

What to listen for in *The Marriage of FIGARO*

Composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (January 27, 1756–December 5, 1791)
Librettist Lorenzo da Ponte (March 10, 1749–August 17, 1838)

The story of *The Marriage of FIGARO* follows after the plot of Rossini's opera *The Barber of Seville*. Both operas were based on plays from a trilogy written by Beaumarchais.

Synopsis

The Count has married Rosina but their marriage has gone sour because of his philandering. **FIGARO** has quit barbering and is now the Count's valet. He is engaged to **SUSANNA**, who is Countess Rosina's maid—and the Count's intended conquest. Old Bartolo is back to seek revenge on **FIGARO** for taking Rosina away from him, with the help of the slimy music-master, Don Basilio. Adding to the fun are an amorous teenager, a scheming old maid, a drunken gardener, and a silly young girl. Much happens on a single "folle journée"—a crazy day.

NOTES:

- **CD tracks and Libretto pages** refer to the EMI Classics (Blackdog) Recording of *The Marriage of FIGARO* by the English Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Daniel Barenboim, © 2005. Featured artists are Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (Count Almaviva), Heather Harper (Countess Almaviva), Judith Blegen (**SUSANNA**), Geraint Evans (**FIGARO**), Teresa Berganza (Cherubino), and Birgit Finnlä (Marcellina). Sung in Italian.
- *The Marriage of FIGARO* is organized in **four acts**. The Pittsburgh Opera performances include an intermission between Act II and Act III.
- *The Marriage of FIGARO* employs a medium number of **artists**:

Principal artists	11	Orchestra	42
Chorus	12	Supernumeraries	4
- The *Marriage of FIGARO* orchestra includes:

2 flutes	2 French horns	Violins	Timpani
2 oboes	2 trumpets	Violas	Harpsichord
2 clarinets		Celli	
2 bassoons		Double Bases	

SOURCES for descriptions and musical excerpts:

Deane, Basil. "A Musical Commentary." *The Marriage of FIGARO: Mozart*, ed. Nicholas John. London, New York: English National Opera. © 1983. 17-27. Print.

The Marriage of FIGARO: Italian opera in four acts by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Adapted from the Opera Journeys Lecture Series by Burton D. Fisher. © 2000.

Thompson, Ann. *Let's Go to the Opera: Guide to The Marriage of FIGARO*. Houston: Let's Go to the Opera, © 1993. Pages 23-27. Print.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE:

- The **WTLF** (What to Listen For) number indicates recommended excerpts from the opera. Consider the WTLF excerpts as "signposts" to guide listeners to significant parts of the music—excerpts that can be recognized easily during a full performance.
- The name of the excerpt is listed and characters who sing in the track are included below the name. (Note that opera arias and ensembles are named by their first words.) Track length is given in minutes and seconds.
- After the WTLF #, the CD Track numbers of the full-length recording are listed.
- Musical vocabulary words are in **BOLD>** font.
- **Libretto** pages are from the full-length recording.

What to Listen For Selection

Timing, Page

Act I

WTLF 1 CD 1, Track 1: Overture

4:21, p. 56

The **Overture** to *The Marriage of FIGARO* is one of the most celebrated pieces of music in all of opera. It is based on three main themes, none appearing anywhere else in the opera. The music is bubbling and delightful, conveying the humor and intrigue of the story. Its elegance and carefully crafted detail are a testament to the genius of Mozart, who composed the Overture only a few hours before the premiere performance.

Overture

The image shows three staves of musical notation for the Overture to The Marriage of Figaro. Each staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a time signature of 2/4. The first staff is marked 'Presto' and 'pp' (pianissimo) and features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The second staff is marked 'Presto' and 'p' (piano) and features a more rhythmic accompaniment with chords and eighth notes. The third staff is marked 'Presto' and 'p' and features a melodic line with eighth notes and a triplet of sixteenth notes.

The little "ringing bells" duet between FIGARO and SUSANNA plays on the ominous undercurrents beneath the veneer of life's pleasantries in the Count's household.

FIGARO

Se a caso madama la notte ti chiama,
din din; in due passi da quella puoi gir.
Vien poi l'occasione che vuolmi il padrone,
don, don; in tre salti lo vado a servir.

SUSANNA

Così se il mattino il caro Contino,
din din; e ti manda tre miglia lontan,
don don; a mia porta il diavol lo porta,
ed ecco in tre salti ...

FIGARO SUSANNA, pian, pian.

SUSANNA Ascolta ...

FIGARO Fa presto ...

SUSANNA Se udir brami il resto, discaccia i sospetti
che torto mi fan.

FIGARO Udir bramo il resto, i dubbi, i sospetti gelare
mi fan.

SUSANNA Or bene; ascolta, e taci!

FIGARO Parla: che c'è di nuovo?

SUSANNA Il signor CONTE, stanco di andar
cacciando le straniere bellezze forestiere, vuole ancor
nel castello ritentar la sua sorte, né già di sua
consorte, bada bene, appetito gli viene ...

FIGARO E di chi dunque?

SUSANNA Della tua Susanetta.

FIGARO Di te?

SUSANNA Di me medesima; ed ha speranza, che al
nobil suo progetto utilissima sia tal vicinanza.

FIGARO Bravo! Tiriamo avanti.

SUSANNA Queste le grazie son, questa la cura
ch'egli prende di te, della tua sposa.

FIGARO

If by chance my lady should call you in the night,
'ding-ding'; in two steps you can be there.
And then, when it happens that the Count wants me,
'dong-dong'; in three bounds I can go to serve him.

SUSANNA

And then, if one morning the dear little Count,
'ding-ding'; sends you three miles away,
'dong-dong'; the devil brings him to my door,
He's here in three steps

FIGARO SUSANNA, hush.

SUSANNA Listen ...

FIGARO Make it quick ...

SUSANNA If you want to hear the rest, dismiss these
suspicious that are so unfair to me.

FIGARO I must hear the rest; these doubts and
suspicious make my blood run cold.

SUSANNA Well, then; listen, and be quiet!

FIGARO Tell me: what's going on?

SUSANNA Our noble Count, tired of pursuing foreign
beauties, has turned his attention back to his castle -
but mind, his passion for his own wife, has already
gone ...

FIGARO And who's he turned it to?

SUSANNA Your little SUSANNA.

FIGARO To you?

SUSANNA The very same; and he hopes, that this
noble design of his will be assisted by having us so
close.

FIGARO Bravo! Let's hear more.

SUSANNA This is the reason for all these graces, all
these favors which he has been lavishing on you, on
your intended.

FIGARO Oh guarda un po', che carità pelosa!

SUSANNA Chetati, or viene il meglio: Don Basilio, mio maestro di canto, e suo mezzano, nel darmi la lezione mi ripete ogni dì questa canzone.

FIGARO Chi? Basilio? Oh birbante!

SUSANNA E tu credevi che fosse la mia dote merto del tuo bel muso!

FIGARO Me n'ero lusingato.

SUSANNA Ei la destina per ottener da me certe mezz'ore ... che il diritto feudale ...

FIGARO Come? Ne' feudi suoi non l'ha il **CONTE**abolito?

SUSANNA Ebben; ora è pentito, e par che tenti riscattarlo da me.

FIGARO: Bravo! Mi piace: Che caro signor **CONTE**! Ci vogliam divertir: trovato avete ... (Si sente suonare un campanello) Chi suona? La **CONTESSA**.

SUSANNA Addio, addio, **FIGARO** bello ...

FIGARO Coraggio, mio tesoro.

SUSANNA E tu, cervello.

FIGARO What generosity!

SUSANNA Wait, the best is still to come: Don Basilio, My singing teacher, and his Pandarus, Every day during my lessons repeats this song to me.

FIGARO Who, Basilio? The scoundrel!

SUSANNA And you believed that he'd promised to pay my dowry simply in gratitude for your handsome face!

FIGARO I flattered myself so.

SUSANNA He intended it to win from me certain little half-hours ... which the old feudal rights ...

FIGARO What? Hasn't he abolished those rights?

SUSANNA Well now he regrets it, and it seems he's trying to buy them back from me.

FIGARO Bravo! I like that: What a dear lord! Well, we'll play at that game too, sir: you've found ... (A bell rings) Who's ringing? The Countess.

SUSANNA Farewell, farewell, farewell, my beautiful **FIGARO** ...

FIGARO Have courage, my love.

SUSANNA And you, be careful.

WTLF 3 CD 1, Track 4: Cavatina, "Bravo, signor padrone!" (FIGARO)

3:18, p. 62

The first solo (**Aria**) of the opera is **FIGARO**'s denunciation of the Count and his dastardly scheme to exercise his *droit de seigneur* over **FIGARO**'s fiancée, **SUSANNA**. The text is bitter and defiant, and the basses add an ominous tone, but Mozart keeps the mood light with the rhythm of an easy-going **minuet** (courtly dance in triple meter).

FIGARO No. 3. Cavatina
Allegretto



If you are af - ter a lit - tle a - muse - ment
Se vuol bal - la - re, si - gnor Con - ti - no,

FIGARO

Bravo, signor padrone! Ora incomincio
 A capir il mistero . . . e a veder schietto
 Tutto il vostro progetto: a Londra, é vero?
 Voi ministro, io corriero, e la **SUSANNA**
 Segreta ambasciatrice . . .
 Non sar , non sar : **FIGARO** il dice.

Se vuol ballare,
 Signor Contino,
 Il chitarrino
 Le suoner .
 Se vuol venire
 Nella mia scuola,
 La capriole
 Le insegner .
 Sapr  . . . Ma, piano:
 Meglio ogni arcano,
 Dissimulando,
 Scoprir potr .
 L'arte schemendo,
 L'arte adoprando,
 Di qua pungendo,
 Di l  scherzando,
 Tutte le machine
 Rovescier .


FIGARO

I thank your lordship kindly! Now I'm beginning
 To understand all this mystery and to appreciate
 Your most generous intentions. And so to London;
 You ambassador, I as courier, and my **SUSANNA**,
 "Confidential attach e!"
 No, I'm hanged if she does. **FIGARO** knows better!

If you are after
 A little amusement,
 You may go dancing,
 I'll play the tune.
 I'll teach your lordship
 Steps and deportment,
 New kinds of capers
 You shall learn soon.
 You shall never doubt it,
 But in my own way
 I'll set about it;
 I've got my plan.
 Try to deceive me,
 I'll do the same thing;
 Two play at that game,
 Yes, Sir, believe me,
 I'll put a spoke in your
 Wheel if I can.

As the music progresses, however, the sounds of the horns, **pizzicato** strings (plucked), accents, and the sudden leaps in the vocal part convey **FIGARO**'s anger, expressively breaking out of operatic convention in the final **presto** (very fast) section.

FIGARO
 Presto



Try to de - ceive me, I'll do the same thing
 L'ar - te scher - men - do, l'ar - te a - do - pran - do,

WTLF 4 CD 1, Track 5: Aria, "La vendetta, oh, la vendetta" 3:10, p. 64
(Bartolo)

In a moment of need, **FIGARO** had borrowed money from Marcellina, Bartolo's housekeeper, but lacking collateral, he promised to marry her if he did not reimburse her. Marcellina arrives to demand payment, and with the encouragement of Bartolo, intends to force **FIGARO** to marry her. Likewise, Bartolo is still bearing a grudge against **FIGARO** for his trickery in helping the Count lure Rosina, now the Countess, away from him. Alone, he reveals his delight at the prospect of revenge on **FIGARO** in a parodied example of great rage arias, full of dark unison passages, accompanied by the pomp of horns, trumpets, and timpani.

BARTOLO No. 4. Aria

Allegro con spirito



Now for ven - geance! ah, now for ven - geance!
La ven - det - ta, oh, la ven - det - ta!

BARTOLO

Allegro con spirito



Once I can seize on the right op - por - tu - ni - ty,
Se tut - to il co - di - ce do - ves - si vol - ge - re,

This aria is followed by a recitative.

BARTOLO La vendetta, oh, la vendetta, è un piacere serbato ai saggi, l'obliar l'onte, gli oltraggi, è bassezza, è ognor viltà. Coll'astuzio... Coll'arguzia, col giudizio, col criter si potrebbe... il fatto è serio, ma credete si farà. Se tutto il codice dovessi volgere, se tutto l'ubduce divessi leggere, con un equivoco, con un sinonimo, qualche garbuglio si triverà. Se tutto il codice, ecc Tutta Siviglia conosce Bartolo, il birbo **FIGARO** vinto sarà, ecc

RECITATIVE

MARCELLINA Tutto ancor non ho perso: mi resta la speranza. Ma **SUSANNA** si avanza, io vo' provarmi. . . fingiam di non vederla. E quella buona perla la vorrebbe sposar!

SUSANNA Di me favella

MARCELLINA Ma da **FIGARO** alfine non può meglio sperarsi. L'argent fait tout.

SUSANNA Che lingua! Manco male, ch'ognun sa quanto vale.

MARCELLINA Brava! Questo è giudizio! Conquegli occhi modesti, con quell'aria pietose, e poi. . .

SUSANNA (Megkui è partir!)

MARCELLINA (Che cara spose!)

BARTOLO Revenge, oh, sweet revenge is a pleasure reserved for the wise; to forgo shame, bold outrage, is base and utter meanness. With astuteness, with cleverness, with discretion, with judgment if possible. The matter is serious; but, believe me, it shall be done. If I have to pore over the law books, if I have to read all the extracts, with misunderstanding, with hocus-pocus he'll find himself in a turmoil. If I have to pore over, etc. All Seville knows Bartolo, the scoundrel **FIGARO** shall be overcome!

RECITATIVE

MARCELLINA I haven't been stopped yet: my hopes are very good. Ah, **SUSANNA** is coming: we'll see. I'll pretend not to notice her. And this is the bright pearl whom he's going to wed!

SUSANNA She's chattering about me.

MARCELLINA But I suppose she couldn't do better than **FIGARO**. L'argent fait tout

SUSANNA (What a tongue!) It takes troubles to bring out a person's character

MARCELLINA Splendid! Here's justice! With those modest eyes! With that pious air, and still. . .

SUSANNA (Now's the time to leave)

MARCELLINA (A pretty little wife!)

WTLF 5 CD 1, Track 7: Aria, “Non so più cosa son, cosa faccio” 2:35, p. 69
(Cherubino)

Cherubino, the Countess’s page and the **trouser role** (mezzo-soprano singing the part of a young boy) of the opera, is in the initial stages of youthful and ardent self-discovery. He falls in love with every woman in sight. He has recently developed an erotic passion for the Countess herself. He hesitantly sings this aria for **SUSANNA**, and with breathless phrases, palpitating accompaniments and **chromaticisms** (added notes to the regular scale), expresses his own confusing emotions and sensibilities. This aria is followed by a recitative.

CHERUBINO *No. 6. Aria*
Allegro vivace



Is it pain, is it plea - sure that fills me,
Non so piu co - sa son, co - sa fac - cio,

CHERUBINO

Non so più cosa son, cosa faccio . . .
Or di fuoco, ora sono di ghiaccio . . .
Ogni donna cangiar di colore,
Ogni donna mi fa palpitar,
Ogni donna mi fa palpitar.
Solo ai nomi d’amor, di diletto
Mi si turba, mi s’altera il petto,
E a parlare mi sforza d’amore
Un desio ch’io non posso spiegar?
Parlo d’amor vegliando,
Parlo d’amor sognando:
All’acque, all’ombre, ai monti,
Ai fiori, all’erbe, ai fonti,
All’eco, all’aria, ai venti
Che il suon de’ vani accenti
Portano via con sè . . .
E, so non ho chi m’oda,
Parlo d’amor con me.

CHERUBINO

Is it pain, is it pleasure that fills me,
And with feverish ecstasy thrills me?
At the sight of a woman I tremble,
And my heart seems to burst into flame,
My poor heart seems to burst into flame.
Love! That word sets me hoping and fearing,
Love! That word that I always am hearing!
Love! Ah love! How can I dissemble
Those desires that I hardly dare name?
Only for love I languish,
Dream of delicious anguish!
To every vale and mountain,
To stream, to lake, and fountain,
For love, for love I’m sighing;
And echo’s voice replying
Bears back my tender moan . . .
And even if none be near me,
I talk of love alone, talk of it all alone.

WTLF 6 CD 1, Track 9: Aria, “Non più andrai, farfallone amoroso” 3:35, p. 82 (FIGARO)

By this time, the Count has found **SUSANNA** and Cherubino in two compromising situations and has wrongly concluded that they are having an affair, which infuriates the Count because he himself has failed to seduce **SUSANNA**. She begs the Count to pardon Cherubino, and he agrees, but in return, the boy will receive a military commission in Spain.

In Mozart’s time it was conventional to end an act with an **ensemble** piece, but for this Act I finale he created a solo farewell aria that has been a hit ever since it was first performed. **FIGARO** sings a formal goodbye to Cherubino as he sets out for military glory in a blaze of fanfares with trumpets and drums.

FIGARO No. 9. Aria

Vivace



Say good - bye now to pas - time and play, lad,
Non piu an - drai, far - fal - lo - ne a - mo - ro - so,

FIGARO

Vivace



Yes, you'll find it quite ex - cit - ing,
Per mon - ta - gne, per val - lo - ni,

FIGARO

Non più andrai, farfallone amoroso, notte e giorno d'intorno girando, delle belle turbando il riposo, Narcisetto, Adoncino d'amor, ecc. Non più avrai questi bei pennacchini, quel cappello leggero e galante, quella chioma, quell'aria brillante, quel vermiglio donnesco color. Non più andrai, ecc. Tra guerrieri poffar Bacco! Gran mustacchi, stretto sacco, schioppo in spalla, sciabola al fianco, col'o dritto, muso franco, o un gran casco, o un gran turbante, molto onor, poco contante, ed invece del fandango, una marcia per il fango, per montagne per valloni, colle nevi, e i solleoni, al concerto di tromboni, dibombarde di cannoni, che le palle in tutti i tuoni all'orecchio fan fischiar. Cherubino alla vittoria, alla gloria militar!

FIGARO

No more will you, amorous butterfly, flit around the castle night and day, upsetting all the pretty girls, lobe's little Narcissus and Adonis, etc. No more will you have those fine plums, that soft and stylish hat, those fine locks, that striking air, those rosy, girl-like cheeks. No more will you, etc. Among warriors swearing by Bacchus! great mustacchos, holding your pack, a gun on your shoulder, a sabre hanging at your right, musket ready, or some great helmet or turban, winning honours, but little money, and in place of the fandango a march through the mud. Over mountains over valleys, through the snow and burning sun. To the music of trumpets, of shells and cannons, with balls sounding thunder, making your ears ring. Cherubino, on to victory, on to victory in war!

Act II

WTLF 7 CD 1, Track 10: Cavatina, “Porgi, amor, qualche ristoro” 4:15, p. 83 (Countess)

The act begins with the introduction of the melancholy Countess in a solo aria, describing her happy past and her unhappy present. She loves her husband but has realized that she is not the only woman in his life. The Countess expressively describes her feelings and prays that her husband’s affections may be restored to her.

COUNTRESS No. 10. Cavatina
Larghetto



God of love, I now im - plore thee,
Por - gi, a - mor, qual - che ri - sto - ro,

CONTESSA

Porgi, amor, qualche ristoro, al moi duolo, a'miei sospir! Omi rendi il moi tesoro, o mi lascia almen morir! Porgi amor, ecc.

COUNTRESS

Grant, love, that relief to my sorrow, to my sighing. Give me back my treasure, or at least let me die. Grant, love, etc.

WTLF 8 CD 1, Track 12: Canzona, “Voi, che sapete” 2:46, p. 88 (Cherubino)

Cherubino, who has contrived with **FIGARO** to delay his departure and written a **canzonetta** (short little song) dedicated to the Countess, is persuaded to sing it for her. In it, with youthful hope and uncertainty, he compliments the Countess on her insight into the intrigues of love and romance.

CHERUBINO No. 11. Canzona
Andante con moto



Tell me, fair la - dies, tell me, oh tell
Voi, che sa - pe - te che co - sa e - a - mor,

CHERUBINO

Voi, che sapete che cosa è amor, donne vedete, s'io l'ho nel cor. Quello ch'io provo, vi ridirò, e per me nuovo, capir nol so. Sento un affetto pien di desir, ch'ora è diletto, ch'ora è martir. Gelo e poi sento l'alma avvampar, e in un momento torno a gelar. Ricercò un bene fuori di me, non so chi' l tiene, non so cos' è. Sospiro e gemo senza voler, palpito e tremo senza saper; non trovo pace notte, né dì, ma pur mi piace languir così. Voi, che sapete, ecc.

CHERUBINO


You who know what love is, ladies, see whether it's in my heart. What I experience I'll describe for you; it's new to me, I don't understand it. I feel an emotion full of desire that is now pleasure, and now suffering. I freeze, then I feel my soul burning up, and in a moment I'm freezing again. I seek a blessing outside myself, from whom I know not or what it is. I sigh and moan without meaning to, palpitate and tremble without knowing it. I find no peace night or day, and yet I enjoy languishing so. You who know what I love is, etc.

WTLF 9-13 CD 1, Tracks 20-24: Septet
(Marcellina, Basilio, Bartolo, SUSANNA, Countess, FIGARO, Count)

20+ minutes, p. 103-122

The finale to Act II is a full 20 minutes of unprecedented, integrated dramatic meaning, beginning with a duet and growing with the entrances of characters to a trio, a quartet, a quintet, and finally ending with a **septet**. The scene begins and ends with confusion, with Cherubino's dressing as a girl and jumping out the window followed by accusations, apologies, and contrivances between the Count and Countess, **FIGARO** and **SUSANNA**. In the final scene, Marcellina, Bartolo, and Basilio arrive to demand the fulfillment of Marcellina's legal right to marry **FIGARO**, theatrically and energetically bringing down the curtain.

MARCELLINA, BASILIO, BARTOLO
Allegro assai



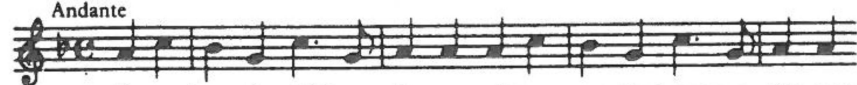
We ap pear be - fore your lord-ship,
Voi, si - gnor, che giu - sto sie - te,

Act III

WTLF 14 CD 2, Track 6: Sextet, "Riconosci in quest'amplesso" 4:56, p. 134
(Marcellina, FIGARO, Bartolo, Don Curzio, Count, SUSANNA)

Act III continues the complicated interweaving of the plot. **FIGARO** appears in court before the Count and explains that he is of noble birth and cannot marry without the consent of his parents, who are unknown. He shows everyone a birthmark on his arm that might help identify him. Marcellina recognizes the mark, and everyone learns that **FIGARO** is the long-lost son of an early love affair between Marcellina and Bartolo. In the scene that follows, **SUSANNA** arrives with the money to pay **FIGARO**'s debt and watches the reunion in horror and amazement.

MARCELLINA No. 18. Sextet
Andante



Oh, my long - lost child, em - brace me, let your mo - ther's arms en - fold you!
Ri - co - no - sci in que - sto am - ples - so u - na ma - dre, a - ma - to fi - glio!

Peace returns as **FIGARO** and Marcellina explain the situation to **SUSANNA**, who embraces her future parents-in-law.

Andante

BARTOLO His mo - ther!
Sua ma - dre!

COUNT His mo - ther!
Sua ma - dre!

SUSANNA His mo - ther?
Sua ma - dre?

SUSANNA His mo - ther?
Sua ma - dre?

CURZIO His mo - ther!
Sua ma - dre!

MARCELLINA His mo - ther!
Sua ma - dre!

SUSANNA His mo - ther?
Sua ma - dre?

SUSANNA His mo - ther!
Sua ma - dre!



MARCELLINA (abbracciando Figaro) Riconosci in questo amplesso una madre, amato figlio

FIGARO (a Bartolo) Padre mio, fate lo stesso, non mi fate più arrossir.

BARTOLO (abbracciando Figaro) Resistenza la coscienza far non lascia al tuo desir.

DON CURZIO Ei suo padre, ella sua madre, l'imeneo non può seguir.

IL CONTE Son smarrito, son stordito, meglio è assai di qua partir.

MARCELLINA & BARTOLO Figlio amato!

FIGARO Parenti amati! (Il Conte vuol partire. Susanna entra con una borsa in mano.)

SUSANNA Alto, alto, signor Conte, mille doppie son qui pronte a pagar vengo per Figaro, ed a porlo in libertà.

IL CONTE & DON CURZIO Non sappiamo com'è la cosa, osservate un poco là!

SUSANNA (si volge vedendo Figaro che abbraccia Marcellina) Già d'accordo ei colla sposa; giusti Dei, che infedeltà! (vuol partire) Lascia iniquo!

FIGARO (trattenendo Susanna) No, t'arresta! Senti, oh cara!

SUSANNA (dà uno schiaffo a Figaro) Senti questa!

MARCELLINA, BARTOLO & FIGARO
È un effetto di buon core tutto amore è quel che fa.

IL CONTE
Fremo, smanio dal furore, il destino a me la fa.

DON CURZIO
Freme e smanio dal furore, il destino gliela fa.

SUSANNA
Fremo, smanio dal furore, una vecchia a me la fa

MARCELLINA (corre ad abbracciar Susanna) Lo sdegno calmate, mia cara figliuola, sua madre abbracciate che or vostra sarà.

SUSANNA Sua madre?

BARTOLO Sua madre!

MARCELLINA (embracing Figaro) In this embrace, find once more your mother, my beloved son!

FIGARO (to Bartolo) My father, do the same, Let me no longer have cause to blush.

BARTOLO (embracing Figaro) My conscience forbids me to object.

DON CURZIO He, his father – she, his mother, then the marriage can't proceed.

COUNT I'm bewildered, I'm confounded, it's much better to leave here.

MARCELLINA & BARTOLO Beloved son!

FIGARO Beloved parents! (The Count goes to leave. Susanna enters with a purse, stopping him.)

SUSANNA One moment, my lord, I have a thousand doubles here and ready, I have come to pay for Figaro, and to set him free.

COUNT & DON CURZIO
I don't know what's going on, Look over there!

SUSANNA (turns to see Figaro embracing Marcellina) Settled with his wife already? good God, what infidelity! (throws the basket to the ground; goes to leave) Leave her, you traitor!

FIGARO (stopping Susanna) No, wait! Hear me, my dear!

SUSANNA (slaps Figaro) Hear this!

MARCELLINA, BARTOLO & FIGARO
It comes of a good heart, it's all for love's sake.

COUNT
I burn, I tremble with fury, destiny does this to me.

DON CURZIO He burns, he trembles with fury, destiny does this to him.

SUSANNA I burn, I tremble with fury, an old woman does this to me.

MARCELLINA (embraces Susanna) Calm your fury, my dear daughter, and embrace his mother who must now be yours too!

SUSANNA His mother!

BARTOLO His mother!

SUSANNA Sua madre?

IL CONTE Sua madre!

SUSANNA Sua madre?

DON CURZIO Sua madre!

SUSANNA Sua madre?

MARCELLINA Sua madre!

SUSANNA (to Figaro) Tua madre?

FIGARO (a Susanna) E quello è mio padre che a te lo dirà.

SUSANNA Suo padre?

BARTOLO Suo padre!

SUSANNA Suo padre?

IL CONTE Suo padre!

SUSANNA Suo padre?

DON CURZIO Suo padre!

SUSANNA Suo padre?

MARCELLINA Suo padre!

SUSANNA (a Figaro) Tuo padre?

FIGARO (a Susanna) E quella è mia madre che a te lo dirà. (tutti quattro abbracciansi)

SUSANNA, MARCELLINA, BARTOLO & FIGARO
Al dolce contento di questo momento, quest'anima appena resister or sa.

DON CURZIO & IL CONTE

Al fiero tormento di questo momento quell'/quest'anima appena resister or sa.

SUSANNA His mother?

COUNT His mother!

SUSANNA His mother?

DON CURZIO His mother!

SUSANNA His mother?

MARCELLINA His mother!

SUSANNA (to Figaro) Your mother?

FIGARO (to Susanna) And that is my father as he will tell you.

SUSANNA His father?

BARTOLO His father!

SUSANNA His father!

COUNT His father!

SUSANNA His father?

DON CURZIO His father!

SUSANNA His father?

MARCELLINA His father!

SUSANNA (to Figaro) Your father?

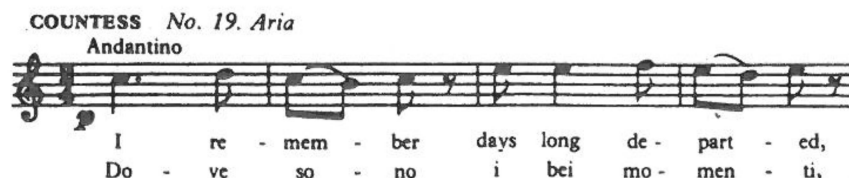
FIGARO (to Susanna) And that is my mother, as she will tell you. (all four embrace)

SUSANNA, MARCELLINA, BARTOLO & FIGARO
My soul hardly knows how to withstand the sweet content of this moment.

DON CURZIO & COUNT

My/His soul hardly knows how to withstand the fiery torments of this moment.

The Countess is deeply concerned about her husband's possible reaction to her plan of deception. She loves the Count, and wants to punish him for his own deception, but deplures the fact that she must seek help from her maid, **SUSANNA**, by changing clothes with her. Sadly, the Countess sings a beautiful and tender aria, recalling her former happiness with the Count and expressing her hopes of renewing the Count's devotion and the pleasures of the past.



The simple melodic outline embodies the nobility and tenderness of her character, later embellished by **appoggiaturas** (decorative note preceding the main note) and supported by the strings, oboe, and bassoon. The aria ends with a final section that is fast, offering an opportunity for vocal bravura and showing her determination to win back her husband's affections.

CONTESSA

E Susanna non vien! Sono ansiosa di saper come il Conte accolse la proposta. Alquanto ardito il progetto mi par, e ad uno sposo sì vivace e geloso! Ma che mal c'è? Cangiando i miei vestiti con quelli de Susanna, e i suoi coi miei a favor della notte. Oh cirlo! A qual'umil stato fatale io son ridotta da un consorte crudel! Che dopo avermi con un mistio inaudito d'infedeltà, di gelosia, di sdegno-prima amata, indi offesa, e alfin tradita-fammi or cercar da un'amia serva aita! Dove sono i bei momenti di dolcezza e di piacere, dove andaron i giuramenti di quel labbro menzogner! Perchè mai, se in pianti e in pene per me tutto si cangiò, la memoria di quel bene dal mio sen non trapassò? Dove sono i bei momenti, ecc. Ah! Se almen la mia costanza nel languire amando ognor mi portasse una speranza di cangiar l'ingrato cor. Ah! Se almen la mia costanza, ecc.

COUNTESS

Still Susanna does not come! am anxious to know how the Count received the proposal. The scheme appears rather daring, with a husband so forceful and jealous! But what's the harm in it? Changing my clothes for those of Susanna, and she for mine, under cover of night. Heavens! To what humble and dangerous state I am reduced by a cruel husband, who, after having with an unheard-of-combination of infidelity, jealousy and disdain-having first loved me, then abused and finally betrayed me-now forces me to seek the help of a servant! Where are the golden moments of tranquility and pleasure; what became of the oaths of that deceitful tongue? Why did not, when my life changed into tears and pain, the memory of that joy disappear from my breast? Where are the golden moments, etc. Ah! If then my constancy still loves through is sorrow, the hope yet remains of changing that ungrateful heart. Ah! If then my constancy, etc.

Act IV

WTLF 16 CD 2, Track 17: Recitative and Aria,

4:22, p. 157

“Tutto è disposto...Aprite un po' quegli occhi” (FIGARO)

The intrigue has developed further, and **FIGARO** now suspects **SUSANNA**, his new wife, of infidelity. He thinks she is going to give into the Count as he states, “I’m already beginning to ply the foolish trade of cuckolded husband...Ah, it’s always madness to trust a woman!” **FIGARO**, working himself into a frenzy for the rest of the aria, sings to the men in the audience warning of the dangers of trusting women, “Open your eyes for a moment, rash and foolish men, look at these women, look at what they are.”

FIGARO


Tutto è disposto: l’ora dovrebbe esser vicina; io sento gente. . . è dessa! Non è alcun; buia è la notte. . . ed io comincio omai a fare il scimunito mestiere di marito. . . Ingrata! Nel momento della mia cerimonia ei godevaleggiando: e nel vederlo io rideva di me senza saperlo. Oh Susanna! Susanna! Quantapena mi costi! Con quell’ingenua faccia, con quegli occhi innocenti chi creduto l’avria? Ah! Che il fidarsi a donna, è ognor folia. Aprite un po’ quegli occhi, uomini incauti e sciocchi, guardate queste femmine, guardate cose son! Queste chiamate dee dagli ingannati sensi, a cui tributa incensi la debole ragion, ecc. Son streghe che incantano per farci penar, sirene che cantano per farci affogar, civette che allettano per trarci le piume, comete che brillano per toglierci il lume. Son rose spinose son volpi vezzose; son orse benigne, colombe maligne, maestre d’inganni, amiche d’affanni, che fingono, mentono, amore non senton, non senton pietà. No, no, no, no, no! Il resto nol dico, già ognuno lo sa. Aprite un po’ quegli occhi, ecc.

FIGARO

Everything is ready: the hour must be near, I hear them coming; it’s she; no it’s no one. The night is dark, and I’m already beginning to ply the foolish trade of cuckolded husband. Ungrateful! At the moment of my wedding ceremony he embraced her through a letter, and seeing him I laughed at myself without knowing it. Oh Susanna, Susanna, how many pains have you cost me! With that artless face, with those innocent eyes, who would have believed it! Ah! it’s always madness to trust a woman! Open your eyes for a moment, rash and foolish men, look at these women, look at what they are. You call them goddesses, with your befuddled senses, and pay them tribute with your weakened minds. They are witches who work spells to make you miserable, sirens who sing to make you drown, screech-owls that lure you to pluck out your feathers, comets that flash to take away your light. They are thorny roses, cunning vixen, hugging bears, spiteful doves, masters of deceit, friends of trouble, who pretend, lie, feel no love, feel no pity, no, no, no, no, no, no! The rest I won’t say, because everyone knows it already. Open your eyes for a moment, *etc/*

Figaro hides in the garden as Susanna and the Countess arrive, dressed in each other's clothes. Susanna knows Figaro is hiding and decides to teach him a lesson for his distrust. She sings a beautiful aria addressed to her supposed lover, anticipating this night of love, while she is really thinking of Figaro and the joys of their wedded bliss.

SUSANNA No. 27. Aria
Andante



Then come, my heart's de - light, no more - de - lay - ing
Deh, vie - ni, non tar - dar, o gio - ja bel - la.

SUSANNA

Giunse alfin il momento
Che godrò senza affanno
In braccio all'idol mio! Timide cure,
Uscite dal mio petto,
A turbar non venite il mio diletto!
Oh, come par che all'amoroso foco
L'amenita del loco,
La terra e il ciel risponda!
Come la notte I furti miei seconda!

Deh, vieni, non tardar, o gioia bella,
Vieni ove amore per goder t'appella,
Finchè non splende in ciel notturna face
Finchè l'aria è ancor bruna e il mondo
tace.
Qui mormora il ruscel, qui scherza l'aura,
Che col dolce sussurro il cor ristaura;
Qui ridono i fioretti, e l'erba è fresca:
Ai piaceri d'amor qui tutto adescà.
Vieni, ben mio: tra queste piante ascose
Ti vo' la fronte incoronar di rose.

SUSANNA

Now at last comes the moment
When I yield, unresisting,
To joy in his embraces. Why need I tremble?
Away with silly scruples!
Shall they stand in the way of my desires?
Here in this wood - 'twas made for lovers -
Everything breathes of rapture;
I feel it, 'tis all around me,
While night enfolds us, our stolen joys concealing.

Then come, my heart's delight, no more delaying,
Come where awaits your love, and would be playing.
Not yet the moon on us her watch is keeping,
While in twilight veiled the world is sleeping.
I hear afar the ceaseless fountain sobbing;
Night winds whisper and set my pulses throbbing.
The grass is cool with flowers the senses exciting,
All to sweet delight of love inviting.
Come, let us hide among these bowers of roses;
Come, my dearest! Sweetest of all is that flower that love
uncloses.

Confusion, mistaken identities, humiliation, playfulness, and reconciliation come together in the finale. In the darkness, Cherubino, who has delayed his departure a second time, tries to make love to the Countess, who is dressed as Susanna. The Count arrives and accidentally gets a kiss from Cherubino, who runs away and leaves the Count to seduce "Susanna." Figaro finds the real Susanna dressed as the Countess, recognizes her, and turns the tables on her by trying to seduce the "Countess." Finally, the real Countess makes a dignified appearance in her own clothes, clears up the confusion of the crazy day, and advises everyone to stop playing foolish games.

Listen to how Mozart collapses time by shortening each repetition of the phrases. Susanna and the Count each sing two measure phrases ("Perdono, perdono" and "No, no sperarlo!"), and then repeat the lines in half the time. When Count Almaviva sings five single notes on "No", the disconnected notes contrast sharply to the sweet, gliding phrase sung by the Countess—"Almeno per loro, perdono otterrò" (At least I shall obtain pardon for them). The Countess' final syllable triggers a magical effect in the orchestra. Marked **pianissimo** (very soft), violins rapidly scurry up and down scales, barely keeping pace with kaleidoscopically changing harmonies in the other instruments. The result is ethereal as Mozart juxtaposes chords from distantly related keys, creating an astonishing effect. When the Countess appears, the other characters sing **sotto voce** (in an undertone). Mozart places rests between syllables of words, creating strategic silences, followed by one of the most beautiful moments in opera: Almaviva asks his wife's pardon, she answers him through a plain melody in the same key, and everyone else joins in to sing an intense hymn-like conclusion. A rousing chorus ends the opera with a celebration as all the lovers are reunited.

CONTE Gente, gente, all'armi, all'armi!

CONTE Help, help, weapons, weapons!

FIGARO (con finto spavento) Il padrone!

FIGARO (con finto spavento) The master!

CONTE Gente, gente, aiuto, aiuto!

CONTE My men, help, help !

FIGARO Son perduto!

FIGARO I'm lost!

BASILIO, CURZIO, ANTONIO, BARTOLI
Cos'avvenne?

BASILIO, CURZIO, ANTONIO, BARTOLI
What happened?

CONTE Il scellerato m'ha tradito, m'ha infamato, e con chi state a veder.

CONTE The villain has betrayed me, has defamed me, and you shall see with whom.

BASILIO, CURZIO, ANTONIO, BARTOLO
Son stordito, sbalordito, non mi par che ciò sia ver!

BASILIO, CURZIO, ANTONIO, BARTOLO
I'm amazed, confounded, I can't believe it's true!

FIGARO Son storditi, sbalorditi, oh che scena, che piacer!

FIGARO They're amazed, comfounded, oh what a scene, what fun!

CONTE Invan resistete, uscite, Madama; il premio ora

CONTE In vain you resist, come out Madame; now

avrete di vostra onestà. . . Il paggio!

ANTONIO Mia figlia!

FIGARO Mia madre!

BASILIO, CURZIO, ANTONIO, BARTOLO Madama!

CONTE Scoperta è la trama la perfide è qua!

SUSANNA (inginocchiandosi). Perdono, perdono!

CONTE No, no! Nonsperarlo!

FIGARO (inginocchiandosi) Perdono, Perdono!

CONTE No, no, non vo'darlo!

TUTTI SLAVO IL CONTE (inginocchiandosi)
Perdono!. . .

CONTE No!

CONTESSA Almeno io per loro perdono otterrò.

BASILIO, CURZIO, CONTE, ANTONIO, BARTOLO
Oh cielo! Che veggio! Deliro! Vaneggio! Che creder
non so.

CONTE (inginocchiandosi) Contessa, Perdono!
Perdono, perdono!

CONTESSA Più docile io sono, e dico di sì.

TUTTI

Ah! Tutti contenti saremo così. Questo giorno di
tormenti, di capricci e di follia, incontenti e in allegria
solo amor può terminar. Sposi, amici, al ballo, al
gioco, alle mine date foco! Ed a suon di lieta
marciacorrìam tutti a festeggiar,. . .

END

you shall be rewarded for your honesty. . . The page !

ANTONIO My daughter!

FIGARO My mother!

BASILIO, CURZIO, ANTONIO, BARTOLO Madame!

CONTE The plot is revealed, and there is the
deceiver.

SUSANNA (kneeling) Pardon, pardon

CONTE No, no, do not expect it!

FIGARO (kneeling) Pardon, pardon!

CONTE No, no, I will not!

ALL EXCEPT THE COUNT (kneeling) Pardon!. . .

CONTE No!

CONTESSA At least I may obtain their pardon.

BASILIO, CURZIO, CONTE, ANTONIO, BARTOLO
Heaven! What do I see? I'm raving! Going crazy! I
don't know what to believe.

CONTE (kneeling) Countess, your pardon! Pardon!

CONTESSA I am more clement, and answer, yes.

TUTTI

Ah! All shall be made happy thereby. Only love can
resolve this day of torments, caprice and folly, into joy
and happiness. Spouses and sweethearts, to dancing
and fun, and let's have some fireworks! And to the
sound of a gay march hurry off to celebrate, . . .

END

A Song to Learn from *The Marriage of FIGARO*

A Classroom Activity to Try

SE VUOL BALLARE

(If you wish to dance)

Figaro's cavatina

(a song, shorter than an aria)

Allegretto
Figaro

Figaro warns the Count that he has a scheme to protect Susanna.

Se vuol bal - la - re, si - gnor Con - ti - no, se vuol bal -
 Well, my dear Count, if you wish to start danc - ing, well, my dear

la - re, si - gnor Con - ti - no, il chi - tar - ri - no le
 Count, if you wish to start danc - ing, I'll strum the mu - sic on

suo - ne - ro, il chi - tar - ri - no le suo - ne -
 my fine gui - tar, I'll strum the mu - sic on my fine gui -

rò, sì, le suo - ne - rò, sì, le suo - ne - rò.
 tar, yes, my fine gui - tar, yes, my fine gui - tar.

Source: *Opera Funtime Presents The Marriage of FIGARO* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

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