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UNVEILING CHERUBINO

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Daniel Leeson recently noted an intriguing thematic borrowing in the Act 1 trio of *Le nozze di Figaro* (No. 7, 'Cosa sento!'). As Leeson demonstrated, Basilio's theme, first introduced in bars 16–23, derives from Cherubino's preceding aria, 'Non so più cosa son, cosa faccio'. This veiled allusion echoes throughout the trio, most dramatically during the narrative in which the Count reveals the hidden page. The quotation of Cherubino's theme, Leeson argued, supplies the stage director with precious information. It proves that Basilio has eavesdropped on the previous scene, and explains why Susanna reacts so sharply to his seemingly innocuous opening lines: 'By singing a disguised version of Cherubino's tune to Susanna, Basilio suggests a nasty perspective on what might have transpired in the previous scene. Any possible accusation against the Count has, by Basilio's hidden musical threat, been redirected: the insinuation targets Cherubino as the recipient of Susanna's favours.'[1]

Unbeknownst to Leeson, the late David Lewin had identified the same thematic quotation in an earlier study of the *Figaro* trio. Lewin also claimed that Basilio has overheard Cherubino's aria, and that he uses the quotation as a veiled threat: 'Basilio, therefore, knowing or strongly suspecting that Cherubino is presently hiding somewhere in the room, is now making sure that Susanna knows his suspicion and suspects his certain knowledge.'[2] Lewin even found a clue to Mozart's intentions in Da Ponte's libretto: 'This aspect of Basilio's solo will be very useful to the actress singing Susanna, as she responds with the punning text: "Che ruina!" [="Cherubino!"]'.[3]

That two critics could reach such similar conclusions independently points to common methodological assumptions. Most strikingly, Lewin and Leeson confined their analyses to pitch, while largely ignoring rhythm, motive or phrase structure. Both critics also disregarded the poetic structure of Da Ponte's text. Yet as extensive studies by Friedrich Lippmann, James Webster and other scholars have demonstrated, Mozart's Italian operas are deeply beholden to the prosody and rhythms of Italian verse.[4] Moreover, as Wye Allanbrook's classic study has established, rhythmic gesture plays a crucial role in the expressive world of *Figaro*.[5] Any interpretation of Mozartean dramaturgy that relies solely on pitch relationships must, *prima facie*, arouse suspicion.

This essay seeks to unveil those aspects of Cherubino's theme passed over by Lewin and Leeson. A wider consideration of the opera reveals two interesting facts. First, Mozart's quotation of Cherubino's theme seems to have been motivated by Da Ponte's poetic design. Second, the transformation of 'Non so più' primarily involves rhythm, not pitch. This analysis thus leads to a more complicated dramatic interpretation of Basilio's theme within the Act 1 trio. It may also prompt us to rethink the relationship between music and language in Mozart.

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1 Daniel Leeson, 'Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*: A Hidden Dramatic Detail', *Eighteenth-Century Music* 1/2 (2004), 303–304.

2 David Lewin, 'Music Analysis as Stage Direction', in *Music and Text: Critical Inquiries*, ed. Steven Paul Scher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 174–175.

3 Lewin, 'Music Analysis as Stage Direction', 174–175.

4 See Friedrich Lippmann, 'Der italienische Vers und der musikalische Rhythmus: ZumVerhältnis von Vers und Musik in der italienischen Oper des 19. Jahrhunderts, mit einem Rückblick auf die 2. Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts' (1. Teil), *Analecta musicologica* 12 (1973), 283–286 and 294–296; Lippmann, 'Mozart und der Vers', in *Colloquium 'Mozart und Italien' (Rom 1974): Bericht*, ed. Friedrich Lippmann (Cologne: Arno Volk Verlag Hans Gerig, 1978), 107–137; James Webster, 'The Analysis of Mozart's Arias', in *Mozart Studies*, ed. Cliff Eisen (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), 130–140.

5 See Wye Jamison Allanbrook, *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart: 'Le nozze di Figaro' and 'Don Giovanni'* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

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The first two quatrains of Cherubino's aria text consist of ten-syllable lines, or *decasillabi*.[6] *Decasillabi* typically divide into three anapests, with accents on syllables 3, 6 and 9:

Non so *piú* | cosa *són*, | cosa *fác*-cio.

True *decasillabi* (as opposed to *quinari doppi*) are rare in Mozart's Italian settings. Three examples occur in *Don Giovanni*, two each in *Il sogno di Scipione*, *Lucio Silla* and *Così fan tutte*, and one each in *La finta semplice*, *Betulia liberata*, *Ascanio in Alba* and *Il re pastore*. *Le nozze di Figaro*, on the other hand, contains five examples, including large swaths of the Act 2 and Act 4 finales (see Table 1). A closer look reveals an unmistakable dramatic design behind these related verse types.

Da Ponte planted his first *decasillabi* in the opening duettino. The number begins with trochaic *ottonari* – 'Cinque . . . dieci . . . venti . . . trenta'. At the reprise, where Figaro finally joins Susanna in her gavotte-like melody, the poetic metre shifts from *ottonari* to *decasillabi* (bars 67–85). As Figaro surrenders to Susanna's feminine charms, his trochees give way to flowing anapests:

Ah il mattino alle nozze vicino
Quanto è dolce al mio tenero sposo
Questo bel cappellino vezzoso
Che Susanna ella stessa si fe'.

The new poetic metre actually fits more readily with Susanna's melody, which begins with a double upbeat and contains three clear stresses. This raises the distinct possibility that Mozart's musical opposition of gavotte and march originated in Da Ponte's contrasting metres (see Example 1).

This reconciliatory moment mirrors the final example of *decasillabi* in the opera. In the Act 4 finale, as Figaro unmasks himself to Susanna, he slips into anapests (bars 275–334):

Pace pace, mio dolce tesoro,
Io conobbi la voce che adoro
E che impressa ognor serbo nel cor.

Mozart responded with a lilting melody that enhances the regular, sing-song accents of the metre. *Decasillabi* thus frame the opera in Figaro's and Susanna's first and last duets, enhancing the theme of reconciliation between the sexes (see Example 2).

The three remaining examples concern Cherubino. 'Non so più' firmly attaches this metre to the page. Accordingly, when Figaro trumpets Cherubino off to war, he also mobilizes his *decasillabi* (No. 10, 'Non più andrai, farfallone amoroso'). The metre is now militarized, like the page himself, transformed into a martial rhythm. Yet when Figaro considers Cherubino's girlish charms, the *decasillabi* regain their former grace. On the words, 'Quella chioma, quell'aria brillante, / Quel vermiglio donnesco color', Figaro recalls the exact rhythm of 'Non so più', mimicking the page's delicate anapests. Mozart has recalled Cherubino's aria, but only its rhythmic structure (see Example 3).

Decasillabi return again as Antonio barges into the Act 2 finale. His entire scene, encompassing two movements and over two hundred bars, consists of ten-syllable lines. This section, of course, revolves around Cherubino, whom Antonio has spotted leaping from the window. As he describes the page's defenestration, he slips into the exact rhythm of 'Non so più'; even without pitches the allusion echoes suggestively. Again Mozart has recalled a rhythmic pattern, rather than a melody (see Example 4).

In summary, it appears that Da Ponte deployed his *decasillabi* carefully and that Mozart responded musically to his design. Specifically, Mozart concentrated on the rhythmic dimension, varying the anapestic metre without regard to pitch. This emphasis proves crucial in understanding the way Basilio quotes Cherubino's aria in the 'Cosa sento!' trio.

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6 The final line of each strophe ends with a nine-syllable line. These truncated verses (*versi tronchi*), however, still count as *decasillabi*.

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Table 1 *Decasillabi* in Mozart's Italian vocal works

La finta semplice
No. 15: 'Amoretti, che ascosi qui siete'

Betulia liberata
No. 1: 'D'ogni colpa la colpa maggiore'

Ascanio in Alba
No. 33: 'Alma Dea tutto il Mondo governa'

Il sogno di Scipione
No. 7: 'Quercia annosa su l'erte pendici'
No. 12: 'Cento volte con lieto sembiante'

Lucio Silla
No. 5: 'Il desio di vendetta e di morte' (first quatrain)
No. 22: 'Fra i pensier più funesti di morte'

Il re pastore
No. 9: 'Se vincendo vi rendo felici'

Le nozze di Figaro
No. 1: 'Cinque . . . dieci . . . venti . . . trenta' (final quatrain)
No. 6: 'Non so più cosa son, cosa faccio' (first two quatrains)
No. 10: 'Non più andrai farfallone amoroso' (first two quatrains)
Act 2 finale (bars 467–695): 'Che insolenza! Chi'l fece! chi fu!' . . . 'Vostre dunque saran queste carte'
Act 4 finale (bars 275–334): 'Pace pace, mio dolce tesoro'

Don Giovanni
No. 4: 'Madamina, il catalogo è questo' (first two quatrains)
No. 5: 'Giovinette che fate all'amore'
Act 1 finale (bars 273–358): 'Riposate, vezzose ragazze'

Così fan tutte
No. 24: 'Ah lo veggio, quell'anima bella'
Act 2 finale (bars 372–409): 'Sani e salvi agli amplessi amorosi'

Let us begin by comparing the two themes; to facilitate rhythmic comparison, Cherubino's melody is rewritten in 2/4 to match Basilio's 4/4. Mozart has borrowed not only pitches, but also the overall phrase structure of Cherubino's aria. Both melodies begin with a rising sequence of two phrases, each of which traces a descending fifth. Both melodies also spin out a three-note pitch idea, resulting in 'repetitive motivic doggerel', as Lewin put it.[7] This idea, more of a pitch cell than a motive, consists of a descending third, repeated sequentially; the essential notes in each theme are $\hat{5}$–$\hat{4}$–$\hat{3}$, $\hat{3}$–$\hat{2}$–$\hat{1}$/$\hat{6}$–$\hat{5}$–$\hat{4}$, $\hat{4}$–$\hat{3}$–$\hat{2}$ (see Example 5).

In Cherubino's aria, the pitch cell forms an anapestic foot, matching Da Ponte's decasyllabic metre. Each phrase, corresponding to a single *decasillabo*, consists of three anapests. Together these form a larger anapestic rhythm at the level of the phrase; that is, the cell is replicated as a two-bar structural rhythm, creating an 8:1 ratio between surface and underlying rhythm. As several critics have noted, the nested anapests of 'Non so più' return almost verbatim in the Symphony in G minor, K550. Basilio's surface rhythm also falls into 'anapests', more broadly understood. Each of his phrases begins a pair of descending minims, harmonized separately. The second bar of each phrase consists of two crotchets on the same pitch and

7 Lewin, 'Music Analysis as Stage Direction', 174.

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Example 1 W. A. Mozart, *Le nozze di Figaro*, No. 1: 'Cinque . . . dieci . . . venti . . . trenta' (reprise), bars 63–66 and 71–73. All excerpts are taken from *Le nozze di Figaro: Die Hochzeit des Figaro*, piano-vocal score after the *Neue Mozart-Ausgabe*, ed. Eugen Epplée (Kassel and New York: Bärenreiter, 1999)

harmony, punctuated by a rest. Thus, although the second bar departs from a literal anapestic rhythm, the linear-harmonic structure is clearly 'short-short-long' (1:1:2). Moreover, the trio has established an unambiguous strong-weak hypermetre, hammered home by the Count's rising line. Within this two-bar hypermetrical structure, Basilio's phrases emerge as weak-strong, or 'end-weighted' – a reading that is confirmed by the structural downbeat on his final bar.

This leads to an important analytical point: Basilio's surface rhythm is precisely equivalent to Cherubino's underlying anapestic rhythm, creating the identical 8:1 ratio. His *alla breve* melody realizes a diminutional structure implicit within 'Non so più'. In fact, Mozart spelled out this rhythmic relationship in the opening bars of the trio. As the Count delivers his opening verses (bars 5–11), the strings shadow his melody in open octaves. They spin out a three-note, anapestic motive, repeated in rising sequence. This is, of course, an inversion of Cherubino's motive. As in 'Non so più', each phrase consists of three anapests, which

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(si mette in ginocchio)
(*kniet nieder*)
275 Andante
Fig.
Pa - ce pa - ce, mio dol - ce te - so - ro, io co - nob - bi la vo - ce che a
Frie - de, Frie - de, mein sü - ße - stes Le - ben, Dei - ne Stim - me ver - riet Dich so -
f *p*

279
Sus.
Fig.
do - ro e che im - pres - sa o - gnor ser - bo nel cor.
e - ben, die für im - mer im Her - zen mir ruht.

Example 2 *Le nozze di Figaro*, Act 2 finale, bars 275–281

21
quel - la chio - ma quell' a - ria bril - lan - te, quel ver - mi - glio don - ne - sco co - lor,
mit den Löck - chen, des Lä - chelns Ver - füh - rung, mit den Wan - gen von sam - te - nem Flor,
tr tr tr
cresc.

Example 3 *Le nozze di Figaro*, No. 10: 'Non più andrai, farfallone amoroso', bars 20–24

form a larger anapestic rhythm at the phrase level – in effect, the orchestra plays a series of *decasillabi tronchi*. The nested anapests form the identical 8:1 proportion that we observed between the two tunes. In short, Mozart has crafted a precise, palpable transition from Cherubino's melody to Basilio's *alla breve* variation.

Mozart's design is subtler yet, for he has nested not only the anapestic rhythm, but also Cherubino's melodic cell. Each two-bar phrase in bars 5–11 ascends a third, replicating the three-note cell as a structural line. The derivation of Basilio's theme now becomes crystal clear. Mozart has simply inverted the augmented version of the three-note cell, drawing the middleground line into the foreground. The orchestra thus prepares Basilio's *alla breve* melody, carving out the large-scale anapests that he will inhabit. He not only

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Dal bal - co - ne che guar - da in giar - di - no mil - le
Aus den Fen - stern hin - ab in den Gar - ten flie - gen

co - se o gni di git - tar veg - gio, e po - c'an - zi, può dar - si di
täg - lich ja al - ler-hand Sa - chen, doch so - e - ben, das ist nicht zum

peg - gio, vi-di un uom, si- gnor mio, git - tar giù,
La - chen, flog ein Mann aus den Fen - ster hin - aus,

Example 4 *Le nozze di Figaro*, Act 1 finale, bars 483–491

5 - 4 - 3, 3 - 2 - 1 / 6 - 5 - 4, 4 - 3 - 2

= (8:1)

5 - 4 - 3, 3 - 2 - 1 / 6 - 5 - 4 4 - 3 - 2

Example 5 *Le nozze di Figaro*: comparison of 'Non so più' (No. 6) and Basilio's theme (No. 7, bars 16–23). Cherubino's melody is rewritten in 2/4

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4 IL CONTE (a Basilio) (zu Basilio)

Il C.

Co - sa sen - to! to - sto an - da - te,
Wie, was hör ich! Geh und ja - ge

p

8

Il C.

e scac - cia - te il se - dut - tor,
die - se Pla - ge hin - aus zum Tor,

12

Il C.

to - - sto an - da - te, e scac-cia - te il se - dut- tor.
geh und ja - ge die - se Pla - ge hin-aus zum Tor.

f

Example 6 *Le Nozze di Figaro*, No. 7: 'Cosa sento!', bars 4–15

recalls Cherubino's melody but, more importantly, his characteristic metre. Like Figaro and Antonio, Basilio evokes Cherubino through his anapestic *decasillabi*. Mozart was again thinking in rhythmic terms, inspired by the structure of Da Ponte's verse.

This analysis poses obvious problems for the dramatic interpretations of both Lewin and Leeson. It now seems that Cherubino's theme takes shape during the Count's opening tirade, before Basilio has even begun to sing. Does this mean that the Count has also overheard Cherubino's aria? Similarly, Figaro and Antonio echo Cherubino's *decasillabi* as they sing about the page; were they, too, eavesdropping during 'Non so più'? And how does Mozart's transformation of Cherubino's metre relate to the *decasillabi* in the duets for Figaro and Susanna?

I would like to suggest that Mozart's rhythmic transformations operate beyond the awareness of the characters, 'over their heads', as it were. Lewin contemplated this possibility, but firmly rejected it: 'I cannot entertain the possibility that Basilio's quotation is only Mozartian irony, like Wagner's irony when he makes

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Siegmund sing the Renunciation of Love motive in *Die Walküre*. That sort of irony seems to me not only pointless here but utterly foreign to the dramatic mode of *Figaro*.'[8]

Yet Mozart indulged in precisely such irony in his next opera, where Don Giovanni's stage band quotes 'Non più andrai' (an aria about Cherubino, incidentally, with pointed significance for the Don). Da Ponte was certainly winking at the audience in the Act 2 finale when he put these Pirandellian lines in Figaro's mouth:

> Per finirla lietamente
> E all'usanza teatrale
> Un'azione matrimoniale
> Le faremo ora seguir.
>
> To conclude the matter happily,
> According to theatrical custom,
> We shall continue
> With a wedding scene.

And when Figaro exits humming 'Se vuol ballare' in Act 2, can this quotation be meant for anyone other than the audience? There is surely ample precedent for irony in Mozart without disturbing Wagner's ghost.

A clue to Mozart's intentions lies in the connotations of *decasillabi*. He rarely set this verse type, and more than half his settings occur in the Da Ponte operas. In *Figaro* and *Don Giovanni* decasyllabic movements correlate with servants (the Figaro-Susanna duets, Antonio's narration and Leporello's catalogue aria) or peasants ('Giovinette che fate all'amore' and 'Riposate vezzose ragazze' in Act 1 of *Don Giovanni*). The first example from *Così* (No. 24, 'Ah, lo veggio quell'anima bella') is not sung by lower characters; yet it takes place in the outdoor space of the garden. Taken together, Da Ponte's *decasillabi* seem to suggest the rustic or pastoral realms. Some literally inhabit pastoral spaces, like the peasants' entrance in *Don Giovanni* or the final duet of Figaro; others merely evoke the pastoral realm, like Susanna's opening gavotte with its pedal points and concertante winds. Da Ponte's choice of metre makes good musical sense, since the anapestic foot lends itself to gavottes, gigues and other dances associated with simple nature. Thus, while the second example of *decasillabi* in *Così* (Act 2 finale, 'Sani e salvi agli amplessi amorosi') does not refer explicitly to the pastoral world, it also drew forth a gavotte from Mozart.[9]

These connotations match Cherubino's first aria, with its pedal points and allusions to fountains, flowers, streams and breezes. As Allanbrook notes, 'The pastoral diction and musette of "Non so più" place Cherubino squarely in the Arcadian tradition; as Eros he presides over the couples in the opera – the indigenous deity of pastoral love'.[10] In this light, Basilio's rhythmic variation of 'Non so più' suggests a deeper theme. If Figaro militarizes Cherubino's *decasillabi*, Basilio sanctifies them, transforming the impetuous anapests into an *alla breve* hymn. We might say that he 'Christianizes' the page's melody, drawing the pagan Eros into the modern thematics of forgiveness and reconciliation (and here we truly need to listen 'over the head' of the lecherous Basilio!). As Cherubino's hormone-drenched aria returns as a four-part hymn, we perhaps get a foretaste of that moment in Act 4 when the Countess will dispense her grace on the mortal lovers. The trio baptizes Cherubino in the *stile antico*, as it were, elevating the pagan deity to a genuinely cherubic status.

8 Lewin, 'Music Analysis as Stage Direction', 174, note 5.

9 The association of gavotte and pastoral was firmly established by Rousseau's celebrated air 'J'ai perdu mon serviteur' from *Le devin du village*, the indirect source of Mozart's first opera. In *Figaro* the connection is most evident in the sublime C major ensemble at the heart of the Act 2 finale, 'Deh signor, nol contrastate', in which gavotte rhythms combine with pedal points and *stile antico* suspensions (Allanbrook classified this passage as a 'musette-gavotte'; *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart*, 1).

10 Allanbrook, *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart*, 97.

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This reading would also explain why Da Ponte used *decasillabi* for both Cherubino and the framing duets of Figaro and Susanna. The disparate verses unite beneath the overarching theme of reconciliation. We will recall that Basilio first quotes 'Non so più', however sardonically, as a plea for mercy – 'Perdonate, o mio signor'. His melody palpably transforms the Count's libindal rage into the serenity of *alla breve* hymnody. According to this reading, Mozart's quotation serves to reinforce a central lesson of *Le nozze di Figaro* – that *eros* can mature into *agape*, sexual attraction into mature love.

Many other interpretations, of course, could fit the analytical facts. But what can the analysis tell us more generally about Mozart's methods as a composer? As argued above, the logic that governs Mozart's decasyllabic variations is chiefly poetic, not musical, dictated by the metrical choices of his Italian librettist. And as Lippmann painstakingly demonstrated, Italian composers relied on a fixed repertory of rhythmic motives for setting specific metres. Mozart's motivic work is wondrous to behold; yet he was simply exaggerating a commonplace of Italian opera. And who is to say that similar patterns would not emerge in the works of Cimarosa, Salieri or Martin y Soler if we combed through their librettos for repeating metres?

This leads to a broader methodological point, which I shall only sketch here. Recent criticism has sought analogies between language and music in the music of Mozart and his contemporaries;[11] critics have drawn chiefly upon a handful of north German theorists, especially Johann Mattheson, Heinrich Christoph Koch and Johann Nikolaus Forkel. Research has thus concentrated upon the referential and pragmatic dimensions of music, the traditional concerns of the Lutheran *musica poetica*. Yet, Mozart's play with metres taps into a different, perhaps more relevant tradition. The linguistic model that dominated the later eighteenth century traced both music and language to a common source in physical gesture, what Étienne de Condillac called the *langage d'action*. Language supposedly began as a primitive poetry, rich in sensory figures and tropes, and evolved gradually into rational prose. This theory of language origins, well known from Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Denis Diderot, also dominated discussion in north Germany, informing the work of Johann Gottfried Herder, Johann Georg Sulzer and even Forkel.[12]

Prosody enjoyed a privileged position in these accounts of language origins. Metre and intonation were thought to form a transition between gesture and rational speech, enshrining the expressive movements of the body. Two quotations will have to suffice here. Giambattista Vico, professor of rhetoric at the University of Naples, explained in his *Scienza nuova* (third edition, 1744):

> Heroic verse was originally spondaic because the founders of the nations possessed slow minds and sluggish tongues; and from this origin it retains the use of a spondee in the last foot. Later, as men's minds and tongues grew more agile, dactyls were allowed in the rest of the verse. Then, as they developed far greater agility, the iamb was born . . . In this way, song passed into verse, and moved more quickly in step with ideas and languages.[13]

Condillac's enormously influential *Essai sur l'origine des connoisances humaines* (1746) also traced music and language to a common physical source:

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11 Some notable examples include Leonard Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style* (New York: Norton, 1980); Mark Evan Bonds, *Wordless Rhetoric: Musical Form and the Metaphor of the Oration* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991); Elaine R. Sisman, *Haydn and the Classical Variation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993) and 'Learned Style and the Rhetoric of the Sublime in the "Jupiter" Symphony', in *Wolfgang Amadé Mozart: Essays on his Life and his Music*, ed. Stanley Sadie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 213–238; Robert Hatten, *Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topics, and Tropes. Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004); and Raymond Monelle, *The Musical Topic: Hunt, Military, and Pastoral* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006).

12 For a more detailed discussion see my 'Mozart's Archaic Endings: A Linguistic Critique', *Journal of the Royal Music Association* 130/2 (2005), 159–196, and 'Beethoven and the *Ut Pictura Poësis* Tradition', *Beethoven Forum* 12/2 (2005), 113–149.

13 Giambattista Vico, *New Science*, trans. David Marsh (London: Penguin, 1999), 191.

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> To take the place of violent bodily movements, the voice was raised and lowered by strongly marked intervals . . . Just as inflections by perceptible intervals had introduced a singing declamation, so the marked inequality of the syllables also added a difference of time and measure.[14]

Like Vico, Condillac located the juncture of the poetry and music in prosody:

> Having noted the uniform and regular cadences that appeared by chance in discourse, the different movements caused by the inequality of the syllables, and the pleasing impression of certain vocal intonations, men formed patterns of rhythm and harmony from which they gradually derived all the rules of versification. Music and poetry were therefore naturally born together.[15]

Not coincidentally, the leading music theorists of the later eighteenth century paid new attention to prosody and rhythmic cadence. Joseph Riepel, Anton Reicha and Koch explored this nexus of music and language, developing theories of melody that were based upon the rhythmic structure, rather than the referential content, of language.

The play of metres in *Figaro* suggests that Mozart also attended carefully to this shared property of music and language, and the Act 1 trio could serve as a primer of Enlightenment language theory, demonstrating how gestural energy cools into speech rhythms, and finally congeals into formal prosody. The affinity between *decasillabi* and pastoral dances could broaden our view of musical topics, suggesting new links between semantics and structure. Indeed, Mozart's conception of 'musical language' may end up resembling the cosmopolitan tradition of Vico and Condillac more closely than the Lutheran *musica poetica*. But that discussion demands a longer study than this essay, which has already wandered too far afield. Perhaps, as the Count reminds us, some things are better left veiled.

14 *Œuvres philosophiques de Condillac*, ed. Georges le Roy (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1947), volume 1, 63 and 68.

15 *Œuvres philsophiques de Condillac*, volume 1, 80.

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