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Repertoire and Style 1 – ADPA4015

1600-word Case Study (WRITTEN)

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‘Dove Sono I Bei Momenti’ (Mozart, 1786) No.19, from Act III, scene VIII in the opera *Le Nozze di Figaro* is sung by Countess Almaviva where she reflects on her deep sadness and despair at her husband’s infidelity. She reminisces on the past happiness of her marriage and the painful realisation that her husband no longer loves her. Count Almaviva has a history of being unfaithful to his wife, the Countess, and throughout the opera noticeably gains advances towards her lady in waiting Susanna, promised to Figaro, the Count’s barber. *Le Nozze di Figaro*, KV 492 (Mozart 1786), otherwise known as *The Marriage of Figaro*, is a *commedia per musica* Opera with an insightful look into the complexities of love, power and social structure during the late eighteenth-century, centred in Seville, Spain.

This case study reflects broadly on former and current relationship dynamics in addition to the underlying acceptance of adultery. I will discuss power dynamics between man and woman, predominantly on where authority stands within a marriage, during the eighteenth-century, and the influence it has on modern day marital relationships, including the growth of Feminism, in an era where the concept was unheard of. I shall also confer how the underlying acceptance of infidelity has revolutionised from the eighteenth-century to the twenty-first-century and how the laws for the dissolution of marriage became eradicated.

Within the aria ‘*Dove Sono*’, the Countess questions where the love and loyalty once existed within her marital relationship. The music is slow and sorrowful, mirroring her feelings of abandonment and betrayal, and the Countess, once confident in her marriage now faces the harsh reality of her husband’s affairs. She laments the loss of love and is forced to reckon her position as a woman in a deeply patriarchal society. Her emotional turmoil and the eventual resolution of her situation, where she regains her power and manipulates her husband into recognising her worth, are central to the opera’s themes of justice, equality and the complexities of marital relationships specifically during the ‘Le Droit du seigneur’ – ‘the right of the first night’ era, (Beaumarchais, 1778) meaning the right of a noble to sleep with a servant bride on her wedding evening. Schmidt, (1881) argued the origins of the belief came from the practice of ‘*culagium*’ – ‘to collect’ ‘a requirement that a serf get permission to marry, and such a permission often required the peasant to pay a fee or give some kind of

service'. (Bullough, 1991) The 'requirement' to 'pay a fee' was seen as a way for a noble man to control 'his human stock' (*ibid.* 1991) as marriage rights were under the authority of a lord and that a lord had the authority to consummate a marriage. If the Count had reinstated this rule and spent the night with Susanna after her wedding, the Countess simply could not object due to the difference in power dynamics between man and woman in the late eighteenth-century. However, the Countess aims to seek revenge on her husband by manipulating and tricking him, notably considering the Countess as 'quite a proto feminist in the opera, anticipating modern feminism in eras where the feminist concept was still unknown'. (Falletti, 2018) The Counts infidelity is a symbol of the corruption and moral laxity of the nobility; however, his infidelity is not solely an expression of personal lust but also an example of the power imbalance compared to the wives and servants who had a lack of constitutional rights. The context of adultery in *Le Nozze di Figaro* is a main theme as it underpins much drama and comedy, a popular genre of opera in that era, *commedia per musica*.

The Countess has an underlying acceptance of her husband's adultery, even if she leans towards a Feministic view. She would much rather rekindle the love they once shared, whilst acknowledging his infidelity. Traditional marriage, over centuries, has witnessed several paradigm shifts where there became less emphasis on individuals marrying for political, religious or family interest, but more through genuine love and attraction. This became a custom as 'people revolutionised matrimony around the end of the eighteenth-century' (Behrend-Martinez, 2021). Therefore, a dispute for the Countess to remain in matrimony with the Count could be due to their initial and genuine love for each other. Furthermore, 'adultery can lead to civil and criminal punishment', though, 'only the husbands had a right to sue for adultery matters' (Garcia, 2014) and thus the Countess innately had no right to protest for his wrongdoings. She could have established the possibility to be sued by the Count as he did not want his nobility, honour and reputation to be at stake over this scandal, even if the countess did not commit any form of misconduct, thus exposing the power dynamics of differentiated genders in the late eighteenth-century.

Marriage took a pivotal turn in twentieth-century Spain where 'the abolishment of the husband's permission rule occurred in 1975, adultery laws were revoked in 1978 and divorce became legalised in 1981' (Barcelona Home Blog, 2021) meaning women could now legally divorce their husbands. This improved women's rights and encouraged feminism, comparable to the Countess's actions and feministic conducts seen within the opera. The underlying acceptance of adultery began to decline due to increasing rates of divorce from civil marriage infidelity. In 2023 there were '76,685' cases of divorce in Spain (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2024) and 'according to a study from the American Sociological

review, currently around 70% of divorces are initiated by women'. (Beattie, 2024) Due to the accessibility of divorce in current times, individuals within a marriage do not have to conform to actions of adultery and therefore, the underlying acceptance becomes abolished due to the freedom of the wronged individuals' rights for divorce.

'Dove Sono I Bei Momenti' which factually translates to 'where are the beautiful moments', is the first line of the aria where the Countess 'calmly remembers moments of love, and hopes, with increasing agitation, that her persistence may make him love her again'. (Moberly, *et al*, 1965) The text within the aria represents her emotions and feelings for her husband along with the heartbreak and devastation she has also endured, for example the final line "Ah! Se almen la mia costanza nel languire amando ognor, mi portasse una speranza di cangiar l'ingrato cor!" translates to "Ah! If at-least [the] my consistency in languishing loving always, me could-bring a hope of changing (his)ungrateful hearts!" (IPA source, 2002).

The 'Recitativo ed aria' – 'Recitative before aria', is originally performed in the key of C major which encompasses no flats or sharps, considered as the most basic key and with a time signature of 2/4, otherwise known as Simple Duple Time, the simplicity of both components can emphasise the feeling Mozart wants the audience to experience within the aria. The slow tempo marked Andante, meaning moderately slow and the use of simple notes does not distract us from the vocal performance. However, in bar eight the tempo is marked allegretto meaning lively or moderately fast adding to the dramatics of the text. The text in the recitative is crucial in understanding the current plot as the Countess is wondering why Susanna is taking so long to deceive the Count while disguised as the Countess. Words on the higher notes are significant and emphasise the Countesses' emotions, for instance, the word *crudel* meaning cruel is the initial high F in the piece.

Recitative

E Susanna non vien! – And Susanna not has-come!

Sono ansiosa di saper – I-am anxious to know

come il Conte accolse la proposta. – How the count received the proposition

Alquanto ardito il progetto mi par, – Rather bold the plan to-me seems,

E ad uno sposo sì vivace e geloso! – and with a husband so vigorous and jealous!

Ma che mal c'è? – But what harm is-there?

Cangiando i miei vestiti con quelli di Susanna, – Changing [the] my clothes with those of Susanna,

E suoi co'miei – and hers with mine

Al favor della notte. – under cover of night.

Oh, cielo! a qual umil stato fatale – Oh, Heaven! To what humble state ill-fated

Io son ridotta da un consorte crude! – I am reduced by a husband cruel!

Che, dopo avermi con un misto inaudito – Who, after having-me with a mixture unheard-of

D'infedeltà, di gelosia, di sdegno! – of-infidelity, of jealousy, of disdain(s),

Prima amata, indi offesa, e alfin tradita, – at-first loved, then offended, and finally betrayed,

Fammi or cercar da una mia serva aita! – makes-me now to-see from one (of)-my maids help!

(IPA source 2025)

There is light accompaniment along with the recitative, where the music and the vocals have a call and response pattern. The accompaniment fits into the pauses, noticeable in the vocal staff and text is sung over the top of the suspended notes.

Recitativo ed Aria
Andante

E Susan-na. non vien! *sono ansio-sa di sa-per come il con-te ac-*
How Su-san-na de-lays! I'm im-pa-tient till I know what my husband has

col-se la pro-po-sa. *Al- quan-to ar-di-to il pro-get-to mi par,*
said to her pro-po-sal, I fear 'tis rashness what I dar'd to attempt;

(CD Sheet Music, 2000)

The aria itself has limited noticeable differences. For example, it is now marked *Andantino* which is slightly faster than *Andante*, also with an *Allegro* section picking up the tempo for musical interest. The time signature remains 2/4 tempo clearly informing the accompanist of the correct rhythm for the piece complimenting the recitative. Likewise, the aria remains in the key signature of C major but with a complex accompaniment. There is an extensive range of notes in the treble and bass clef, showing a vast array of tonal qualities adding dramatic effect.

Aria

Dove sono i bei momenti – where are the beautiful moments
Di dolcezza e di piacer? – of sweetness and of pleasure!
Dove andaro i giuramenti – where have-gone the promises
Di quel labbro menzogner? – from that lip lying?
Perchè mai, se in pianti e in pene – Why ever, if into tears and into pain
Per me tutto si cangiò, - for me all (has) changed,
La memoria di quel bene – the memory of that goodness
Dal mio sen non trapassò? – from my breast not has-passed?
Ah! se almen la mia costanza, - Ah! If at-last [the] my consistency
Nel languire amando ognor, - in languishing loving always,
Mi portasse una Speranza – me could-bring a hope
Di cangiar l'ingrato cor! – of changing (his)-ungrateful heart!

(IPA Source, 2002)

There are only twelve lines to the aria. Nonetheless, with the selection of lyrics by Da Ponte (1786) the audience can genuinely appreciate the Countess' emotions. Languire and l'ingrato, meaning languishing and ungrateful, the melodramatic words that add feelings to phrases, gains the audience's attention to the significant parts of the aria. The lyrics and accompaniment complement each other flawlessly, representing her calm, confident nature despite the betrayals of her husband. (Appendix A)

Aria
Andantino

Cs. *Do - ve so - no i bei mo - men - ti, di dol - ces. za e*
Gone for e - ver love's sun - ny splen - dour, Now for - sa - ken and

Cs. *di - pia - cer, do - ve an - da - ro i giu - ra - men - ti*
lone I mourn, Oft he vow'd me love true and ten - der,

Cs. *di quel lab - bro men - zo - gner, di quel lab - bro men - zo - gner!*
Ah, those lips are now for - sworn, ah those lips are now for - sworn!

(CD Sheet Music, 2000)

The Countess has liberated her feelings in the aria 'Dove Sono'. As a woman in the late-eighteenth-century she has experienced her husband's infidelity and reminisces on her once, love-filled marriage through Mozart's music and Da Ponte's lyrics (1786). She accepts that her husband has been unfaithful but plans to also deceive him because of her feministic perspective within the opera. There is a possibility that if the opera was written in the twentieth-century there would not be the underlying acceptance of adultery and therefore the women in the opera would have been able to divorce their husbands. Although this could have occurred, it would have entirely reversed Beaumarchais's plot and the continuation of Rossini's, *The Barber of Seville*. The significance of 'Dove Sono' represents the emotions of betrayal within marriages and how infidelity became a regular occurrence within the aristocracy that led wives to manipulate and conspire against the men that wronged them.

When it comes to my personal performance of Dove Sono, I will take a slightly different approach to the emotions I aim to convey. Most opera singers who play Countess Almaviva, portray sentiments of pain and devastation, whereas I would aim for emotions of resentment and offense. I believe these feelings to better compliment the lyrics of the aria, in a modern context, as Feministic moments in contemporary operas are more acknowledged, which can be appreciated in English National Opera's twenty-first-century version of *The Marriage of Figaro*. The change in emotion illustrates further her ambitions to deceive the Count. My chosen emotions and feelings will highlight her intentions during this point in the opera and will represent how her character develops from a betrayed, conforming wife, to a confident, head-strong partner seeking retribution not only for herself but for the establishment of modern-day Feminism.

Word count – 1751

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Mozart
Dove sono
from Le Nozze di Figaro

Recitativo ed Aria
Andante

E Susan-na. non vien! sono ansio-sa di sa-per co-me il con-te ac-
How Su-san-na de-lays! I'm im-pa-tient till I know what my husband has

f *Str. p*

This system of the musical score for the first system of 'Dove sono' from Le Nozze di Figaro. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The piano accompaniment is in treble and bass clefs. The tempo is marked 'Andante'. The lyrics are in Italian and English. The piano part includes a forte 'f' dynamic and a 'Str. p' (string piano) marking.

col-se la pro-po-sa. Al-quan-to ar-di-to il pro-get-to mi par,
said to her pro-po-sal, I fear 'tis rashness what I dar'd to attempt;

Cs.

This system of the musical score for the second system of 'Dove sono' from Le Nozze di Figaro. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The piano accompaniment is in treble and bass clefs. The tempo is marked 'Andante'. The lyrics are in Italian and English. The piano part includes a 'Cs.' (Crescendo) marking.

Allegretto (deciso)

Cs. *ad u.no spo.so si vi.va.ce e ge.lo.so!*
he's so impetuous, so re-sent-ful, and so jea-lous!

Ma che mal
But 'tis no

Andante

Cs. *c'è p cangiando i miei ve sti - li con quel li di Su san.na, e i suoi co' mi.ei*
wrong! a mere exchange of garments, I give mine to Su-san-na, while her's dis-guise me

p

Cs. *al fa.vor del la not.te... oh cie-lo! a qual' u.mil sta - to fa.ta.le*
by the fa-vour-ing darkness... Oh hea-ven! how deep-ly my pride has been humbled,

fp

Cs. *io son ri.dot.ta da un con.sor.te cru.del! che do-po a.*
I am de-gra-ded by my hus-band's ne-glect! Af-ter short

Cs. *ver.mi con un mi.sto in.au.di.to d'in.fe.del-tà, di ge.lo.si-a di*
hours of bur-ning love, I a-wake to doubt and de-spair. I see him jea-lous, dis-

S. *sde.gno!* *Pri.ma a - ma.ta,* *in-di of - fe - sa,* *e al fin tra -*
dainful! He who loved me, now de - serts me, and nas be -

S. *di - ta,* *fam.mi or cer.car da u -* *na mia ser - va ai . la!*
tray'd me, Must I sub-mit that my own ser-vants aid me!

Aria Andantino

S. *Do - ve so - no i bei mo - men - ti,* *di dol - ces.sa e*
Gone for e - ver love's sun - ny splen-dour, Now for - sa - ken and

S. *di - pia - cer,* *do - ve an - da - ro i giu - ra - men - ti*
lone I mourn, Oft he vow'd me love true and ten - der,

S. *di quel lab - bro men - zo - gner, di quel lab - bro men - zo - gner!*
Ah, those lips are now for - sworn, ah those lips are now for - sworn!

Cs. *Per.chè mai, se in pianti in pe. ne per me*
 Why, oh why must I thus sor-row, Why doth

Ob. *Fag. Str. Fag.*

Cs. *tut - to si can - giò, per me tut - to si can - giò, la me.*
 all to me seem chang'd? why doth all to me seem chang'd? From re -

sp *Fag. Ho.*

Cs. *mo - ria di quel be - ne dal mio sen non trapas - sò, la me.*
 membrance I must bor-row Ev'ry joy, since he's es - trang'd, from re -

Str. Ob. Fag.

Cs. *mo - ria di quel ben non tra - pas - sò? Do - ve so - no i bei mo.*
 membrance ev'ry joy since he's es - trang'd. Gone for e - ver love's sun - ny

Str. Ob. Fag.

Cs. *men - ti di dol - cezza e di pia - cer, do - ve an.*
 splen-dour, now for - sa - ken and lone I mourn, Oft he

Ob. Fag. dolce

Cs. *da - ro i giu - ra - men - ti di quel lab - bro - men - zo - gner!*
 vow'd me love true and ten - der, *Ob.* Ah those lips are now for - sworn!

Fag. Ho.

Allegro

Cs. *Ah! se al - men la mia co - stan - za nel lan - gui - re a - man - do o -*
 Ah! per - haps my constant yearn - ing, And these bit - ter tears that

Str. p

Cs. *gnor, mi por - tus - seu - na spe - ranza di can - giar l'in - gra - to cor, di can -*
 start, Yet will win his love re - turning, And re - store th'ungrateful heart, and re -

Ob. Ho.

Cs. *giar - l'in - gra - to cor!*
 store th'un - grate - ful heart,

Tutti f sf p Fag. Ob.

Cs. *Ah! se al - men la - mia co - stan - za,*
 Ah! Per - haps my con - stant year - ning,

Str. Ho. Tutti sf

Cs. *ah! seal - men la - mia co -*
Ah! per - haps my con - stant

Ob.

p Fag.

Str.

Hr.

Cs. *stan - za nel lan - gui - re a - man - doo - gnor, mi por - tasse u - na spe -*
yearning, and these bit - ter tears that start, Yet may win his love re -

Cs. *ran - za di can - giar l'in - gra - to - cor, mi por - tas - se u - na spe -*
turn - ing, And re - store th'un - grate - ful heart, Yet may win me his love re -

Ob.

Fag. Hr.

Cs. *ran - za di can - giar l'in - gra - to cor, di can -*
turn - ing, and re - store th'un - grate - ful heart, and re -

Ob.

Fag. Hr.

Str.

Cs. *giar l'in - gra - to cor, di can - giar l'in - gra - to*
store th'ungrateful heart, and re - store th'un - grate - ful

Ob.

Str.

Hr.

Cs. *cor, di can-giar l'in-gra to cor, l'in*
heart, and re-store th'un-grate ful heart, th'un-

Cs. *gra to cor, l'in-gra to cor! (Parte)*
grate - - ful heart, th'un-grate - ful heart!

fp cresc. Tutti f

The musical score is written for Cello (Cs.) and Piano. The Cello part has two systems of staves. The first system includes the lyrics: "cor, di can-giar l'in-gra to cor, l'in heart, and re-store th'un-grate ful heart, th'un-". The second system includes the lyrics: "gra to cor, l'in-gra to cor! (Parte) grate - - ful heart, th'un-grate - ful heart!". The Piano accompaniment is written in two systems. The first system includes the dynamics *fp* and *fp*. The second system includes the dynamics *fp*, *cresc.*, *Tutti*, and *f*. The score also includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and ornaments.