The Heroines of Mozart: The Relationship of Music and Social Status

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Music in Applied Music, Voice, and the Honors Program

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Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, considered to be one of the greatest and most prolific composers in the history of Western music, is known as one of the masters of opera. In his lifetime, he composed 22 operas, the last of which are still part of the standard repertoire today. In these operas, Mozart seems to create a delineation between characters of high social standing and those of low social standing through their music. Two heroines each from three later operas, \textit{Le Nozze di Figaro}, \textit{Don Giovanni}, and \textit{Die Zauberflöte}, were analyzed to determine how their social status related to the music they sing.
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Introduction and Background

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was a classical era (1730-1820) composer, known for his many different musical works. He was a prolific composer, writing hundreds of different pieces of music in his rather short lifetime. Born on January 27, 1756, Mozart was considered a prodigy both at composing and at the piano. He toured Europe with his father and sister as a child, and wrote his first operas in 1768 when he was only twelve (Headington et al. 94).

Mozart composed many operas over his lifetime, and many of them remain as standards of the profession. Of his 22 completed operas, some are more well-known than others, with Don Giovanni, Le Nozze di Figaro, and Die Zauberflöte at the very top of that list. Part of the notoriety of these pieces comes from these three being among the last five operas Mozart ever composed, when he began to play with opera tropes and conventions.

Italian operas can be divided into two basic genres, so to speak, from which tropes, conventions, and character archetypes can be taken. The earliest operas are of the genre referred to as opera seria, or tragic opera. Often, these operas are based off of mythological stories and characters - such as the oldest surviving opera, Euridice, based on the story of Orpheus. In these operas, the characters are generally of noble blood who are faced with dramatic, large scale problems, and solutions are found through divine intervention in the final act. Opera seria was often written about royalty for royalty.
On the other side, there is the comic opera, opera buffa. Opera buffa began with the intermezzi - short musical comedies performed between acts of an opera seria - but eventually became an opera genre of its own. Where opera seria focuses on the trials of kings and noble heroes, opera buffa focuses on the daily life and problems of the common man. While characters of the noble class do appear, the heroes of the shows are the commoners, and the action is driven by the decisions and schemes of these characters, rather than the whims of fate or the gods.

While other genres do exist, the traditions of opera seria and opera buffa have carried down through the years and influence the operas that come after. Most of Mozart’s operas are done in either of these two styles, though he also composed several singspiels - German music dramas, in which musical numbers are separated by spoken dialogue rather than sung recitative. *Le Nozze di Figaro* and *Don Giovanni* are both classified as opera buffa, though *Don Giovanni* also contains serious and supernatural themes, while *Die Zauberflöte* is a singspiel.

*Le Nozze di Figaro*, which premiered in 1786, was Mozart’s first time working with the librettist Lorenzo da Ponte, who also wrote the libretto for Mozart’s *Don Giovanni* and *Cosi fan tutte*. Da Ponte and Mozart worked together to turn Beaumarchais’ play into the libretto for an Italian comic opera (Weiss 142). Turning an established play into an opera presents a particular set of challenges, and in their effort, characters and scenes had to be eliminated to make it work as an opera. This ended up being useful not just to make the music work, but because Emperor Joseph II had forbidden a German troupe from performing the play just before Mozart and Da Ponte began work on the
opera (Weiss 143). Da Ponte was able to use the omissions to convince the Emperor to allow the opera (Weiss 145).

Emperor Joseph’s concerns about the play, and therefore the opera, have much to do about the original play’s portrayal of the nobility. *Le Nozze di Figaro* tells the story of Count Alvamiva’s servant Figaro on the day of his wedding to the servant Susanna, and all the action takes place in this one day. Susanna and Figaro are excited for the wedding, but the Count wishes to sleep with Susanna, using the feudal right he had abolished after marrying his wife. The Countess and Susanna plot against the Count as the Count schemes to get Susanna into his bed, and chaos ensues, leading up to a happy ending for Figaro and Susanna.

*Don Giovanni*, composed in 1787 (Holden et al. 702), was the second of Mozart’s three da Ponte operas. It is based on the story of Don Juan, and tells the story of the downfall of the rake Don Giovanni. A mix of opera seria and opera buffa conventions and characters, *Don Giovanni* begins with the title character’s rape of Donna Anna, and his slaying of her father, the Commendatore, and ends with the spirit of the Commendatore sending Giovanni to hell for his crimes. In between these two events, many things happen - Giovanni seduces the peasant Zerlina; Donna Anna and her betrothed Don Ottavio lead a manhunt to kill Giovanni; Donna Elvira attempts to save other women from Giovanni’s schemes; Leporello tries to quit working for Giovanni but ends up becoming even more complicit in the man’s schemes (Holden et al. 703-704).

*Die Zauberflöte* was the last opera composed before Mozart’s death, in the last year of his life. It is the most fantastical of Mozart’s operas, a story that juxtaposes the lofty ideals to which humans can strive with the simple pleasures of life. Using a libretto
written by Mozart’s friend, the impresario (theater director) Emanuel Schikaneder, *Die Zauberflöte* tells the story of Prince Tamino, who is sent to rescue the daughter of the Queen of the Night from Sarastro, and who completes the trials of Sarastro’s sect with the Queen’s daughter Pamina at his side, as his wife (Headington et al. 108). With him travels Papageno the bird catcher, who cares for the lofty heights of Sarastro’s sect, but for finding his simple pleasures in food and a wife, Papagena. And though Tamino’s lot is pointed at as the highest height mankind can reach, the opera does not fault Papageno for his simpler goals.

Mozart and Schikaneder were Masons, members of a fraternal organization that holds logic and morality as high ideals, and *Die Zauberflöte* contains a plethora of Masonic imagery and ideals. While the opera is filled with many fantastical elements, the text speaks of how wisdom and enlightenment will save the day, and that any mortal man can rise to the level of the gods. Tamino goes through initiation rituals and ceremonies in order to join Sarastro’s priests and bring peace through his enlightenment. Honesty, steadfastness, patience, and discretion (virtues valued by the Masons) are extolled throughout the show - by the three spirits sent to guide Tamino and Papageno, by Sarastro, and even by the three Ladies of the Queen of the Night.

All three of these operas were met with great success at their premiers, and all three remain as industry standards to this day.

**Literature Review**

People have been analyzing Mozart’s works for a long time, and there is much to look at: his portrayal of characters of different classes, the reception of audiences to his
works, his treatment of librettos, the music itself. A large portion of the body of research
done on Mozart’s works focuses on the social dynamics of his works, and how they were
influenced by the world in which he lived. Mozart’s operas focus on the personalities of
the characters, and how their personalities affect the circumstances they find themselves
in. This is discussed in detail by many authors. Frits Noske discusses the social standing
of each of the characters in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and how that affects the way they interact
with the other characters, and points to examples of their music in order to emphasize his
points (Noske). He also points directly to the difference in conventions between the
music for characters of high class and those of low class; in his short analysis of Countess
Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, he brings up her duet with Susanna and how the
Countess lowers herself during that scene in two ways - one, socially, by plotting with
her servant; and two, musically, by matching Susanna’s melodic line and meter (Noske,
51).

Noske also mentions Hermann Albert’s thoughts on the way Mozart’s characters
are motivated by their personalities and not just their titles and social standing, and how
this is different from many other operas (Noske, 45). This idea is echoed by Michael
Levey in his analysis of Pamina and Countess Almaviva, in which he posits that Mozart’s
heroines differ from the typical opera heroines in that they have agency over their own
lives - especially Pamina, whom he describes as being unlike any of Mozart’s other
heroines or any other opera heroine before her (Levey, 133).

Where Levey and Noske discuss Mozart’s characters and how they stand apart
from opera characters that came before, Abram Loft discusses where Mozart lies in the
tradition of opera buffa (comic opera) as seen through the buffa archetypal character of
the comic servant (Loft, 377). Part of Loft’s discussion is particularly beneficial to my research, as he comments that the comic characters that are so important to the success of opera buffa are generally characters of the lower classes (Loft, 377) - which aligns with my thought that the music of characters of lower class is purposely more comedic than the high class counterparts.

Many societal concerns are brought up by those studying Mozart’s works, beyond social status and how it relates to the characters. One issue often discussed is the rape and sexual assaults committed by the title character of Don Giovanni, and what sort of social commentary the opera gives. Liane Curtis focuses on the problems some audiences may have with Don Giovanni, if they are not paying attention to the point of the show, which is that Don Giovanni has done terrible things and eventually is made to pay for them (Curtis, 122), as well as how the show intersects with the modern day issue of rape culture (Curtis, 119). This particular article emphasizes the fact that these operas are not just relics of the past, but can be used to relate to and comment on the modern world, as well as to reflect on the past.

Character Analysis

Lower class

The three characters chosen from the lower class are Susanna from Le Nozze di Figaro, Zerlina from Don Giovanni, and Papagena from Die Zauberflöte. Each of these characters, while being lower in social standing than their chosen counterparts, are all very different from each other in personality and temperament. Each one serves a
different role within their opera, which will likely have additional effects on the music they perform.

**Susanna**

The action of *Le Nozze di Figaro* centers itself around the maid Susanna, Figaro’s bride-to-be and maid to the Countess. She is present in almost every scene, scheming with Figaro, the Countess, and Cherubino against the Count and his plans to bed Susanna. She is playful, feisty, and resourceful, with a quick wit that matches the speed of her singing. Throughout the opera Susanna sings many tunes, in different keys, at different tempos, with different feeling. Occasionally she may have a long, flowing legato line to sing; but generally speaking her lines move quickly around the scale and have plenty of coloratura (*Le Nozze di Figaro*).

Throughout the show, Susanna shows herself to be one of the smarter characters, able to outwit not only the Count, but also Figaro. For every obstacle thrown her way, she manages to find a way to surmount it. When the Count, in a jealous rage, threatens to break down the door to the closet where Cherubino is hiding, Susanna helps sneak the boy escape the room and takes his place in the closet and plays the situation off as though they had been testing the Count and he had failed. When the original plot to outwit the Count is foiled, Susanna stays calm and comes up with a new plan. She never lets the increasingly strange events of the day stop her from doing what needs to be done.

Susanna also shows herself to have a temper to rival the Count’s. During the sextet in the third act, when Susanna believes Figaro has left her and accepted Marcelina as his wife, she yells and slaps him. She turns her anger on the Count as well, several times throughout the show, and the Count is the one to back down each time.
As a heroine, Susanna is an interesting and compelling character who responds to
and directs the action around her with charm and a sense of humor. While her temper
occasionally gets the best of her, it only serves to make her more real to the audience.

Zerlina

Throughout his opera, Don Giovanni flirts with and seduces several different women.
Midway through the first act, he happens upon Zerlina, a pretty young peasant woman on
her wedding day. Just as her counterpart Donna Anna is often interpreted in different
ways, so is Zerlina’s character often looked at in one of two ways - either as an innocent
victim, or as a manipulative and ambitious woman. Neither interpretation is more correct
than the other, but Zerlina is most often played as the latter of the two options.

In Mozart’s time, a woman’s so-called virtue was often viewed as her most
important quality. If an unmarried woman was found to not be a virgin, it ruined her
prospects for marriage. And as women were often treated as second class citizens,
beholden to their fathers and brothers until they married and were then beholden to their
husbands, a woman without her virtue had lost many of her options. This is one of the
things that makes Don Giovanni’s actions, even when they are consensual, so
reprehensible. By sleeping with all the women he can, he causes no harm to himself, but
does destroy the reputations and prospects of the women he seduces. Especially as he is
shown promising to marry several of the women he sleeps with before casting them
aside.

His interactions with Zerlina are a perfect example. In their duet, “La chi darem,”
Giovanni promises to marry Zerlina if she’ll come back to his house with him. Zerlina,
whether charmed by his appearance and manners or his wealth and power, first protests
and then agrees. If Donna Elvira had not intervened and the two had slept together, Don Giovanni would not have followed through with his promise, and Zerlina would have been left out to rot. As we see in ‘Batti, batti,’ Masetto would not have taken her back if she had actually slept with Don Giovanni; it is her innocence of that act that allows her to calm him and win him over again. And whatever Zerlina’s motivations behind her agreement during ‘la chi darem,’ she is smart enough to realize that Don Giovanni will not marry her, and resists Giovanni’s advances later that evening.

**Papagena**

Papagena makes her first appearance in the second act of *Die Zauberflöte*, when she comes to speak with Papageno disguised as an old woman. Her next appearance is much the same, appearing to Papageno in the guise of an old woman, though when he offends her by calling her old, she throws off her disguise, revealing herself to be a beautiful young woman, before dashing offstage (Mozart 181). Papagena is a birdcatcher like Papageno, his female counterpart, and made specifically to be Papageno’s wife. Her role in the opera is small, with only three appearances, but she is the driving motivation of Papageno’s story - his wish for a happy little life with food, wine, and a pretty little wife.

Papagena plays a very different role than the other women on this list. In some ways, she holds to a more traditional female role - a prize to be won by a worthy man (though Papageno, who wins her, does not win her by proving himself worthy; he uses the magic bells). But she is only a minor character who sings once, a melody that mirrors Papageno.

**High class**
Like the ladies of the lower class, these characters are very different from each other, though they do share more character traits than the lower class ladies. Pamina and the Countess both deal with the heartbreak of being abandoned by their lover, whether that abandonment is real or imagined. Pamina and Donna Anna share the loss of a loved parent, though again, the loss is different for each - Donna Anna’s father is murdered, while Pamina is stolen away from her mother, who then turns her back on her daughter for being too tenderhearted.

**Countess Rosina Almaviva**

Countess Almaviva is in many ways what would would expect of a noblewoman in an opera buffa - she is sad and serious, a far cry from the young Rosina of *The Barber of Seville*. Her happiness is gone, as her husband is busy chasing after young women. She does participate actively in the plot, plotting with Susanna to help stop the Count’s plans (Le Nozze di Figaro), but she brings gravity to the plot. If Susanna is the driving force of the opera, the Countess is the moral center.

Of all the characters in the opera, the Countess is the one who holds the moral high ground, despite her husband’s jealous accusations. She is a kind-hearted woman, who is genuinely hurt by her husband’s infidelity and cruelties. Her participation in the schemes against the Count is due to the care she feels for her servants, who she treats as friends throughout the course of the opera. When the Count decides to send Cherubino away to join the army, the Countess helps Susanna dress the boy as a girl; and she helps Susanna develop the schemes against the Count.

The opera comes to a head with the Count romancing the Countess, who is disguised as Susanna, while Figaro and Susanna - who is dressed as the Countess -
pretend to be having an affair. When the Count flies into a jealous rage against Figaro, the Countess enters the garden and reveals the trick. In this moment, because she has retained her morality while the Count has not, the Countess holds all of the power. She could find some way of punishing the Count for his indiscretions; but with the kindness of her heart, she forgives the Count, who is immediately apologetic for everything he has done.

**Donna Anna**

*Don Giovanni* begins with the titular character fleeing from the bedroom of an angry Donna Anna, with Anna chasing him and trying to stop him from leaving. There is some discussion among those in the profession on what exactly is happening in this scene - some say that Donna Anna is trying to prevent her rapist from leaving so that he may be punished, while others say that Donna Anna is simply upset that Don Giovanni is leaving. How one views this opening scene can affect how Donna Anna is viewed throughout the rest of the opera. Her entire plotline revolves around what happened before Don Giovanni left her room, and his subsequent duel with her father; and the way the opening is treated greatly determines what kind of character Donna Anna is.

In the interpretation where Don Giovanni’s advances were unwelcomed by Donna Anna, she becomes a more tragic character, who is twice wronged and injured by Giovanni. Her quest for vengeance is strengthened by allowing her another reason to despise the villain, and it allows her to retain dignity. If the scene is interpreted as if Donna Anna had invited Don Giovanni into her room knowing it was not her fiancé, then she loses that tragic edge. She becomes a more manipulative character, who lies to her fiance about how the events of the evening transpired.
Ultimately, the interpretation of Donna Anna’s character is up to the director and the actress portraying her; and it has been played both ways. Mozart and Da Ponte never explicitly said what transpired between Donna Anna and Don Giovanni, so we have the text and the music to aid artistic interpretation. I prefer to lean towards Donna Anna as a more tragic character because it makes her a more compelling character, especially if Zerlina is being played as manipulative. They become a foil for each other this way.

**Pamina**

Pamina is the daughter of the Queen of the Night, and plays an important role in the action of *Die Zauberflöte*. She fills many roles within the show: a damsel in distress; the prize for Tamino to win; the heroine who takes an active part in her own rescue; and in the end, the person who leads Tamino to his success. Their success in the trials comes from her knowledge of the power of the magic flute, and her willingness to follow Tamino into the fire and water. They win because they take the trials together, as a united front.

In many ways, Pamina is a different breed of opera heroine from the ones that came before her. Many of the higher class heroines (though this does not necessarily include all of Mozart’s heroines of this class) are simply the damsel in distress who the hero must save. Pamina differs from the classic opera seria heroine in that she actively participates in saving herself. In this respect, she resembles the heroine of an opera buffa, somewhere between Susanna and the Countess. Like Susanna, Pamina does not allow the action to move her; instead, she directly affects the action. She keeps Papageno calm when their escape is foiled, and she joins Tamino in his trials of initiation. And like the Countess, Pamina is occasionally overwhelmed by her circumstances. After Tamino and
Papageno refuse to speak with her - as a part of their trials, though she was unaware - Pamina believes Tamino no longer loves her and is heartbroken.

Pamina is a strong heroine, with a kind heart and a determination to do what she believes is right. When her mother threatens that Pamina will be dead to her if she does not murder Sarastro, Pamina is frightened, but doesn’t entertain the idea.

**Musical Analysis**

Though each chosen character - with the exception of Papagena - sings many times throughout their respective operas, for my purposes one aria (or duet, in Papagena’s case) from each was chosen for analysis.

**Venite, inginocchiatevi**

Susanna’s aria from the second act of *Le Nozze di Figaro* is a light, comical piece. The Count has determined to send Cherubino to the army, but he has not left yet, and Figaro tells Susanna and the Countess that they should use Cherubino in their plans to foil the Count’s plot. Figaro suggests disguising Cherubino as a girl, and in this aria Susanna dresses him up in some of her clothes (*Le Nozze di Figaro*). The text of the aria is Susanna’s commentary, giving direction and chiding Cherubino when he gets distracted by the Countess. It is light and silly, like the scene and the music.

The aria is fast, marked allegretto, and starts lightly, with quick thirty-second notes and block chords, and after the first twenty-three measures the orchestra picks up a steady straight sixteenth note line that stays fairly consistent for the rest of the aria. There are a lot of little turns and quick embellishments by the violins during the interludes,
which serve to keep the song light and playful (Le Nozze di Figaro, p. 110; see appendix a).

Susanna’s vocal line is quick-moving with short phrases - since each sung phrase is a little comment on Cherubino’s behavior or appearance, they feel like little laughing interjections. Each phrase moves through a range of at least a fifth, if not more, and there are plenty of leaps, though there is also a lot of stepward motion. Her vocal line is very lively, driving forward just as the orchestra’s line does. Most of her rhythms are a mix of sixteenth and eighth notes, and it is extremely sixteenth note heavy (Le Nozze di Figaro). While the piece is syllabic rather than melismatic, it has the coloratura qualities in that it moves through the range very quickly, and so the voice has to move quickly. It’s a style referred to as patter-singing, when the singer needs to quickly spit out a lot of different syllables on different notes. It gives the piece a boundless energy, and Susanna floats over the frenetic orchestra, her line fast but never frantic. The quick speed and frequent short pauses between phrases give the piece a laughing quality, which adds to the comedy.

The aria ends in one of the most Mozartian ways possible. In the last nine measures of the piece, Mozart gives writes three cadences leading to the final V-I cadence. The sequence G-D-B-B-G-D is repeated twice, the second time going back down to the G, the tonic of the key the aria is written in - G major. This is followed by two repetitions of the line ‘il lor perche,’ with the first three syllables on D and the final on G. In the first repetition, the vocal line goes up from D5 to G5, while it descends from D5 to G4 on the final repetition (Le Nozze di Figaro, p 114). This sort of cadential ending
is very common in Mozart’s works, especially the double repetition of the cadence with the first repetition taking a leap upwards and the final ending the octave down.

**Dove sono**

Both of the Countess’s arias are about her husband’s infidelity, but this one from Act III is the longer and more emotionally charged piece. “Dove sono” is a beautiful song in which the Countess mourns for the happy moments she and the Count had in the past. This aria comes after the Countess has Susanna invite the Count to meet her for a rendezvous in the garden that night. The Countess leaves while Susanna speaks with the Count, and then returns, wanting to know how the plan is coming along. She speaks to herself about the situation, and finds herself lamenting the situation she finds herself in (Le Nozze di Figaro).

The aria begins slow and stately; even in her despair, the Countess is poised and elegant. It’s marked as andantino, which means that while it is slow, it is lighter than something marked andante. The orchestra plays a stately accompaniment, with octave intervals played in unison in the bass alternating with chords at the top. It keeps a fairly steady 1-and-2-and pattern, with occasional deviations at the top. Over this, the Countess sings her gentle, elegant melody. Her line at the beginning is fairly simple, but no less beautiful or touching. The beginning, lamenting line is mostly up in the mid-high range, though there is a point where the line leaps down an octave from F5 to F4, then moves stepwise down to D4 (Le Nozze di Figaro, p. 247; see appendix b). Then it leaps up to D5, and the next page continues in the mid-high range, never going below G4 (Le Nozze di Figaro, p. 248).
Starting in measure 52, the time signature changes from 2/4 to common time, or 4/4, and the aria picks up speed, marked allegro (Le Nozze di Figaro, p. 248). The Countess has done her mourning for the happy times, and now she has found hope that someday, she might be able to take back his heart. This part of the aria still sits above G4, but now the top of the range has been extended up higher, popping up above the staff with more regularity. With the upping of the tempo, the aria gains a feeling of excitement, as the Countess resolves to have hope. Underneath her vocal line, the orchestra gains in speed and drama, with a consistent repeating eighth note bass line accompanied by alternating block chord inversions. The aria is now charged with energy, moving forward and driving the Countess towards her three A5’s, the high points of the piece, and the classic Mozart repeating final line and cadence (Le Nozze di Figaro, p. 250).

**Batti, batti o bel Masetto**

Midway through Act I of *Don Giovanni*, we are introduced to Zerlina and Masetto, preparing for their wedding. Don Giovanni enters the scene and is immediately taken with the pretty Zerlina, and sends Masetto away so he may be alone with Zerlina to seduce her. Donna Elvira interrupts them before anything can happen, and shepherds the girl back to her friends and fiancé. When we next see them, Masetto is angry with Zerlina for what he thinks must have happened with Don Giovanni, and Zerlina tries to calm him. He remains belligerently angry, and Zerlina sings her aria in an attempt to soothe him (Don Giovanni). “Beat me,” she tells him, “and I will still kiss your sweet hands.”

The aria is sweet and playful, with Zerlina describing all the ways Masetto could punish her, and assuring him that she would still love him after all of that. It begins
slowly and gently, in an andante 2/4 time. The orchestra plays a moderate legato alberti bass line under Zerlina’s gentle descending opening line. The music is made more playful by the little turns that occasionally appear in the violins, keeping the music from feeling too serious (Don Giovanni, p. 106; see appendix c).

With the exception of a few spots, the orchestra drives the aria forward with a continuous sixteenth note bass line; and in the few spots where that bass line trades the sixteenth notes for quarter notes, Zerlina takes up the sixteenth notes herself in the vocal line (Don Giovanni, p. 106). This keeps the aria moving and adds a feeling of lightness to the piece. Zerlina’s vocal line moves in a mostly stepwise motion, without very many leaps further than a fifth; and rhythmically moves in eighth and sixteenth notes.

Halfway through the aria, the tempo shifts, Zerlina manages to calm Masetto enough that her text changes from possible punishments she could receive to how they will live the rest of their lives together in peace. Here, the tempo and time signatures both change, signaling a small shift in the emotion. Zerlina is still apologetic and soothing, but now that she knows Masetto is listening to her, she is more playful. The time signature changes from the earlier 2/4 to 6/8, and the piece takes on an allegro, or brisk, tempo (Don Giovanni, p. 108). This is also where Zerlina’s vocal line, which has been centered more in the middle range settles to a higher point in the range, with more notes above the staff than in the first half. She also gets her coloratura moments with two short sixteenth note runs (Don Giovanni, p. 109). This section also contains more leaps in the vocal line. There is a lot of up and down motion in the aria, in the sense that the vocal line will move in upwards motion to a certain point, come back down, and then go back up again.
Overall, the aria feels very light and airy, with some singers giving it an almost breathless quality in the allegro section (Batti, batti, o bel Masetto).

**Or sai chi l’onor**

Towards the end of Act I, Donna Anna and Don Ottavio encounter Don Giovanni and Donna Elvira, looking for help in finding the man who killed the Commendatore. Donna Elvira tries to warn Anna and Ottavio that they cannot trust Don Giovanni, and an argument breaks out. Eventually Don Giovanni leads Elvira away, leaving the couple alone. Donna Anna realizes then that Don Giovanni was the villain they were looking for, and pleads and demands that Don Ottavio take vengeance for her father and for her honor (Don Giovanni).

This aria is what is referred to as a rage aria - an expression of the character’s fury. Generally a rage aria is fast paced and full of coloratura passages. “Or sai chi l’onore” takes a step away from these conventions in that there is no real coloratura written in, though the soprano singing it may well decide to add a few coloratura embellishments, and the tempo is marked as andante, or moderately slow (Don Giovanni, p. 90; see appendix d). However, the aria does not feel slow. Underneath Donna Anna’s soaring lines at the beginning, the orchestra plays an accompaniment of rapidly oscillating sixteenth-note broken chords, giving the aria a tumultuous and frantic feeling (Don Giovanni, p. 90). The feeling of these broken chords continues throughout the piece, with occasional breaks where Donna Anna’s line is supported by a flowing line of half notes and quarter notes that match up with her, only to return to the driving agitation of the broken chords.
The aria follows the general form of the da capo aria - an A section followed by a modulation into a minor relative key for the B section, and then a return to the A section, with a small ending coda section added on for dramatic value. Donna Anna’s vocal line sits between F4 and A5, with a lot of time spent at C5 or higher. The high A5 is brought out as an important note to the piece, being repeated throughout the piece from the very beginning, and being held for a lengthier amount of time than any other note. It is the high point of the piece, and important tonally by virtue of being the fifth scale degree of the aria’s home key, D major, and therefore leading us down cadentially to the tonic, D. This makes the ending section so dramatic and ultimately Mozartian. In measures 68-73, Anna sings a sequence of F#-E-A-G-F# twice, followed by D-G-F#-pause-F#-E-A-sixteenth note triplet G-F#-E down to the final D (Don Giovanni, p.93-94). The delay of the V-I cadence over those six measures makes the final cadence more dramatic and more satisfying, and serves to punctuate Anna’s anger.

Rhythmically, the aria isn’t too complicated. It’s mostly quarter and half notes, with eighth notes and the occasional group of sixteenths to add variety. The vocal line rises and falls through the range of the piece in almost every phrase, giving the aria a grandiose feeling of majesty.

**Papageno/Papagena duet**

The Papageno/Papagena duet, the first of the final three scenes in the finale, is fast paced and full of short notes and fast rhythms. It begins with Papageno stuttering through Papagena’s name, and Papagena mimicking him in a way that is reminiscent of birds: ‘Pa-pa-pa-pa-pa-genoe.’ This little introduction, which lasts for the first 18 measures of the piece, sets the tone for the rest of it (Die Zauberflöte, p. 224; see appendix e). There is
very little in the way of longer, legato lines; the melodic line in measures 660-675 is the closest there is to a long legato line, and it still maintains the same artistic style as the rest of the duet (Die Zauberflöte, p. 226-227).

This duet comes after Papageno’s suicide aria and the intervention of the three spirits. Papageno believes he has lost his Papagena forever, and the spirits remind him of the silver bells he was given by the Queen of the Night. After playing the bells, Papagena returns, and the couple sing a sweet little duet about their future happiness as a couple and as a family, speaking about all the little Papagena’s and Papageno’s they’ll have (Die Zauberflöte).

Underneath the bird-like “Pa’s” of the introduction, the orchestra plays a bouncing Alberti bass line, the notes separated and staccato-like, with little trills every few measures, adding a lightness to the already bright and airy duet. The piece keeps the tempo set when Papageno uses the bells to summon Papagena, a brisk allegro, and the style in which the orchestra plays gives the duet a forward motion, driving it to the end (Die Zauberflöte, p. 224). Looking at the music, it doesn’t seem like it would feel as fast as the piece actually moves, especially considering that the singers never sing a note of a smaller value than an eighth. However, because of the momentum of the piece, those eighth notes are actually very quick, as are the quarter notes.

The duet has a lot of back and forth between the characters. Papageno will sing a phrase, and Papagena will echo it a step or two higher. Then they’ll sing in parallel motion, harmonizing with each other for a few measures, before breaking back into their echoes. As the piece goes on, the vocal line seems to grow more frenzied and energetic, especially once we reach measure 693 (Die Zauberflöte, p. 228). Here, Papageno sings
four measures of quick eighth note Pa-pa-pa-pa-ge-no’s, with Papagena joining in for the last measure. She then echoes this rhythm and melody starting at measure 706 (Die Zauberflöte, p. 229). The last two pages of the duet are full of the excited pattering of their names together, with the orchestra driving them towards the final cadence.

It is a simple piece, as far as the melody and concept go, but difficult to execute because of the quick patter singing; and it is one of the most satisfying and entertaining moments of the opera. It is playful and light, something that is much needed thanks to the more serious tone of the preceding scenes in the finale.

**Ach ich fühl’s**

In the second act of *Die Zauberflöte*, Tamino and Papageno go through several trials to prove their worth to Sarastro and his priests. During these trials, they are told they must remain silent and not speak to anyone, no matter the temptation. While Papageno has a difficult time following this order, Tamino stays firm, refusing to speak even when Pamina appears and begs him to speak with her. When Papageno refuses to speak with her as well, Pamina breaks into a heartbroken lamentation (Die Zauberflöte).

At first glance, the aria ‘Ach ich fühl’s’ looks to be much more rhythmically difficult than it is. Pamina’s vocal line is filled with sixteenth and thirty-second note runs; but the tempo marking of andante coupled with the time signature of 6/8 makes it slower and therefore makes the runs easier to execute (Die Zauberflöte, p. 159; see appendix f). As the 6/8 time signature gives the beat to the eighth note rather than the quarter note, the thirty-second note runs become the equivalent of a sixteenth note run in a piece where the quarter note has the beat.
Underneath the vocal line, the orchestra plays a relatively simple progression of block chords to support the singer. Above this, Pamina’s vocal line soars gracefully through the lament (Die Zauberflöte, p.159). Most phrases ask for the singer to move smoothly through a range of over an octave, with large leaps of a fifth to an octave. The slow tempo, repeated chords, and lofty range work together to give the aria a melancholy but elegant feel.

Beginning in measure 12, Pamina sings a long, elegant melody that runs through almost the entirety of the song’s range, from F4 up to B5 and winding back down to B4 (Die Zauberflöte, p. 159). Even with the slow tempo of the aria, this section is still considered a coloratura section, thanks to the melismatic movement of the thirty-second note run on ‘Herzen,’ and therefore follows the rules governing the use of coloratura. All coloratura runs in an aria represent one of three things - laughter, excitement, or tears. In this case, this long legato line is an outpouring of Pamina’s heartbreak and despair, and so it represents her weeping.

The melodic line from measure 12 that started the run returns in measure 30, leading the song to its close (Die Zauberflöte, p. 160). The return of this theme brings back Pamina’s tears, as she exclaims that she will rest in death. Like the other arias, this one ends with several repetitions of the last line of text, “so wird Ruh’ im Tode sein!” However, unlike some of the other arias analyzed, the melodic content of each repetition is different. The first of the repetitions is the return of the melodic line from measure 12 in measure 30, with a long climb from D4 to E5 and down to end on G4. The next repetition features an octave leap from G4 up to G5, with a leap of over an octave down to C#4 followed by a leap up to B4 and a stepwise descent from there to end on G4 (Die
Zauberflöte, p. 160-161). The last two repetitions of ‘im Tode sein,’ are more similar to each other than the others were; both begin on B4 and move up before ending with a redo cadential move, from the F# resolving to G. The first of these two repetitions is just a simple 5-note sequence, B-A-C-F#-G, while the second extrapolates on this, rising up to an E5 before coming back down (Die Zauberflöte, p. 161).

**Conclusions**

In a Mozart opera, a character’s class does have bearing on what sort of music that character will sing, as well as how they will respond to the situations they are placed in. The characters from a lower social standing have a tendency to sing music that is lighter and more playful, with text that is comedic or light-hearted, often taking action in response to their situation. Susanna’s aria is a direct response to the situation she and Cherubino have found themselves in - plotting to stop the Count from getting his way as well as hiding the fact the Cherubino has not left for the army (Le Nozze di Figaro). Despite the absurdity of the situation and the risks of the plan, Susanna stays upbeat and positive, having fun with the execution of the plan. In Zerlina’s aria, she knows that she has to convince Masetto to calm down if she wants to save her reputation and their relationship. She knows Masetto is angry, and she uses his anger to tease him, suggesting all the different ways he could punish her (Don Giovanni). She doesn’t show any fear or hesitation, simply gets done what she needs to get done.

On the other hand, characters of the higher class in Mozart’s operas often handle their problems in understandable but less productive ways. Donna Anna demands that Don Ottavio take vengeance on Don Giovanni; but none of them are capable of catching
and stopping the villain. That is only achieved by supernatural means, when the statue of
the Commendatore summons demons to drag Don Giovanni to Hell (Don Giovanni). The
Countess spends two arias lamenting her husband’s infidelity, and though she actively
participates in the scheming against the Count, she would not have if Susanna and Figaro
hadn’t first brought her into their scheme. Unlike Donna Anna, the Countess is able to
solve her problem, but it is with the help of Susanna and Figaro. If it hadn’t been for the
problems the Count was causing for Susanna and Figaro, the Countess likely would never
have taken the actions she needed to take back control of her life. Of the three higher
class heroines, Pamina has the most agency, and has the most in common with the lower
class heroines; but even she finds herself falling prey to despair. After her aria, she is
charged by her mother to kill Sarastro or be disowned, and in her despair Pamina plans to
use the knife given to her by the Queen of the Night to take her own life (Die
Zauberflöte). The spirits stop her, and she is able to pull herself together to go help
Tamino; but she still did lose hope, even if just for a moment.

These high class characters tend to have songs that deal with heavy topics in a
heavier way than the characters of the low class. Their melodies often lean towards a
grander, more elegant and serious tone, with long sweeping phrases and legato lines. All
three of the arias from the high class characters were slower - marked andante and
andantino - with block chords consistently found in the orchestra’s accompaniment. The
arias are stately and majestic, in the sadness and the anger, and the characters singing
them remain elegant and graceful throughout their outpouring of emotion. The lower
class characters differ from this in that while they also deal with sad emotions, they often
choose to linger in the more productive ones. Susanna, Zerlina, and Papagena are
cheerful, even in less-than-ideal situations, and their music reflects that. It is quicker, marked allegro and allegretto, and less legato, with more energy and humor.

One reason the music is like this is thanks to the opera buffa style of composition, because the characters of the high class are treated differently than the lower class characters. In opera buffa, especially the Mozart/Da Ponte collaborations, the nobility is made fun of by placing the high class characters into absurd situations and watching them struggle while the lower class characters drive the action. The high class characters get to keep aspects of opera seria in their music and characterization, and this seriousness is often exaggerated to further add absurdity and comedy to the show.
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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1PT9ynX8L1E


https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pnOlZ9QFB8E


Metropolitan Opera. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PtG5A1WFYWI


Appendix A

No. 12 Aria

Susanna

Came hither, and kneel before me now.
Ve - ni - te, noo - chi - te - vi.

Keep qui - et if you can; keep qui - et, keep qui - et, keep qui - et if you can. Keep qui - et, keep qui - et.
Can, keep qui - et if you can. And now just turn your face away.

The Marriage of Figaro

To listen: Barbara Bonney
there! in me, not o-ver there! Look straight at me, I tell you, sir! I

Yes, I know why you stare. Come turn full face towards me now; To me, not o-ver

there! Look straight at me, I tell you, sir! Yes, I... know, yes

I know why you stare. Yes, I know why you stare. Oh, do keep

The Marriage of Figaro

B. & E. 15969
Now turn your face away.
Look straight at me.

That's right!

To fold your hands before you.

And look discreetly downwards.

Sincerely, I implore you.

The Marriage of Figaro
B. & B. 15060
S. creet-ly, I im-plore you! Now let me see you try

\[ \text{bre-mo po-scet-il pas-so, quan-do sa-re-fe in fie.} \]

S. Just look at him, my la-dy!

\[ \text{Mi-ra-te il bricoon-cel-lo,} \]

S. Well put him through his pa-ces; Where did he get those glances?

\[ \text{mi-ra-te qua-n-to è bel-lo, che fur-bo guer-da - tu-ra,} \]

S. Such naugh-ty airs and graces? Just look at him, my la-dy. Well put him through his

\[ \text{che vez-so, che fi-gu-ral Mi-ra-te il bricoon-cel-lo, mi-ra-te qua-n-to è} \]

S. pa-ces, where did he get those glances? Such naugh-ty airs and graces?

\[ \text{che vez-so, che fi-gu-ral} \]

The Marriage of Figaro

B. J. H. 10960
Women all go mad for him. They have good reason why, go 
L'amo-no le femmi-ne, han cer-to il lor per-che, se 

mad for him, they have good reason why, good reason, yes good reason, 
Io-mio-nu, han cer-to il lor per-che, han cer-to, cer-to, cer-to, 

good reason why, good reason, yes, good reason, good reason 
it lor per-che, han cer-to, cer-to, cer-to, cer-to, 

why, they have, they have good reason why, they have, they have good reason 
per-che, han cer-to, cer-to il lor per-che, han cer-to, cer-to il lor per-

why, good reason why, good reason why. 
il lor per-che, il lor per-che. 

The Marriage of Figaro
Appendix B

To listen: Annette Dasch
surely, all my devotion
might his heart,

his heart regain, might his heart,

his heart regain, might his faith

less heart regain, his faith less

heart, his heart regain.

The Marriage of Figaro

B. & H. 1994
Appendix C

No. 12. "Batti, batti, o bel Masetto."

Andante grazioso. Aria.

To listen: Cecilia Bartoli
Lascia-rò cavar-mi gli occhi, e le care tue mani.
But I did not understand. Come, no longer then re-
nine la ta poi sa-prò baci-ar, sa-prò baci-
sent it, give me kindly thy dear hand, oh give thy
hand, thy hand, Oh give me thy dear

(Masetto goes away again, but not so crossly; he even steals a few glances at Zerlina.)

batti bel Ma-
canst thou see me, un for-
set-to, la tua po-ve-ra Zer-li-nal sta-rò qui come a-gnel-
giv-en, Here in sor-row stand and languish! Oh Ma-set-to, end my
(still trying to get one of Masetto's hands; he always draws back.)

O beli Ma-set-to! O canst thou see me

Bat-ti, bat-ti! sta-rò qui, sta-rò qui le tue botte ad a - spe-tar.

Stand and languish, Oh Ma-set-to, end my anguish, Come and let's be friends a-gain.

Ah, confess it.

Ah, ah non hai co-re, Ah thou hai non

Ah non hai co-re, Ah non hai zero

(bene Zerlina seizes one of his hands.)

Allegro.

Pace, pace, o vita long-er, thou no long-er canst withstand me. Peace and joy once more shall

co-re, ah, love do, nonhai co-re.
Peace, peace, my life! in contented all bless us, Not a frown shall ever distress us, While united and de-

All our days shall sweetly glide,

Peace and joy again shall bless us, Peace and joy again shall
Peace, peace! joyful life! in contented and blessed us, Not a frown shall ever distress us, While united and devoted.

Gria note e di vogliam passar,
light ed All our days shall sweetly glide.

Note e di vogliam passar,
All our days shall sweetly glide.

Di vogliam passar,
All our days shall sweetly glide.

Pace, pa ceo vita mi a! Peace and joy shall bless us, Peace and joy shall
Appendix D

To listen: Rachel Willis-Sørensen
chiedete il tuo cor.
Ask of thy troth.
Hammen ta la
Remember when

plaga
del mi se ro se no,
wounded, His life blood was flowing, Un-

mirar
di san gue co per to, coperto il fer-
sol aced,
un shriv en, He heard not, he heard not my

reno, se l' ir aine te lan gue d'un giusto fu ror,
crying, My heart will be riv en, If thou break thy oath!
mi-ra
di san-gue
Ven-det
na
ta
life-blood was flowing.
For jus-"ti-
ne
I
sue thee,
I
chier-
gio.
la
chie-de-il
tuo
ask of thy
thor,
lal
chie-de-il
tuo
troth,
For jus-tice I
sue-thee, I ask of thy
chie-de-il
tuo
troth,
For jus-tice I
sue-thee, I ask of thy
chie-de-il
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For jus-tice I
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For jus-tice I
sue-thee, I ask of thy
chie-de-il
tuo
troth,
For jus-tice I
sue-thee, I ask of thy
chie-de-il
tuo
troth,
Recit.

Don Octavia (alone)

Come mai credo deggio, di si nero delitto caro
I can scarcely believe it, that of crimes so degrading a

pace un cavaliere! Ah, dipriporti vero figlio
noble can be guilty! Close ly I will pursue him, till the

mez zo si cerchi; io sento in petto e di sposo e da-
truth is discovered, every emotion, my allegiance to the

mi-co il dover che mi parla; Disingannar la voglio, o ven di car la!
dear one whom my faith I have plighted, bids me avenge her wrongs and see her righ ted.
Appendix E

(‘PAPAGENO steht sich un, beide’ haben unter dem Rhythm kemischer Spiel)

To listen: Manfred Hemm and Barbara Kilduff
Nun bin ich dir ganz gegeben.

mir nun ganz gegeben?

Nun so sei mein liebes Weibchen!

Welche Freude wird das sein.
sein.

wenn die Göt-t-er uns be-den-ken, un-s-rer Lie-be Kin-der

wenn die Gö-t-ter uns be-den-ken, un-s-rer Lie-be Kin-der

ri-

schen-ken, un-s-rer Lie-be Kin-der schen-ken, so lie-be klei-ne Kin-der-lein! Kin-der-lein!
schen-ken, un-s-rer Lie-be Kin-der schen-ken, so lie-be klei-ne Kin-der-lein! Kin-der-lein!

tar-dan-do

Kin-der-lein! Kin-der-lein! so lie-be klei-ne Kin-der-lein, so lie-be klei-ne Kin-der-lein!

Kin-der-lein! Kin-der-lein! so lie-be klei-ne Kin-der-lein, so lie-be klei-ne Kin-der-lein!

BA 4553-90
in tempo

Pa.

-lein.

Dann ______ ei-ne klei-ne Pa-pa-

Pap.

-lein. Erst ______ ei-nen klei-nen Pa-pa- ge -no!

Legno

fp Archi fp

673

Pa.

dann ______ wie-der ei-ne Pa-pa-

Pap.

dann ______ wie-der ei-nen Pa-pa- ge -no!

fp fp

683

Pa.

dann ______ wie-der ei-nen Pa-pa- ge -no!

Pap.

Pa-pa-ge-no!

Pa-pa-ge-no!

Pa-pa-ge-no!

Pa-pa-ge-no!

Pa-pa-ge-no!

Pa-pa-ge-no!

Arch Archi fp cresc.

BA 4555-90
Es ist das höchste der Gefühle, wenn viele,

Es ist das höchste der Gefühle,

wenn viele Papapa-papa-papa-papa-papa-

wenn viele Papapa-papa-no, Papapa-papa-papa-no, Papapa-papa-papa-no, Papapa-papa-papa-no, Papapa-papa-papa-papa-papa-

gegena der Eltern Segen werden sein.

gegeno der Eltern Segen werden sein. Es ist das
Es ist das höchste der Gefühle, wenn viele Papa-papa-

höchste der Gefühle, wenn viele, vie-

ge-na, Papa-papa-pa-ge-na, Papa-papa-pa-ge-na, Papa-papa-pa-ge-na, Papa-papa-papa-ge- na der

Pa-pa-pa-papa-pa-ge-no der

Eltern Segen werden sein, Papa-

Eltern Segen werden sein, Papa-

p Archi

FA 4553-90
55

727
Pa.
Se- gen wer- den sein, der El- tern Se- gen wer- den sein,

Pap.
Se- gen wer- den sein, der El- tern Se- gen wer- den sein,

731
Pa.
Pa-pa-pa-pa- pa- ge-nal!

Pap.
Pa-pa-pa-pa- pa- ge-nal! Pa-pa-pa-pa-

735
Pa.
ge-nal, Pa-pa-pa-pa- ge-nal, Pa-pa-pa-pa- ge-

Pap.
ge-nal, Pa-pa-pa-pa- ge-nal, Pa-pa-pa-pa-

739

\footnote{T. 744: Mozart setzt im Autograph an dieser Stelle keinen Takstrich.}

BA 4553-90
Appendix F

No. 17 Aria
Andante

Ach ich fühls, es ist verschwunden ewig hin der Liebe

Glück! - ewig hin der Liebe Glück!

stund meinem Herzen mehr zurück! meinem Herzen, meinem

To listen: Kathleen Battle
Sieh Tamino!

diese Tränen fließen Trauer dir allein,

dir allein, fühlst du nicht der Liebe Sehnen, der Liebe Sehnen - so wird

Ruhe, so wird Ruh' im Tode sein! - fühlst du nicht der Liebe Sehnen, fühlst du

nicht der Liebe Sehnen, so wird Ruhe, so wird Ruh' im Tode.
Neunzhenter Auftritt

TAMINO, PAPAGENO.

PAPAGENO (lisst hastig)
Nicht wahr, Tamino, ich kann auch schweigen, wenn's sein muss. — Ja, bei so einem Unternehmen, da bin ich Mann. — (er trinkt)
Der Herr Koch und der Herr Kellermeister sollen leben. — (dramaticher Posaunenton *)
(TAMINO winkt PAPAGENO, dass er gehen soll)

PAPAGENO
Gehe du nur voran, ich komme schon nach.
(TAMINO sagt ihm mit Gewalt fortzuführen.)

PAPAGENO
Der Stärkere bleibt da!
(TAMINO droht ihm und geht rechts ab; ist aber links gekommen.)

PAPAGENO
Jetzt will ich mir's erst recht wohl sein lassen.
(Die Löwen kommen heraus, er erschrückt.)
O Barmherzigkeit, ihr gütigen Göttcr! —

*) Vgl. Vorwort

Tamino, rette mich! die Herrn Löwen machen
eine Mahzeit: aus mir. —
(TAMINO bläst seine Flöte, kommt schnell zurück: die Löwen gehen hinein, TAMINO winkt ihm.)

PAPAGENO
Ich gehe schon! heß du mich einen Schelmen,
wen ich dir nicht in allem folge.
(dramaticher Posaunenton)
Das geht uns an. — Wir kommen schon. —
Aher hör einmal, Tamino, was wird denn noch alles mit uns werden?
(TAMINO deutet gen Himmel.)

PAPAGENO
Die Göttcr soll ich fragen?
(TAMINO deutet jh.)

PAPAGENO
Ja, die könnten uns freilich mehr sagen, als wir wissen!
(dramaticher Posaunenton)
(TAMINO reißt ihn mit Gewalt fort.)

PAPAGENO
Eile nur nicht so, wir kommen noch immer
zeitlich genug, um uns braten zu lassen.
(abi)