oper as Singspiel; and those called dramma giocoso as opere buffe. The various designations may represent perfectly valid subclassifications, but the three major classifications are sufficient for most purposes.
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<th>Work</th>
<th>Arias</th>
<th>Duets</th>
<th>Trios</th>
<th>Quartets</th>
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\(^a\) The "Introduction" is here counted as an aria and two trios.

\(^b\) The "Introduction" is here counted as a quartet.
VITA

Luther Irwin Wade III was born in Elkin, North Carolina, on September 29, 1937, the son of Luther Irwin Wade, Jr. and Kathleen Reece Wade. He graduated in 1955 from University High School, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and obtained his B.A. (English) in 1960 from Louisiana State University. After serving in the United States Army for two years (1960-1962) as a commissioned officer and attending the University of Minnesota as a Woodrow Wilson Fellow (1962-1963), he returned to Louisiana State University where he received a B.M. (Music) in 1965 and a M.A. (Music History) in 1966. He was employed as Supervisor of the Listening Rooms of the Louisiana State University Library for one year (1966-1967) and is presently a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Speech at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.
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Major Field: Speech

Title of Thesis: The Dramatic Functions of the Ensemble in the Operas of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

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Dean of the Graduate School

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Kenneth Klauer

Date of Examination:

July 24, 1969