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A Character Study of Two Trouser Roles For Mezzo-Soprano In Opera: "Cherubino" From W. A. Mozart's *Le Nozze Di Figaro* and "Octavian" From R. Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier*

Tammy Jo Hensrud-Kerian

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A CHARACTER STUDY OF TWO TROUSER ROLES
FOR MEZZO-SOPRANO IN OPERA: "CHERUBINO" FROM
W. A. MOZART'S LE NOZZE DI FIGARO AND
"OCTAVIAN" FROM R. STRAUSS'S DER ROSENKAVALIER

by
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Bachelor of Music, University of North Dakota, 1981

A Thesis
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty
of the
University of North Dakota
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Arts

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This thesis submitted by Tammy Jo Hensrud-Kerian in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts from the University of North Dakota is hereby approved by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done.

Ferry E. Eder
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This thesis meets the standards for appearance and conforms to the style and format requirements of the Graduate School of the University of North Dakota, and is hereby approved.

A. William Johnson 5/2/84
Dean of the Graduate School

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Title A Character Study of Two Trouser Roles for
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from R. Strauss's Der Rosenkavalier

Department Music

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Signature Tommy Herold-Kerian

Date April 25, 1984

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ABSTRACT

Trouser roles are roles in opera in which women portray young men. These roles present a special problem for the singer-actor--the problem of performing a character through transvestism.

This thesis is a study of two popular trouser roles for mezzo-soprano. It addresses the general history of trouser roles and the specific characters of "Cherubino" from W. A. Mozart's Le Nozze di Figaro and "Octavian" from R. Strauss's Der Rosenkavalier. The study analysis of these two roles incorporates the history of the characters as reflected through the development of librettos in which they appear, a character study focusing on acting and technical problems for the performer, and musical analysis relevant to the understanding of these two trouser roles.

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The nature of the art form "opera," with its sources stemming from both theatre and music, presents unique and very demanding situations to performers. Not only does a singer have to be in total technical control of the voice to perform the taxing roles opera demands, but also must have the ability to transcend the music in order to portray the character as a singing-actor. In years past, music was the more important attribute of a good operatic performer. However, in the past few decades, a synthesis of the technical expertise of both art forms has been required in order for the singer to compete in the field of opera.

Many different types of singers are required to represent various characters in the performance of an opera. Each operatic composer writes for the particular kind of voice that will best suit the character whom he is bringing to musical life. Historically, various voice classifications have traditionally been associated with specific types of roles. The lyric mezzo-soprano has been accorded a unique type of role that is a consequence of

the range and voice quality; that of the "trouser role," in which the woman sings and acts the part of a young man. Mezzo-sopranos seem to have been ideally chosen for these roles with their richer, lower voices, in opposition to the leading soprano's or tenor's radiant, higher tessitura. Therefore, in roles of this nature the mezzo-soprano must not only be aware of the usual problems presented to the singer-actor, but also must be able to solve these problems through transvestism.

This study will center on the development of trouser roles in opera and specifically will address through a character analysis the interpretation of two such roles, Cherubino from W. A. Mozart's Le Nozze di Figaro and Octavian from Richard Strauss's Der Rosenkavalier.

In researching this topic, it became apparent there was not an abundant amount of material specifically concerning the trouser roles. However, by consulting various major sources of opera history, theatre history, and sources tracing the development of the present day voices, this writer was able to trace the origin of the trouser roles. Donald Grout's A Short History of Opera, and Angus Heriot's The Castrati in Opera, along with The Great Singers by Henry Pleasants, and Ellen Boyer's Master's Thesis entitled "The transvestite female Shakespearean phenomenon: Charlotte Cushman's Romeo and Sarah Bernhardt's Hamlet" provided the bulk of information regarding

the history of the trouser roles. For the specific study of the history and analysis of Cherubino, Brigid Brophy's Mozart the Dramatist, William Mann's The Operas of Mozart, Gary Schmidgall's Literature as Opera, and John Drummond's Opera in Perspective were very valuable sources. Much of the information to be found describing Octavian's character was translated from Karl Fölnbacher's Hugo von Hofmannsthal-Richard Strauss, Der Rosenkavalier: Interpretationen. William Mann's Richard Strauss: A critical study of the operas also provided useful information on the character of Octavian.

The two roles selected for study are excellent examples of trouser role characters. They are representative of two extremely different styles, periods, and forms of opera, even though the two characters themselves are of the same mold. By outlining a format of character analysis and discussing the innate problems trouser roles encounter, it should be possible to transfer this information to the interpretation of other such roles in an appropriate manner. A brief Discography is included at the end of this paper, however the specific singers playing the roles will not be discussed.

The definition of a few terms which occur throughout the paper might prove helpful to the reader:

Aria - A formal song sung by a single vocalist, usually at a point of high dramatic action. (Mitchell 1970, p. 293)

Cadenza - An elaborate passage, originally for singers, intended to display vocal agility just before the final phrase of an aria. (Mitchell 1970, p. 295)

Castrati - (also called evirato, musico) plural form of a type of singer of the Renaissance and Baroque periods associated especially with opera seria, a male soprano or alto. (Mitchell 1970, p. 295)

Comic opera - Italian opera buffa, French opéra comique, German Singspiel and anything ranging from a play with songs to a through-composed opera on a comedy subject. (Mitchell 1970, p. 295)

Commedia dell'arte - Masked comedy or improvised Italian comedy of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. A popular theatrical form with a sketched-out plot and stock characters, a pair of lovers without masks surrounded by comedians. Some of Mozart's and Rossini's operas retain the vestiges of these characters. Strauss and other recent composers have deliberately used them. (Mitchell 1970, p. 295)

Grand opera - Commonly used to denote any work of the musical theater which is neither musical comedy nor operetta. Strictly speaking the term should apply to large-scale works written with spectacular production in mind, such as Verdi's Aida and Puccini's Turandot. (Mitchell 1970, p. 299)

Grundgestalt - German term meaning the fundamental form. (Casse.l's 1965)

Hosenrolle - German term for trouser role.

Leitmotiv - German term which denotes the representation of certain characters, typical situations, and recurring ideas by musical motifs. (Apel 1970, p. 466)

Libretto - The text of an opera.

Opera buffa - A precise Italian definition, meaning Italian comic opera of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. (Mitchell 1970, p. 301)

Opera seria - A seventeenth and eighteenth century form of Baroque musical theater, generally with many arias for display purposes, little or no ensemble singing and a functional continuum of dry recitative. (Mitchell 1970, p. 302)

Pants Role - Another term for trouser role. The role in opera of a young man, usually in his teens, played by a woman singing mezzo-soprano or sometimes soprano.

Parlando accompagnato - An indication that the voice must approximate speech; in a sense, "spoken music," as distinguished from the "musical speech" of the recitative. (Apel 1970, p. 643)

Singspiel - German for "song play," or a play with songs between spoken dialogue. (Mitchell 1970, p. 306)

Secco recitative - A vocal style designed to imitate and emphasize the natural inflections of speech. It serves to carry the action from one aria (ensemble, chorus) to another. Sung to only a thoroughbass accompaniment with a fuller accompaniment introduced for recitatives of special importance. (Apel 1970, p. 718)

Although the composer, the dramatist, the conductor, the orchestra, the director, the designers, and the technicians are largely responsible for the success of any musical theater production, the average audience is generally more aware of the singers, actors, or stage personalities who appear before them. The three terms are used intentionally, since anyone who appears and sings upon the opera, operetta, or musical comedy stage invites an evaluation of their singing voice, acting ability, and, somewhat less tangibly, their personal magnetism. It is the purpose of this paper not only to prepare the singer-actor for the specific trouser roles discussed, but also

to attain, through the analysis, a better understanding
and thus a more charismatic performance of such roles.

CHAPTER II

TROUSER ROLES - HISTORY

Castrati in the Churches

"Let your women keep silence in the churches," St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians (I Corinthians 14:34). He echoed the injunction in his epistle to St. Timothy: "Let the woman," he said, "learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over men, but to be in silence" (I Timothy 2:11-12).

The interpretation of this scripture by the Church of Rome stated that women were forbidden, accordingly, not only to speak in church, but also to sing. The church also extended the prohibition to the theaters. This restriction endured, in Rome at least, well into the eighteenth century (Pleasants 1966, p. 37).

The absence of female voices in the music of the church was accommodated easily enough in the Middle Ages by utilizing men and boys for treble parts. In the latter half of the sixteenth century, however, problems arose because of the popularity and complexity of multiple voiced songs. The boys' voices were not strong enough to

maintain the treble parts. Also, by the time they had acquired the necessary musicianship, their voices were usually at the point of changing. The elaborate a cappella style, which began to flourish about the middle of the fifteenth century, necessitated a much wider range of voices and a higher degree of virtuosity than before. Obviously, the existing choir boys became inadequate. Castration, the practiced surgical solution which began sometime at the end of the sixteenth century, allowed the child to continue to grow. His voice continued to grow as well; or at least the physical powers necessary to exploit the voice he already had developed. Eunuchs have existed almost since the dawn of civilization, but at what point children began to be castrated specifically for the sake of their voices seems almost impossible to determine (Heriot 1975, p. 9).

Around 1600 it seems likely that the appearance of castrati in considerable numbers was to some extent an admission of their existence rather than a completely new introduction. Orlandus Lassus, while serving as a Kapellmeister at Munich in the 1560's and 1570's, already had six castrati among his singers (Heriot 1975, p. 11). One Spanish singer in the papal chapel, Padre Soto, first heard of in 1562, is referred to by Della Valle as one of the earliest of the castrati (Heriot 1975, p. 11).

Castrati in Opera

In the case of opera, however, the situation regarding castrati was very different. It would have been absurd to have a tenor or bass singing a feminine part; and boys soon proved unsatisfactory as stage singers just as they had in church choirs. In some cases, tradition was boldly disregarded and women were admitted on the stage, as at Mantua in 1608. Where they were not permitted, the only course left open was the use of castrati (Heriot 1975, p. 24).

A young castrato usually made his debut in a female role and took advantage of a slender figure while it lasted (Pleasants 1966, p. 41). Because of their bravura technique and amazing lung power, the castrati were considered indispensable, for both principal male and female characters in opera. Tenors were generally relegated to the roles of old men, the roles assigned to basses in later operas, while the basses were often reserved for comic character roles. In the eighteenth century seventy percent of all male opera singers were castrati (Heriot 1975, p. 31).

In a sense, the reign of the castrati was actually the period of utmost triumph for the "female voice," although the role of the female voice had partly been usurped by men. The male voices were a dark background for the more glamorously attractive characters, the young

man and young woman in love, both of whom were likely to be sung in the soprano range.

It is often difficult to distinguish cause from effect; and whether it was the presence of castrati that gave the Italians of that period their taste for peculiar sexual and vocal reversals on the stage, or vice versa, is a doubtful question. In any event, not only was travesti as common a feature of seventeenth-century plots as it was in the Elizabethan and Jacobean drama, but further oddities were gratuitously introduced in the writing for the voice and in the casting. A few examples will show what is meant.

In Monteverdi's "L'Incoronazione di Poppea," the parts of Nero and Ottone are for soprano, while Ottavia and Poppea were sung by (female) contraltos: thus, the male characters actually sang in a higher voice than the female, though these were played by women. Later, the female contralto seems to have gone very much out of favour, and such women singers as there were with this type of voice almost invariably sang a man's part--sometimes opposite a castrato in a female part. (Heriot 1975, p. 33)

Women Rise into Opera

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, opera was an exploitation of the "female voice." Along with this exploitation, the eighteenth century saw the rise of women socially. Both the emergence of opera in the eighteenth century¹ and emancipation of women were part of a greater whole, namely the psychological emancipation of European humanity. The arrival of opera drew attention to women as a long oppressed class (Brophy 1964, p. 37).

The mere fact that female characters were to be represented in the eighteenth century would not in itself have been enough to permit women to appear on the operatic stage. Elizabethan drama had female characters, but did

not have actresses to play them. Perhaps because it had not long severed itself from its religious origins, Elizabethan drama followed the ecclesiastical precedent and made up the deficiency by casting boys for female roles (Brophy 1964, p. 57). It may even be this convention we have to thank for liberating Shakespeare's genius into the theatre.

To judge from the sexual disgust he attributes to many of his later characters, and also from the Sonnets, which are more trustworthy as being utterances in his own person, he was, though by no means exclusively homosexual, more inclined to conceive romantic love in homosexual terms; it may be that his deeply appreciative and psychological portraiture of women became possible only because he could imagine his women characters through the provocative transvestite cloak of their really being boys. (Brophy 1964, pp. 57-8)

The social attitude had been revolutionized full-circle by the time Beaumarchais decreed that the role of the page in Le Mariage de Figaro "can only be played, as it has been, by a young and very pretty woman," on the grounds that young male actors were not capable of performing it (Brophy 1964, p. 58).² Beaumarchais's ruling held when his play became the basis of Mozart and da Ponte's opera, and their precedent was followed by Richard Strauss in the creation of his latterday Cherubino, Octavian.

Decline of Castrati

Along with women's rise into opera, several other factors seemed to have influenced the decline of the

castrati from supremacy in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The confused political situation that marked the opening of the nineteenth century, caused the conservatories to fall into serious neglect, and there was a shortage of young singers of all kinds (Heriot 1975, p. 35). As a result of the French Revolution, castration was outlawed, although one of the last of the castrati, Girolamo Crescentini, often sang for the pleasure of Napoleon (Phalen 1973, p. 16). Before his fall, the Emperor had issued a decree making castration an offense punishable by death (Phalen 1973, p. 16). This ordinance reflected a current of opinion which had long been gaining ground. The Catholic Church, as well, took measures to oppose the practice of castration. Reforming composers such as Gluck, Rossini, and Meyerbeer wrote less and less for the male soprano voice and began writing for the voices available to them. The increasing popularity of the opera buffa also seemed to hold no suitable place for the voices or characters associated with the castrati. The comic opera was everything that the serious opera was not. It was natural, lively, based on everyday life, and often written in the local dialect. It was also inexpensive to produce and did not require superb singers, but rather, well-rounded artists with comic flair and the ability to capture the spirit of the character on stage (Heriot 1975, pp. 16-17). Once opera

began to devote itself to romantic themes, the castrati were doomed to rejection from opera and, therefore, were forced to return to church music. This rejection was not necessarily because their presence on the operatic stage shattered reality, but because the sight of them was distasteful to the egos in the audience, who had come to the opera in conscious pursuit of pleasure.

The castrati's fall from glory was as rapid and complete as their supremacy had been long and uncontested. The supply of castrati began to diminish, quite suddenly, in about 1807-08 (Heriot 1975, p. 36). The leading man's part was increasingly often given to a woman or transposed for tenor. Composers began to write the leading man's part for the tenor voice as well as the "old man" and "king" parts; (as of this time few basses had been trained to the style of serious opera) and for a few years there were operas with four or five tenor parts (Heriot 1975, p. 36). The 1820's saw the emergence of a regular pattern that has survived to the present day, with tenor, baritone, and bass, the baritone being for the first time recognized as a special category, and not merely a rather high bass or low tenor.

Emergence of Trouser Roles

In opera the last faint remembrances of the castrati were in the series of "breeches" or trouser roles that

composers continued to write (Heriot 1975, p. 22). A lower female voice, designated alto or contralto, was condemned to other secondary parts. This habit of pejorative categorization persisted beyond the departure of the castrati, although male roles that would have formerly been sung by castrati were now frequently entrusted to lower-voiced females (Pleasants 1966, p. 212). The origins of mezzo-soprano, as we understand the term today, however, are difficult to trace in the confused transition from opera seria to grand opera. Curiously enough, after the disappearance of castrati from opera, the term musico, a euphemistic avoidance of the explicit castrato, was passed on to female mezzo-sopranos and contraltos specializing in male roles (Pleasants 1966, p. 50).

The emergence of women in the legitimate theatre also deemed male transvestite acting obsolete. Consequently it is understandable that female Shakespearean transvestite acting was fairly uncommon during the later part of the seventeenth century. There was, however, a growing interest in breeches parts. Boyer quotes Phyllis Hartnoll's definition of breeches parts as "the name given to roles written for handsome young heroes in romantic comedy and played by personable young women" (Boyer 1977, p. 4).

In eighteenth century France the practice of women playing young male roles became a standard acting conven-

tion known as "travesti." Travesti became very popular later during the nineteenth century. Beaumarchais explains the nineteenth century "travesti" convention by stating that

. . . the role of the page Chérubin could be performed only by a young woman since the theatre of his day no longer possessed young actors sufficiently trained to be able to penetrate the subtleties of the role. (Boyer 1977, p. 5).

Female "travesti" acting differs from the English "breeches parts" in that ". . . the sexual disguise remains constant throughout the play. Discovery scenes, such as those of the English Restoration where the characters suddenly realize the sexual identity of the young man, were therefore absent from French plays containing 'travesti roles'" (Taranow 1972, p. 211).

One of the actresses, Sarah Bernhardt, whom Ellen Boyer discusses in her thesis, reveals her opinion of travesti acting. Bernhardt believes that travesti could only be performed if the intellectual dominated the physical (Boyer 1977, p. 40).

A boy of twenty cannot understand the philosophy of Hamlet, nor the poetic enthusiasm of L'Aiglon, and without understanding there is no delineation of character. There are no young men of that age capable of playing these parts; consequently an older man essays the role. He does not look the boy, nor has he the ready adaptability of the woman, who can combine the light carriage of youth with the mature thought of the man. The woman more readily looks the part, yet has the maturity of mind to grasp it. (Boyer 1977, p. 40)

The "trouser role" in opera, however, is hard for us

to accept as credible because of both the physical appearance involved and also the voice range. In Der Rosenkavalier and other operas with leading roles being trouser roles of very young men, the high voices in question are meant to represent youth. After the acceptance of women on the stage, the trouser role became subject to criticism. Actresses of the eighteenth century who experimented with male roles became objects of social ridicule and criticism. Simon Trussler, in his article, "That's No Lady," notes that some ". . . literally minded puritans were anxious to point out the injunction in Deuteronomy against a man wearing that which pertaineth to a woman and, come to that, against a woman wearing the old testament equivalent of trousers" (Trussler 1966, p. 52). Trussler further states: "Strangely as if the fair sex was seeking to redress the imbalance of centuries of male domination, the eighteenth century has many more instances of women taking men's parts than of the opposite" (Trussler 1966, p. 54).

Social Implications of the Trouser Roles

Boyer and Trussler have provided descriptions of some of the women of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries who played male roles and have discussed the effect of these characters on opera and the public. Boyer reports that Mrs. Charlotte Clarke performed the part of

Macbeth in a 1745 revival of The Beggar's Opera. However, she retired from the stage in an effort to disguise herself as a man in real life (Boyer 1977, p. 6).

Trussler describes her eccentric life style:

Assuming male attire, she hung around theatres for casual hire, went on tramp with itinerants, hungered daily, and was weekly cheated, but yet kept up such an appearance that an heiress fell in love with her, who was reduced to despair when Charlotte Clarke revealed her story and abandoned the place. (Trussler 1966, p. 56)

Other notorious imposters of the day were Mademoiselle de Maupin and Hannah Snell (Boyer 1977, p. 6). Trussler explains that these ". . . adventuresses had . . . tended to make respectable folk suspicious of women playing men" (Trussler 1966, p. 56). Charlotte Cushman, the other actress discussed by Boyer, appeared as Romeo opposite her sister, Susan's, Juliet at the Haymarket Theatre in London on December 29, 1845 (Boyer 1977, p. 43). The critical public response to Miss Cushman's performance was overwhelmingly favorable, however, Miss Cushman's appearance as Romeo was considered nineteenth century pornography by a small group of puritanical and self righteous citizens eager to protect theatergoers from immorality of the stage (Boyer 1977, p. 37).

On the other hand, the trouser roles seemed to boost the theatre and opera attendance. Boyer states,

. . . female transvestite performances attracted a profitable number of patrons regardless of their professional quality. It is my assumption that patrons, bored with the usual fare, were attracted to the idea of watching actresses perform in male

attire. During the 19th century, it was a rather rare occurrence to see women outfitted in breeches. (Boyer 1977, p. 13)

Perhaps the element of disguise, one of the most fundamental comic devices, aided the popularity of trouser roles. In comic plays and in opera, characters often deliberately disguise themselves as other people. The important thing the audience should know is that the disguise has occurred.

We know that X is really Y, although some characters in the play do not. The effect is comic, not just through dramatic irony (we know more than the characters) but because a permanent bisociation is set up. Yet it is more than just comic, for it raises questions about what individual identity really is. Someone whom we know to have a certain look and certain behavioural characteristics adopts other features and characteristics convincingly enough to fool other characters on the stage. Our emotions are continually divided between seeing things from the point of view of the person fooled, and seeing things from the point of view of our knowledge of the disguise. (Drummond 1980, p. 177)

In opera seria, however, it is usual for at least one character to be in disguise and, when revealed, the true identity does not necessarily have a comic effect. Furthermore, acting itself is a matter of disguise, and disguise-situations on the stage can create complexities beyond the action. In both Mozart's Le Nozze di Figaro and Strauss's Der Rosenkavalier, a female singer must doubly convince the audience. She plays the part of a boy, who during the opera takes on the disguise of a girl. It seems to be our willingness to suspend disbelief,

to accept the essential pretense of drama, that enables disguise as comic device to work. A man dressed up as a woman is acceptable on the stage in a way he/she might not be accepted in the street. To see the latter may strike us as very strange or ridiculous, for we are not prepared to question reality when we are living in it. The basic pretense of the stage provides an opportunity for the imagination to operate more freely on the implications of transvestism.

Costuming of Trouser Roles

Trouser roles offer very special casting problems. Cherubino in Mozart's Le Nozze di Figaro calls for a soprano or mezzo-soprano who can act the part of a young boy--yet one old enough to fall in love repeatedly. The situation in Der Rosenkavalier is similar but more ingenious. Count Octavian must be convincing as a young man; "he" must also be acceptable in several appearances as a young servant girl. Roles of this nature are therefore difficult to cast since they demand rare combinations of physical appearance and vocal equipment; of acting and singing ability. Leo Van Witsen offers some practical solutions to concealing the feminine figure of the projected male in trouser roles:

It is important at the same time that the costume disguise the singer's female attributes as much as possible. Luckily, men's clothes of that time are quite helpful in that respect, so long as the tempta-

tion is avoided of emphasizing his poetic youthfulness by dressing him in shirt sleeves and vest, with an open neck collar. No woman will ever look like a man dressed in that manner. Very feminine knees and legs can be concealed in tall boots if need be. The men's long, curly hairstyles of that time are far too feminine when framing a woman's face. It is necessary instead to catch the hair with a bow at the nape of the neck. This male hairstyle just came into fashion at that time and would remain in vogue throughout the eighteenth century. (Van Witsen 1981, p. 41)

Van Witsen says that pumpkin breeches can do wonders to conceal female hips and thighs, particularly when worn with a matching doublet under an armhole cloak in a contrasting shade (Van Witsen 1981, p. 147).

CHAPTER III

MOZART/BEAUMARCHAIS/DA PONTE--LIBRETTO HISTORY

Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais sent the King of Sweden a note accompanying a finely bound copy of La folle journée ou le mariage de Figaro written in 1784: "Sorrow issues from joy, and gaiety itself produces grief" (Schmidgall 1977, p. 76). He seemed to be alluding to the play's mingled sense of life's levity and sadness; the same characteristics Mozart infused in his opera.

Le mariage was written as a sequel to the first play, Le barbier de Séville (1775), of a set of three, sometimes referred to as the "Almaviva Trilogy" (Hughes 1972, p. 48). To retain interest after the marriage of Rosina and Almaviva, at the end of Le barbier, Beaumarchais developed and strengthened the characters by allowing three years to pass before the beginning of Le mariage. He also made the play more unconventional and striking and more controversial. He introduced several new characters that proved impressive and attractive. In 1792 he produced the third Almaviva play, L'artre Tartuffe, ou la mère coupable, a work that was not received as favorably as the preceding two had been.

Beaumarchais began his writing at a time when laughter had already been banished in European drama for decades. Oliver Goldsmith, in a preface to The Good-Natured Man (1768), states:

French comedy is now become so very elevated and sentimental, that it has not only banished humor and Molière from the stage, but it has banished all spectators too. (Schmidgall 1977, p. 87)

Beaumarchais evolved the concept of the drame serieuse, which encourages a new, more natural dramaturgy (Schmidgall 1977, p. 87). It urges the redirection of attention from gods and kings to more humane situations. "The genuine interest of the heart, its true expression, is of course always that of a man to a man, and not between a man and a king" (Schmidgall 1977, p. 87). Beaumarchais helped return drama to the prose and speech actually in use and revitalized the "art of laughing" on the French stage.

Le mariage de Figaro was considered altogether more dangerous than its predecessor Le barbier. The characters were more lifelike, and the situations were most unflattering to male aristocrats anywhere. Females of the genre were allowed to suffer, but not to bemoan their wounded pride, as every Almaviva did. The dialogue is positively impudent, showing the servants bettering their master and giving eloquent justification for themselves too. Beaumarchais had completed Le mariage in 1778. Shortly thereafter, the King of France, Louis XVI, banned the play

(Mann 1977, p. 366). Other monarchist countries followed suit. Beaumarchais, however, did not accept the French King's verdict and incigated a campaign of intrigue against the French censors. By September 1783 the King was willing to permit one of Beaumarchais' close friends, M. de Vaudreuil, to give a private performance of Le mariage in his own home (Mann 1977, p. 366). Three hundred courtiers attended this private performance. Their enthusiasm overturned the King's resistance and prompted him to authorize an official production (with a few cuts) on April 27, 1784. Le mariage de Figaro ran initially for sixty-eight performances, broke box-office records, and brought about the death of three women in the crowd, who suffocated as they sought to gain admission (Mann 1977, p. 366).

Interest in Le mariage quickly spread outside France. There were almost a dozen translations available in Germany by the time Mozart's opera was performed two years later. This was exactly the subject for which Mozart had been searching. In 1782 Count Orsini-Rosenberg had invited him to compose a new "opera buffa" for Vienna (Mann 1977, p. 367). Mozart had reviewed dozens of opera libretti, but found them all to be repeats of commedia dell'arte characters and situations. Mozart met da Ponte soon after the poet's arrival in Vienna and was promised a libretto by him. A couple of years later Mozart himself approached

da Ponte with the idea of making an opera out of Beaumarchais' Le mariage. Although banned as a play, Le mariage was read and discussed everywhere. The success of the composer Paisello's (1740-1816) Le barbier and the social comment about Le mariage would ensure good attendance.

Da Ponte translated long passages of Beaumarchais' play into Italian verse. In September 1785, da Ponte wrote: ". . . as fast as I wrote the words, Mozart set them to music" (Mann 1977, p. 370). Mozart and da Ponte chose what to omit in order to turn Beaumarchais' five acts into four. They chose which lines had to be translated directly into Italian, and which others could be turned into verse for set numbers. Since both lived in Vienna, they did not have to communicate, arduously, by mail. Mozart could simply go to da Ponte's house and explain what might need reworking. Spike Hughes offers this information on the libretto:

The traditional Italian finale was something which clearly drove da Ponte frantic when he first encountered it. It was a dogma of theatrical theology, he said, that in a finale all the singers should appear on the stage--even if there were three hundred of them--"by ones, twos, by threes, by sixes, by sixties, to sing solos, duets, trios, sextets, and sessantets." And if the plot of the play didn't allow it, he continued, then the poet must find some way of making the plot allow it. (Hughes 1972, p. 48)

The patron system in the eighteenth century was one that provided prosperity to those artists whose works pleased the Emperor. That which was deemed inappropriate or of poor quality, was simply not performed or made

available. Mozart and da Ponte sought the advice of Baron Wetzler, an influential Austrian nobleman, on circumventing the official ban on Le mariage. They wished to get their production of Le Nozze di Figaro scheduled in Vienna against the powerful competition of Paisiello, Salieri, Righini, and other composers preferred by Count Rosenberg and the Emperor (Mann 1977, p. 369). Baron Wetzler magnanimously offered to commission both libretto and music. If not accepted in Vienna, he also agreed to promote Le Nozze di Figaro himself in Paris or London, where Beaumarchais' comedy was already much in demand. Da Ponte and Mozart both desired a success in Vienna. Da Ponte, who was already favored by the Emperor, Joseph II, went to him personally with the text. Joseph II gave his blessing on Le Nozze and sent a messenger to Mozart. Mozart arrived at the Emperor's home with his musical score to Le Nozze. He played large sections of the score for the Emperor, and it is said that eventually the Emperor was convinced of the opera's merit (Hughes 1972, p. 49). Joseph II ordered that the libretto be copied and that the opera be scheduled for immediate production (Mann 1977, p. 372). Da Ponte wrote in his preface to the libretto to Le Nozze di Figaro, that the opera was going to be ". . . a new kind of spectacle to a public of so refined a taste and such just understanding;" (Mann 1977, p. 372).

CHAPTER IV

CHERUBINO

History of Character/Character Analysis

According to Donald Grout, the characters of Cherubino, Figaro and Susanna, and the Count and Countess give the impression of being real persons more strongly than any other characters in opera. Grout attributes this vividness of characterization not to Beaumarchais or da Ponte, but to Mozart,

. . . whose imagination conceived his characters not as stock figures in opera buffa going through a set of conventional antics travestied from the superficial aspects of current daily life, nor yet as social types in an eighteenth-century political pamphlet, but as human beings, each feeling, speaking, and behaving under certain vital circumstances very much as any other human being of like disposition would under similar conditions whether in the eighteenth century or twentieth. (Grout 1965, p. 283)

Mozart's secret lies in the nature of the music itself. This style, which he creates by a flowing, continuous, melody, and the simultaneous harmonic combinations, rhythms, and colors of the supporting instruments seems to convey to us those things inexpressible in words, yet infinitely important to make the difference between a lifeless figure and a living being. Mozart's handling of Cherubino especially in the arias (to be discussed in

more detail in the next chapter) reveals the character, aside from the text, through his painting of emotions, expressions, and expansion of the character musically. With Cherubino, Grout says that Mozart has achieved what Guillaume de Lorris is said to have achieved in poetry, "that boy-like blending . . . of innocence and sensuousness which could make us believe for a moment that paradise had never been lost" (Grout 1965, p. 284).

Beaumarchais, in his note on Chérubin says, "The basis of his character is an undefined and restless desire" (Schmidgall 1977, p. 99). It is also said that Beaumarchais elaborated Cherubino from his own memories of early puberty (Mann 1977, p. 383). Columbia encyclopedia's definitions of "cherub" also help define Cherubino's character: "In Jewish tradition they were usually beautiful young men; but late Christian art made plump children of them. . . . The color surrounding them is traditionally blue and they depict love . . . an innocent and loving child" (Columbia Encyclopedia 1968, p. 395).

Hofmannsthal, in describing the leading roles he had in mind for Der Rosenkavalier, explains Octavian's role in terms of "der Cherubin" from Mozart's Figaro. Der Rosenkavalier--Interpretation, elaborates on this "Cherubin" type:

This love-yearning figure, the personification of young men, who awaken to love, not coolly calculating, not knowledgeable through experience, not saturated, but unexperienced. A singer becomes a loving being. Her body, disguised in the clothes of a man, possesses a concealed but strong allurements.

The Chérubin figure is also the subject that motivated the young poet Grillparzer to write one of his most beautiful youth poems, in which he shows an understanding of all which Cherubino expresses about what is happening.

Cherubim

Who are you, who in the depths of my heart,
 Which love's cheerful sun has never penetrated,
 Have seized with unknown magic power?
 Who are you, you sweet, enticing figure?
 Feelings which slept in the bottom of my soul
 You have awakened with magic power;
 My entire, deepest being is chained;
 There is neither strength nor determination to break the
 bond.

When I see the tender fullness of your limbs resplendant,
 Disfigured by beautifully decorated young boys' clothes,
 The sweet redness of your cheeks blushing with shame,
 The silly boyish bashfulness,
 The dark, now-awakening, yearning,
 Which passionately wishes and hesitates to desire
 The flaming vision shyly buried in the ground.
 Thus do you appear to me the most enticing of all the
 boys!

Yet I see the welling of your breast again,
 Treacherously swelled by envious clothes,
 The silver of your neck, like the swan's plumage
 When fanned by soft, lustrous curly locks of hair;
 I hear the bright sound of the magic songs,
 And what every faculty senses softly;
 I give ear to the ominous tones of the heart;
 Then I name you the crown of all beauties.

May this boiling hot blood modestly tame
 This struggle of battling feelings,
 Let my glance wallow in these enticements,
 Let me cool the feverish glow of my lips,
 In the quick welling of your breast,
 And the rapacious flood of my kisses
 Shall tear away your secret in the storm;
 What a sublime being you are most worthy to be named.⁴

About the same time that this poem was written, Grillparzer noted thoughts over "a young person in the process of the awakening of passion." At the end of these notes he states: "Beaumarchais' Chérubin in Figaro's Hochzeit is by far not everything which one can desire in this regard, nevertheless, he is exciting particularly with Mozart's soul-inspiring music."⁵

Cherubino is a thirteen year old, love-filled pubescent boy. Because of his new developments both mentally and physically, he appears a bit lanky or awkward in his movements. He lives for women and the experience of love. His personality reveals his sensitivity to the extremes of his emotions. Søren Kierkegaard addresses Cherubino in his discussion of the eroticism in music. He remarks that Cherubino is the first stage of the erotic, the predecessor of a more mature Don Juan in the latter stages (Kierkegaard 1944, p. 60). Brophy, discussing Kierkegaard's interpretation, states:

Søren Kierkegaard made a charming remark when he described Cherubino as Don Giovanni [Don Juan] as a boy: but the truth about Cherubino, who lives on the perpetual point of being ravished, is that he is as much seduced as seducer. He has none of Don Giovanni's active and deliberate character, and not a touch of Don Giovanni's brazenness. Intellectual self-justification in the enlightenment manner would never enter his head. He is himself the victim of the influence which through him disturbs everyone else. He is the adolescent whose sexual tension has involuntarily attracted a poltergeist into the Almaviva household. (Brophy 1964, p. 105)

The prototype on which his original creator, Beaumar-

chais, has unconsciously modeled Cherubino comes from the common stock of popularized classical mythology. Da Ponte and Mozart took Cherubino over and, perhaps unconsciously, expanded him in the same terms as he had originally been conceived. In any case, the true identity of Cherubino was evidently hovering on the tip of their consciousness.

The dry and understated little speech Beaumarchais provides Figaro for his farewell to Cherubino, who has been sent off and bidden to transform himself from a page into an army officer,⁶ is expanded by the authors of the opera into the much more dramatic and realized "Non più andrai."⁷ Brigid Brophy addresses this scene of the opera in her book, in the chapter that discusses seduction in Mozart's operas.

The un-descriptive "mon petit Chérubin" is elaborated into a series of epithets Jamesianly searching for the mot juste to address to Cherubino. Figaro knows that at the back of his thoughts is a classical prototype, and he tries out two, Narcissus⁸ and Adonis. But he senses that the person he really has in mind is more babyish than either of these, and so he adds the diminutive ending to both names. Even so, he is not quite satisfied, because he feels that his real quarry has a more quintessential connexion with love than even Narcissus and Adonis, and so he adds "d'amor," making a total of: Narcisetto, Adoncino d'amor. (Brophy 1964, p. 106)

In contrast to Brophy's basically mythological creation of the character, George R. Marek pays tribute to Beaumarchais for the creation of Cherubino:

. . . Marcellina takes her leave and we are now introduced to Cherubino. The figure of the boy is a creation of Beaumarchais'. And a very unusual and successful creation he is in the play. Through Mozart's

music the figure has become one of transcendental beauty, the very posture of youth, the delicate embodiment of the state of being in love with love. Mozart draws him with Botticellian grace. But even in the prose version Cherubino is poetic, and we have reason to be eternally grateful to the French author. (Marek 1962, p. 11)

The fluttering Cherubino ("ogni donna mi fa palpitare"),¹⁰ with his angelical and winged name, is the last major manifestation in European art of Cupid, the boyish god of love--whose wings, Apuleius had reported some sixteen centuries before--even fluttered while he slept.¹¹ By similar flutterings Cherubino, according to Figaro, disturbs the sleep of beautiful women--"delle belle turbando il riposo." In fact, Figaro need not have searched so hard in the fourth line of his aria for Cherubino's original name. He has made the essential point--winged love--in the first line, when he calls Cherubino a "great amorous butterfly," "farfallone amorose." Later in the aria Figaro seems dissatisfied with the butterfly metaphor and refines his description when he speaks of Cherubino's "fine little feathers"--"questi bei pennacchini."

Both in antiquity and in the renaissance tradition, iconography leaves the question unanswered as to whether Cupid is a baby or an adolescent (Brophy 1964, p. 106). Beaumarchais has passed on something of this uncertainty about Cupid to his Chérubin, of whom he writes (in his Preface), "Perhaps he is no longer a child, but he is not yet a man."¹² Thus we see Cherubino as variously a youth

and a baby. "He's still a baby," pleads Susanna on behalf of Cherubino; "Less than you think," replies the Count.¹³ Cherubino, who is found to be involved in every intrigue ("Fate will keep making me find this page everywhere!" exclaims the Count¹⁴), fully preserves the mischief of Cupid's character. He is hardly a human at all, but the presiding genius of Le Nozze di Figaro, just as Puck,¹⁵ another derivative of Cupid, presides over A Midsummer Night's Dream.

Synopsis of "Le Nozze di Figaro"

Before discussing the setting of the music and its relationship to the characters within Le Nozze di Figaro, a brief synopsis of the opera would be appropriate. David Ewen in his book The Home Book of Musical Knowledge has written a clear, brief synopsis of the opera.

LE NOZZE DI FIGARO (THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO)

Figaro, valet of Count Almaviva, is about to marry Susanna, the Countess' lady-in-waiting. The Count has assigned to the pair a room near his own. Susanna does not fail to point out to her betrothed that the proximity of her room to that of the Count is surely no coincidence, since the Count has previously shown that he is attracted to her. Figaro is troubled; but in mock gaiety he insists he can handle his master ("Se vuol ballare").

Bartolo and Marcellina enter and engage in a plot against Figaro which involves his one-time promise to marry Marcellina. They are overheard by Susanna, who emerges from hiding and begins to quarrel with her rival. Cherubino now appears and speaks of his love for the gardener's daughter. With the entrance of the Count, Cherubino hides behind a chair, from which point he witnesses the Count's effort to flirt with Susanna. Basilio's sudden arrival sends the

Count scurrying behind the chair, too. Both are discovered. Angrily, the Count orders Cherubino to join the regiment; this tempts Figaro to comment sardonically on Cherubino's future in the army ("Non più andrai").

In her bedroom, the Countess muses about love ("Porgi amor"). Aware that the Count is none too faithful, she concocts a plot with Figaro for the purpose of awakening his love for her: the Count is to discover a love note seemingly dispatched to the Countess from her lover; and in the rendezvous that is to be arranged between the Countess and her lover, Susanna is to take the Countess' place. At the same time, Cherubino is to appear in Susanna's clothes. When Cherubino comes, singing of the meaning of love ("Voi che sapete"), he is hurriedly dressed in Susanna's apparel. The sudden entrance of the Count sends Cherubino scurrying into the closet. By the time the suspicious Count is ready to break down the closet door, Cherubino has managed to flee out of the bedroom window. The Count, then, does not find Cherubino in the closet, but only Susanna. He regrets his suspicions until the gardener appears to complain that somebody has jumped out of the bedroom window and destroyed his flowers. Figaro suddenly announces that he is the culprit. Unfortunately, the gardener has found a piece of paper dropped by the guilty man: it is Cherubino's commission to the Count's regiment. Hastily, Figaro explains that he had Cherubino's commission in his own possession. The troubled waters seem momentarily stilled when Marcellina arrives and demands that Figaro go through with his one-time bargain to marry her.

Somewhat later, the Count threatens Susanna that unless she is agreeable to him he will personally see to it that Figaro marry Marcellina. Susanna makes a pretense of yielding to the Count's coercion, arranging a rendezvous. But the Count is nevertheless bent on punishing Figaro, and orders him either to marry Marcellina or pay damages. During these negotiations, it is suddenly discovered that Figaro is actually Marcellina's son. Nothing now stands in the way of Figaro's marriage.

The Countess, still eager to catch her husband in his philandering and to win back his love, recalls her days of happiness with her husband ("Dove sono"). She plans to double for Susanna during the latter's meeting with the Count. Meanwhile, the marriage ceremony uniting Figaro and Susanna takes place.

In the garden, Susanna and the Countess appear in each other's clothes. Cherubino, who has an appointment with the gardener's daughter, sees the Countess

and, thinking she is Susanna, kisses her. Matters become more complicated when both the Count and Figaro appear on the scene. The situation is relieved when the Countess and Susanna reveal their true identities and the motive for their disguise. The Count is contrite and begs for forgiveness. The entire group returns into the castle to celebrate Figaro's marriage. (Ewen 1973, p. 251).

Musical Analysis of Cherubino

In the first Act of The Marriage of Figaro we are introduced to Cherubino, a thirteen-year-old boy who has been sent to court to polish his education. He has been accepted as Count Almaviva's chief page because the Countess is his godmother and a relative. Cherubino immediately becomes enamoured with the Countess as well as with Susanna, and indeed every woman in the castle. In recitative Cherubino explains how the Count has caught him with Barbarina, the gardener's daughter, and would have expelled him from the court but for the Countess's intervention. Cherubino says he envies Susanna for her constant attendance on the Countess; her duty to undress the Countess every night. Then Cherubino sees the ribbon which Susanna brought from the Countess's room and seizes it, in return offering a song of love which he has just written. (It is "Voi che sapete," which he will sing later.) He summarizes its content in another solo, less formal and more agitated. This is the aria, "Non so più" in E flat major, allegro vivace with clarinets and bassoons, horns and strings:

I no longer know who I am or what I am doing. One moment I am on fire, the next I am freezing. I change color and tremble at the sight of every woman. Even their names set my heart throbbing, and an indescribable longing forces me to talk of love all the time, awake or asleep, to the water, mountains, flowers, even the air which carries away my dreams. When no one is there to listen I even talk about love to myself. (Mann 1977, p. 383)

Mozart vividly conveys the boy's impetuous, abrupt confession. The voice enters almost at once, above an agitated accompaniment on muted strings, and the sentences seem to tumble out between gasps for breath. Equally vivid is the end of the aria, allegro and stopping almost at once by breaking into recitative without waiting for a continuo chord.

The sensuous content of the verses seems to demand a warm and voluptuous orchestration. Mozart writes in the key of B flat major for the first episode ("Solo ai nomi d'amor"), A flat and F minor in the second with rich sustained chords for clarinets, bassoons and horns in the transition to this episode. Especially effective are the chains of chromatic thirds for clarinets and bassoons after the first pause (Ex. 1).

Example 1. "Non so più cosa son" mm. 65-69

ven-ti, che il suon de' va-ni ac-cen-ti, pur-la-no via con se,
team-ing. In gen-tle winds and show-ers, I hear its mel-low tune,--

p *f* *colla voce*

Also, after a hurried start, the touch of expansiveness and grand curve of the melody at "Ogni donna mi fa palpitare" with the stress on "donna," creates Cherubino's sensuous adoration of each woman. Mozart repeats the phrase "Ogni donna mi fa palpitare," firmly establishing the effect of women on Cherubino (Ex. 2).

Example 2. "Non so più cosa son" mm. 10-15

don - na mi fa pal - pi - tar, o - gni don - na mi fa pal - pi - tar.
 trem - ble with plea - sure and pain, makes me trem - ble with plea - sure and pain.

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Sensitive touches to the text and mood of the character abound in Mozart's setting of this aria. For example, the minor third in B flat major at "un desio" (a longing) suddenly brings the music out in an expression of great yearning (Ex. 3). The exquisite nervous hesitancy of the adagio before the end also portrays Cherubino as one who has confessed his foremost desires. Even if no one were to listen to him, he would still discourse about love (Ex. 4).

Example 3. "Non so più cosa son" mm. 26-27

sa de - si - o,
filled with long-ing,

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Example 4. "Non so più cosa son" mm. 91-95

Adagio

se E se non ho chi m'o - da, e
And if no one will lis - ten... and

Tempo I

se non ho chi m'o - da, par - lo d'a - mor cos
if no one will lis - ten, then I will talk a

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Cherubino's second aria comes towards the beginning of Act II. He enters the Countess's bedroom in order to be disguised as Susanna to aid the Countess in her plot against the Count. Susanna teases Cherubino about his newly appointed position in the army as she gives a greeting of "Signor uffiziale" in recitative. The very reminder of his soldierly fate depresses Cherubino, especially in this room belonging to the gentle, lovely godmother whom he soon must leave. Susanna mimics his love-lorn complaints. She tells Cherubino to sing his canzonet to the Countess. The Countess comes forward, takes the sheet of paper and asks slyly who wrote it. Cherubino blushes and confesses almost speechless embarrassment but is delighted to sing his song, with Susanna accompanying on the guitar and the Countess serving as appreciative audience. Beaumarchais said he derived this tableau from a well-known eighteenth century painting by Carle Van Loo entitled "Conversation Espagnole" (Spanish conversation) (Van Witsen 1981, p. 166).

"Voi che sapete," in B flat major, traditionally andante with flute, oboe, clarinet and bassoon, two horns and strings, was based by da Ponte on lines from Dante's Vita nuova, Canto XIX (Mann 1977, p. 393).

Ladies, you who know what love is, see if I have it in my heart. What I am undergoing is so new to me that I do not understand it. I feel full of desire, sometimes pleasurable, sometimes agony. I freeze, then I burn, and in a moment I am freezing again. In search for someone outside of myself; I don't know

what or where it is. I sigh and groan involuntarily, quiver and tremble unwittingly. Night and day I am never at peace, and yet my longing gives me pleasure. (Mann 1977, p. 393)

Mozart gives a fairly lengthy orchestral introduction in which Cherubino is allowed to settle himself for the "audition" of his composition. The clarinet begins this song of love, the other woodwinds take over and then Cherubino begins.

Example 5. "Voi che sapete" mm. 9-16

Cherubino *f*

Voi che sa - pe - te che co - sta - mor,
You know the an - swer, you hold the key.

Ben - ne, ve - de - te, sia l'ho nel cor,
Love's ten - der se - cret - share it with me.

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The crisply punctuated triplets by the flute and oboe, after "vedete" and "cor," vividly show the gay, mischievous, liveliness of this little piece in opposition

to the very legato confession of love (Ex. 5). A man with a boy's voice, is either tripping over the carpet or just beginning to enjoy himself. Cherubino's second verse ("Quel lo ch'io provo") moves into F major. In order to depict Cherubino's emotional turmoil, Mozart writes a flattened third at "chora e martir." Mozart strongly brings out Cherubino's languish beginning with the passage "ma pur mi piace" and continuing through the recapitulation, by establishing a slower rhythmic declamation after the previous agitated section of sixteenths. This allows the harmony and rhythm a smooth transition into the recapitulation (Ex. 6).

Example 6. "Voi che sapete" mm. 56-63

pri. Non tro-vo pa - ce not - te, nè di, Ma pur mi pia - ce
 why. From this di - lem - ma I find no peace, And yet I want it

lan - guir co - si. Voi, che sa - po - to
 nev - er to cease. You know the an - swer,

An interesting difference exists between Mozart's opera and Beaumarchais' play. In Beaumarchais' play, Chérubin sings eight verses of a Romance to the tune of "Malbrouk s'en va-t'en guerre" which the English know as "For he's a jolly good fellow." Beaumarchais' words refer specifically to the singer's passionate adoration of his godmother and refusal to accept other offers of employment, even on the recommendation of the King and Queen (Mann 1977, p. 393). Cherubino's adoration of the Countess is also apparent in the opera. However, in the play, the feelings appear to have been mutual.

In the play it becomes clear that the Countess is attracted to Cherubino, if only a little, and that she is not averse to a small flirtation with him. Her feelings hover somewhat between those of a protector--she is Cherubino's godmother--and of a woman intrigued by a young boy's ardent admiration. Twice the Countess sends Susanna away in order to snatch a few moments alone with Cherubino. All this is treated quite lightly by Beaumarchais but is almost altogether suppressed in the opera, probably because Mozart, in deepening and mellowing the character of the Countess, had little use for flirtation. (Marek 1962, p. 15)

Marek goes on to tell us that although Mozart could not have known it, in Beaumarchais's third Figaro play, La Mère Coupable, which was staged the year after Mozart's death in 1792, the Countess succumbs to Cherubino while the Count is away on an official journey to the Spanish colonies (Marek 1962, p. 15).

Cherubino's Place in the Plot of "Le Nozze di Figaro"

Cherubino manages to turn up everywhere in The Marriage of Figaro, thereby creating relationships of one sort or another with the majority of the characters in the opera. In order to better determine the various relationships Cherubino develops, we must consider the dramatic action itself. John Drummond has devised a Grundgestalt of the dramatic action in Le Nozze di Figaro. He describes the action as: proposition--consequence or reaction--interruption by new event--solution.

He places the four acts of the opera into this formula (we will only concern ourselves with the first two acts):

Act I presents four propositions: (a) Susanna wants to marry Figaro (b) the Count wishes to seduce Susanna (c) Cherubino wishes to seduce the Countess (d) Marcellina and Bartolo wish to "get" Figaro (in their different ways). Act II presents the consequences and reactions to these four propositions: [(a)] the Countess's misery at the Count's infidelities, [(b)] the Count's accusations of Cherubino, [(c)] the resort of Marcellina and Bartolo to the law, and [(d)] the Count's determination to prevent Figaro and Susanna from marrying. (Drummond 1980, p. 195)

By assigning Cherubino's high dramatic points (the arias) to this plot formula we can see where these fit into the sequence of action.

PROPOSITION	Cherubino sings of the passion of his love. (Non so più)
CONSEQUENCE	The Count accuses Susanna of hiding Cherubino and discovers it to be true.

INTERRUPTION	The chorus asks the Count to bless the marriage of Susanna to Figaro.
SOLUTION	Figaro teases Cherubino, who has been banished to a regiment.
PROPOSITION	The Countess laments her lonely state.
CONSEQUENCE	Cherubino sings of his love for the Countess. (Voi che sapete)
INTERRUPTION	The Count attempts to come in to the Countess's bedroom while Cherubino is still there.
SOLUTION	Susanna and Cherubino change places-- Cherubino jumps out the window.

(Drummond 1980, p. 197)

Although the character of Cherubino is not one of great vocal range, one can see from Cherubino's interaction and involvement in the elaborate plot of Le Nozze di Figaro, it is a role which requires great vocal energy. His character is an innocent central figure which helps keep this comic opera moving from points of serious drama to points of pure comedy.

CHAPTER V

STRAUSS/HOFMANNSTHAL--LIBRETTO HISTORY

Der Rosenkavalier was the second in a long line of operas produced by the joint efforts of Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Richard Strauss. The experience of working with Hugo von Hofmannsthal on Elektra, their first opera together, had convinced Strauss that he had found an ideal collaborator, and that he would be unwise to seek librettos elsewhere. Hofmannsthal, for his part, saw in the prospect of regular collaboration with Germany's most eminent living opera composer an opportunity to "regenerate" the status of the opera libretto, setting new standards of creativity and literary excellence.

At the outset Hofmannsthal took it for granted that he would continue to write and present his dramas first as plays for the spoken theatre, afterwards adapting them for music. In the case of Elektra, this method had allowed his poetic text to be absorbed and appreciated on its own merit without lessening its attraction when it reappeared in operatic form. So, before Strauss had even finished composing Elektra, Hofmannsthal began a comedy entitled Cristinas Heimreise, about Casanova, and offered

it to Strauss for their next collaboration, the Figaro of Strauss's dreams. After the first performance of Elektra, Strauss reportedly said, "Next time I shall write a Mozart opera" (Mann 1966, p. 97). Strauss understandably expressed some disappointment that the libretto for the comic opera had first been given on the dramatic stage without music. But by this time Hofmannsthal had begun to realize that words suitable for musical setting had to be of a particular kind; Cristinas Heimreise would need to be substantially altered before it would be of any use for Strauss.

In February 1909, after the premier of Elektra, Hofmannsthal went to stay in Weimar with his friend Count Henry von Kessler. These two formulated the basis for a new comic opera libretto. In a letter to Strauss Hofmannsthal described the libretto as "thoroughly comic in characters and situation, with action bright, transparent and almost pantomime-like. There are opportunities in it for lyricism, for wit and humour, even for a small ballet" (Mann 1966, p. 68).

At first Hofmannsthal and Kessler thought simply in terms of comedy types, "the buffo, the old man, the young girl, the lady, the Cherubino." In the opera, "there are two major roles, one for a baritone and another for a graceful girl dressed as a man" (Pörnbacher 1964, p. 63; see footnote 17). During the time Hofmannsthal worked at

Kessler's home, he studied Molière's Monsieur de Pourceaugnac and Les Fourberies de Scapin, and Les Amours du Chevalier de Faublas by Louvet de Couvray, a contemporary of Beaumarchais (Mann 1966, p. 98). These three works provide the names, and in part the actions, of the characters outlined in the sketch of the libretto Hofmannsthal made at Weimar, a document that was discovered after his death. Hofmannsthal dedicated the final libretto to Kessler, perhaps as a tribute for his contribution to the libretto.

Couvray's novel provided Hofmannsthal with the prototype of the character Octavian and his transvestist escapades; the name and nature of Sophie; the Marquise, later called Feldmarschallin; and numerous smaller plot ideas such as the episode in the first act concerning the sword left lying in the Feldmarschallin's bedroom. The pantomime at the inn in the third act derives from several possible sources, including a Viennese rococo comedy by Philipp Haffner, the frustrated Ochs/Sophie betrothal from Don Pasquale and many similar commedia dell'arte plots. The hairdresser, the black page-boy, and the singer (with flute obligato) have been traced to Goethe's Wilhelm Meister and Hogarth's Marriage à la mode (Mann 1966, p. 99). The presentation of the silver rose in act two seems to have two sources. First, it was a Papal custom to give a golden rose to virtuous and noble

ladies (Mann 1966, p. 99); and second in the eighteenth century, it was traditional that when two aristocratic families wished to be allied through the act of marriage, an ambassador from the groom's family would present a silver rose to the bride as a pledge of love and as a symbol that negotiations for the alliance had opened (Martin 1961, p. 650). The nicknames by which Octavian and the Marschallin address each other have French origins. "Bichette" is an actual French term of endearment, meaning literally "little dear." "Quinquin" means "baby" in a dialect used in the north of France (Marek 1962, p. 316).

The progress of the collaboration between Strauss and Hofmannsthal can be traced in the extensive correspondence between the two men. Impressed by the clarity with which the characters had been drawn, Strauss immediately composed music for the text supplied. As the score grew, numerous changes were made in both text and music, some of them affecting the nature of the work as a whole. The original plan had been for a Spieloper (pure comedy), but eventually Rosenkavalier included much that was serious and thoughtful.

The original title which Hofmannsthal considered was Ochs von Lerchenau, based on the comic character, Baron Ochs. However, Strauss's wish to have Octavian as the title role prevailed, and after much correspondence regard-

ing the order, title and subheadings, they agreed upon the following:

Der Rosenkavalier
Komödie für Musik von H.v.H.
Musik von Richard Strauss

(Pörnbacher 1964, p. 29)

Only one and a half years elapsed from the time of Hofmannsthal's original scenario to the completion of the opera--a remarkably short time in view of the length and complexity of the score and the many revisions of the text and music that were made. The speed with which both librettist and composer worked can be inferred from a letter by Strauss which states that while the score of Act II was already being engraved he was "still waiting anxiously for [the concluding text of] Act III" (Pörnbacher 1964, p. 25).¹⁶ Upon completion of the opera on September 26, 1910, Strauss noted that the music was "Mozartian but true to myself; the orchestra is by no means small, but Mozart was delighted to hear one of his own symphonies played by an orchestra with a hundred violins" (Mann 1966, p. 100).

Unlike many twentieth century operas, modern performances of Der Rosenkavalier continue and this is probably due mainly to the quality of the characters. The stage seems saturated with real people, people an audience can recognize all too easily. These characters have human qualities and human failings, exchange conversation,

quarrel, make love, play practical jokes, are greedy, snobbish, sentimental and pretentious, and can never be fit into the familiar operatic categories of "hero," "heroine," or "villain." It is worth noting that in this opera with many diverse characters from all ranges of life, each individual's speech pattern is different and identifiable. One can tell from the text who is speaking; the Marschallin's usage is always clean and concise; Och's rustic language is pompous; Octavian's speech is rather self-conscious and judgmental; and Faninal is given a thick Viennese dialect. Hofmannsthal also helps Octavian to act the part of Mariandl, the flirtatious servant girl, by providing the singer with the additional disguise of a heavily spiced Viennese dialect. These characteristics, along with the music, have allowed Der Rosenkavalier to become one of the best loved operas in this century.

CHAPTER VI

OCTAVIAN

History of Character/Character Analysis

One of the aspects of Der Rosenkavalier which makes it a remarkable work is the unusual assignment of characters in the opera. There is not a principal tenor role, rather the "hero," Count Octavian Rofrano, is played by a mezzo-soprano. His two lovers in this triangular plot are also sopranos, one being a very high soprano. The truly male figure who throughout the opera thinks he is really the hero is Baron Ochs, a thoroughly endearing basso buffo character. A country squire, he comes penniless to Vienna to marry Sophie Faninal, a young girl whose father has recently been ennobled. Since Ochs's pedigree stretches back for many generations, it seems a good match. However, Octavian falls in love with Sophie and sets a trap for Baron Ochs, so that Ochs is completely discredited and must go back to the country again, still a bachelor. Octavian wins the affections of Sophie, but this involves his having to dress up as Mariandl, a servant, in two of the acts, only just narrowly allowing him to escape seduction by Ochs.

Many listeners today find it difficult to understand how in an opera with so much realistic detail, a principal male role can be sung by a woman--a trouser role in the tradition of Mozart's Cherubino. Whatever reasons Strauss may have had (it is said that Strauss hated tenors--Jefferson 1975, p. 71), he created a part that is difficult to make credible since Octavian's high voice implies physical youth inconsistent with his feelings and actions.

At seventeen Octavian is supposed to be boyish and impulsive, but also an impetuous and ardent lover. (A passionate love scene, musically suggested by the orchestral introduction, is wisely left to be imagined before the curtain goes up on Act I.) During the sword fight crisis of Act II, Octavian is also resolute and daring. He must be just as convincing here as in the first act, when, in his childlike desire to ignore the reality of daylight, he closes the curtains. As if these demands are not enough, he must also efficiently play the part of Mariandl. Ochs, who is not a complete fool, must not discover the hoax, even puzzled as he is by the resemblance of Mariandl to the picture the Marschallin has shown him of the chosen rose-bearer, Octavian.

Both Octavian and especially the fifteen-year-old Sophie must appear young, rather unsure of themselves, and shy. Hofmannsthal insisted on this interpretation of both roles; particularly in their duets he wanted the

general mood to be naive and tender, with "no Wagnerian screaming at each other" (Pauly 1970, p. 316).

In a famous letter written to Strauss about the libretto for Der Rosenkavalier, Hofmannsthal wrote ". . . There are two major roles, one for a baritone and another for a graceful girl dressed as a man."¹⁷ More exactly, Hofmannsthal describes this disguised young woman as a "Chérubin" type. Hofmannsthal saw the "Hosenrolle" or trouser role as a very typical part of the opera. In Arabella, he wrote a trouser role in the character of Zdenka. However, in the prologue of Ariadne auf Naxos, which was added to the opera later to make it a more acceptable length, it was Strauss who insisted over the objections of Hofmannsthal, that the role of the "Composer" in the opera should be "another Octavian," in other words a mezzo-soprano dressed up as a man (Jefferson 1975, p. 73).

From the "Cherubino" figure of Mozart's Figaro and from the "lover" character of "Faublas" in Corneille's Les aventures du chevalier Faublas, Hofmannsthal created Octavian. The audience recognizes the young cavalier as a trouser role character, which allows the intimate first scene between the Marschallin and Octavian to be perceived as a tasteful expression of love between two people. It also prepares the public for the romance involved in Octavian's character. Pörnbacher writes in his interpreta-

tion of Der Rosenkavalier:

A tenor in the role of Octavian would allow the tête-à-tête at the beginning of the first act to appear at the least tasteless, if not offensive and distressing. Because there are two women in character involved, the action on the stage remains discreetly reserved and distinguished. In addition, only the Cherubin-role, which Hofmannsthal gives Octavian, makes possible the relationship between the individual persons, as Hofmannsthal had thought and wished it to be.¹⁸

Rodney Blumer also agrees that a trouser role was the best choice for Octavian:

How lucky that the earliest drafts of the opera specified travesti portrayal of Octavian--how hideous this scene would be if played by a man. How real a person Mariandl becomes. . . . (Blumer)

William Mann, in his book on the operas of Richard Strauss seems to disagree with the casting of Octavian as a female trouser role:

Her [the Marschallin's] current lover is Count Octavian Maria Ehrenreich Bonaventura Fernand Hyacinth Rofrano, a seventeen-year-old boy of very noble family indeed. By a nice stroke of aesthetic imagination, designed to bring home his immaturity, he is presented as a trouser-role in the tradition of Cherubino and Urbain and Oscar. The musical results are marvellous throughout every scene of the opera; but it seems distasteful that Hofmannsthal should have cast so sexually virile a figure as a female role, particularly in the opening scene which demands overt demonstrations of the most passionate love--it is seldom that the two actresses involved manage to avoid suggesting a repellent sort of Lesbianism as they hug and caress one another, crooning torrid endearments. As if to atone for this disastrous miscalculation, Strauss leaves no doubt in the introduction to the first act that Octavian is a proper man. The opera begins with an unrestrained and highly suggestive musical description of the act of love. (Mann 1966, p. 104)

In any case, the character of Octavian can confuse

the audience. The public, hardly used to seeing Octavian as a man in his position between the two leading women (Marschallin and Sophie), must suddenly perceive him in his reverse role as Mariandl with Baron Ochs. In the mind of Hofmannsthal, however, there must never be any confusion as to Octavian's sexual identity. He strongly encourages the male perception of Octavian by giving him instructions in the score to ". . . always pantomimically bring attention to his trousers, through which he wants to prove his identity as a man."¹⁹ Through these tactics the audience should be convinced of Octavian as a masculine character and feel comfortable with the intimate involvement this particular trouser role demands.

In the first act Octavian appears as a Cherubino figure. Kierkegaard characterizes him by stating: "If I were to try to grasp the specific character of the page in one single predicate, I would say: he is love-drunk."²⁰ The Marschallin calls Octavian a childlike, playful boy who pouts and is insulted by every critical command. Pörnbacher summarizes the character of Octavian in these words: "In Octavian, so it seems, we find again the unobligated lover, the adventurer."²¹

Marek offers yet a more elaborate summary of the title character:

Octavian, with his seventeen years and two months, is the dashing hero of the opera, romantic from his white wig to his satin shoes, carrying with him in well-born poise all the attractiveness that only unprincipled youth can bestow. He is obviously

modeled on Cherubino, though he lacks Mozart's mystery. Octavian is predictable. But that does not make him any less attractive. Not only to Sophie and the Marschallin but to the audience that attraction is largely a physical one. Octavian does not say anything very witty or profound. He bears a light heart in a lithe body--that is more than enough. He makes love well, differently to the older than to the younger woman; Hofmannsthal writes these scenes with a delicate difference. Octavian is courageous, as he has been brought up to be. He is headstrong; that is to be expected from somebody who must have been everybody's favorite. The poet named him Rofrano and tells us that the Rofranos were a very noble family. It is not a Viennese name, and I believe, Hofmannsthal meant to suggest that in Octavian's character some volatile Italian traits can be found. At any rate, he acts impulsively--and loves play acting. (Marek 1962, p. 310)

The title role of Octavian, whether performed by mezzo-soprano or soprano as is sometimes the case, demands convincing masculine movements and stature. Boris Goldovsky offers this information regarding the differences between masculine and feminine appearance:

Besides possessing control over our joints, we are able to make the fleshy parts of our body harder or softer at will. The leg, thigh, buttocks, upper and lower arm can all be made to respond to an adjustment of muscle-tone, and this ability helps the actor with some of his most difficult assignments. For instance, complete control of the firmness of the joints and muscle-tone is essential for actresses who are to play such trouser roles as Cherubino, Siebel, and Octavian. In a woman's somewhat more relaxed knee, the gentler fixations of her hip, waist, and shoulder joints, as well as in the comparative softness of her flesh, lie the secret of her shorter steps and pleasant undulating walk. The man's knee is stiffer, causing him to swing his whole leg from a correspondingly firmer hip, and there is a lack of "give" in his waist and shoulder and a general hardness of the flesh. It is the combination of these qualities that we see in his

longer stride and his muscular, athletic appearance. While he can purposely make his appearance more feminine by reducing the fixation of his joints and the hardness of his muscle tone, a woman by an opposite process can achieve the appearance of a man. Women who approach male roles "from the outside" rarely succeed, they may put on trousers and prance around in an exaggerated imitation of the masculine stride, but they still give the impression of women wearing trousers. Working "from inside," however, an actress need not worry about her appearance or indulge in foolish exaggerations; to acquire the habit of a more firmly fixated knee, hip, and waist, and the harder muscular tone of the man's body, she must feel like a man, and as Cherubino, or Octavian, practice this total sensation until her masculine appearance is independent of the clothes she is wearing. (Goldovsky 1968, pp. 37-8)

In order to develop the control of bodily hardness and softness, Goldovsky suggests exercises of a general muscle-building type such as skipping rope, jumping on one foot, punching the body in playful boxing, swinging arms and legs without flexing the elbow or the knee, and weaving the knees, hips, and shoulders in and out. He also suggests attempting artificial wobbliness in order to cultivate versatility in muscular control and a quick recognition of various instantly available muscular sensations. Goldovsky says "One should aim at reaching the point at which much mental commands as 'I am a young man' would immediately bring about the appropriate changes in limb, torso, and feature" (Goldovsky 1968, p. 38).

The title role of Octavian also requires a voice which is both powerful and capable of expressive subtle-

ties. The role is very taxing since Octavian sings extensively in all three acts, the range required is wide, and the underlying orchestration is heavy. The singer must also be able to sustain sufficient energy and vocal prowess to perform the taxing phrases of the love duet at the very end of the third act. On the other hand, Octavian must be sufficiently warmed up by the second phrase of the role, marked feurig (ardently) in the score, to express his strong feelings of love for his mistress.

Synopsis of "Der Rosenkavalier"

Der Rosenkavalier, although an opera specifically relating to life in eighteenth century Vienna, has nevertheless long been awarded international acclaim. This comic opera contains moments of humor, satire, and serious drama. Before discussing the musical setting of the character Octavian, a brief synopsis of the opera should help to relate the elements of the libretto which have made this one of the best-loved operas by the public.

DER ROSENKAVALIER (THE ROSE BEARER)

In her bedroom, Princess von Werdenberg [the Marchallin] expresses her love for young Octavian. He takes to hiding with the sudden arrival of the Princess' cousin, Baron Ochs. Ochs has come to tell his cousin about his impending marriage to Sophie. When Octavian emerges from hiding he is disguised as a maid. The lecherous Baron proceeds to flirt with "her" and tries to arrange a rendezvous. The Princess attends to the business of her morning interviews with people seeking favors and advice. She is also

entertained with music. When all this is completed, the Baron asks his cousin to deliver to his betrothed a silver rose, as is the prevailing custom. After the departure of the Baron, the Princess contemplates the sad truth that she is no longer young and that she cannot possibly hold on to Octavian's love. She then sends Octavian to deliver the silver rose to Sophie.

He comes to the house of Faninal, Sophie's father. On presenting the rose to Sophie, they both exchange meaningful glances and it is apparent they have fallen in love with each other on sight. They are hardly able to control themselves from openly revealing their feelings. The Baron intrudes upon them and, realizing what has happened, challenges Octavian to a duel. In this fray, Ochs is slightly wounded, though his bellows of anguish might indicate that he had been murdered. But he is appeased when a note arrives--conveniently arranged by Octavian--in which the rendezvous he had made with his cousin's "maid" is accepted and arranged. Meanwhile, Sophie expresses the determination never to marry Ochs in spite of her father's demands.

Octavian, once again disguised as a maid, comes to a disreputable inn to keep her appointment with Ochs. To harass the Baron, Octavian has arranged a series of pranks. Strange faces peer at Ochs from different parts of the room. A woman enters noisily, with a brood of children, insisting that Ochs is their father. Matters get involved. The police enter to arrest the Baron, but are prevented by the arrival of the Princess. It is then that Octavian takes off his disguise and reveals himself.

Magnanimously, the Princess brings Sophie and Octavian together and gives the young lovers her blessings in a beautiful trio. After her dignified departure, the young lovers rush into each other's arms to sing the duet "Ist ein Traum." The Baron sulks. He has lost Sophie and also been the object of derision. (Ewen 1973, pp. 272-3)

Musical Analysis of Octavian

In the case of Octavian there are no arias per se to examine, but rather musical expressions in the opera in which Octavian either reveals the emotion of the words through the music, or in which the orchestral music

itself, without words, represents the drama associated with Octavian. The elements of style which Strauss uses in Der Rosenkavalier differ from the elements of the eighteenth century Mozartian style. He puts leitmotifs and musical symbols to use, making them reveal clearly those thoughts and emotions which lie unspoken behind the words. As opposed to the secco recitativo of Mozart, Strauss turned to a type of parlando accompagnato, or lively Sprechgesang, supported by a delicate orchestral texture. This style is employed for the long stretches of conversation in which the voices narrate, using luscious melodies and expression much more than other kinds of recitative. The technique allows Strauss to give witty musical adaptation to the sense of the words and to make ironic comment on the various situations through skillful use of the leitmotiv.

The musical leitmotifs associated with Octavian are vividly descriptive of the character. The opera begins with an unrestrained and highly suggestive musical description of the act of love. No one who understands music can misconstrue the meaning of the initial ascending horn-call (Ex. 1).

Example 1. mm. 1-3 Act I from Der Rosenkavalier



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Two more Octavian themes appear in the first act--the piercing and receding arpeggio which rises higher than expected (Ex. 2) and the more lyric, gently thematic line doubled at the sixth (Ex. 3).

Example 2. mm. 3-5 Act I from Der Rosenkavalier



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Example 3. mm. 9-11 Act I from Der Rosenkavalier



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William Mann has this to say about the orchestral introduction:

. . . it is so graphic as to leave us in no doubt that this ardent boy, in his inexperience, reaches his climax (whooping horns) much too soon, and that he has to resume activity [Ex. 3] rather less inspiredly. . . . (Mann 1966, p. 105)

Professor Erich Graf also addresses the leitmotifs in Der Rosenkavalier. He considers the following motif, preceding Octavian's first words, as the "embrace" motif (Ex. 4).

Example 4. mm. 88-90 Act I from Der Rosenkavalier



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In the opening of the opera, at the point where Octavian praises his angel, the Marschallin, whom he of all men, understands and loves, Strauss carefully uses adjacent keys to indicate the different attitudes. Whereas Octavian addresses the Marschallin with the intimate "Du," she adopts the more formal "Er" at this moment. Marek helps to clarify this uncommon usage of German pronouns.

In the eighteenth century German three forms of address were used, only two of which remain in the language. There was the familiar "du" used between lovers or very good friends. There was the formal "Sie." There was also a third form, "er," which was used by a person of higher rank speaking to one below him, or by distant relatives, etc. When the Marschallin teases Octavian, or when she is annoyed by him, she uses this third form. In her tenderer moments, she reverts to the "du." (Marek 1962, p. 315)

After the entrance of Baron Ochs, we can see a difference in the musical writing which is used to portray Octavian, now disguised as Mariandl, the maid. In a waltzlike fashion Strauss captures the feminine quality of the character (Ex. 5).

Example 5. p. 64 No. 143 Act I from Der Rosenkavalier



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At the end of Act I Octavian reappears in the bedroom of the Marschallin wearing riding attire. At this moment we see for the first time a real tension of characters at a deeper level; the exposition of the drama is completed and the development has begun. The Marschallin faces the sad truth about growing old and realizes she will no longer hold the young Octavian's love. Octavian, not really appreciating the delicacy of the situation, renews his protests of passion. The Marschallin, being a little impatient, tells him not to be insensitive, as all other men are. The Marschallin sings about her perception that nothing on earth is permanent, everything slips away, and that Octavian will indeed ultimately leave her for a girl younger and prettier than she.

In Act II Octavian appears as the Rose Bearer, dressed all in silver. His entrance is accompanied orchestally by the dignified rhythmic pattern associated specifically with Octavian's function as the Rose Bearer (Ex. 6).

Example 6. p. 156 No. 3 Act II from Der Rosenkavalier



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Also heard during this entrance of Octavian, is the leitmotiv of the silver rose. Both Octavian and Sophie are somewhat overcome by the ceremonious occasion. They are both very young and attractive, and are meeting for the first time in extremely formal, public circumstances. Something of their bashful confusion, as well as the silver sparkle of the rose, is reflected in the shimmering effect of this leitmotiv set for flutes, celesta, harps, and high muted violins (Ex. 7).

Example 7. p. 169 No. 27 Act III from Der Rosenkavalier



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The dramatic action stops briefly while the two young people savor the revelation of this instant. Musical phrases of utmost lyrical beauty that weave in and out are depictive of their sudden, mutual infatuation (Ex. 8).

Example 8, p. 172, mm. 2-4 from Der Rosenkavalier



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William Mann addresses the intimacy of this opening of Act II:

Hofmannsthal was at pains to convince Strauss that these dear children must on no account bawl like Tristan and Isolde. Perhaps that is why he removed Octavian from the reality of sexual love by making his a travesty role--the reality of this love is something precious and virginal which must not, in this unspoken moment, be spoiled by animal mating-calls. Strauss recognized the intense but immaculate quality of the required soprano voice and he scored the whole section very gently and intricately so as to suggest the dawning of a first love between a boy and a girl who, only a few minutes before, had been emotionally children. (Mann 1966, p. 124)

In Act III we again hear the Mariandl theme set now in the context of the country inn with Baron Ochs. The various pranks against Baron Ochs are accompanied by Viennese waltzes, finally culminating orchestrally in an abundance of character themes to investigate this confusing situation. Octavian reestablishes himself as Octavian, both on stage and through the music, and the troupes exit

leaving only Octavian, the Marschallin and Sophie in the room. We hear the "Today or tomorrow" motif (You will leave me for someone younger and prettier) of the Marschallin intertwined with Octavian's leitmotiv of love for the Marschallin from the first act. All three characters become increasingly involved in their separate convictions, revealing all that is most secret in their hearts. Octavian, standing between the Marschallin and Sophie, is himself bewildered by the situation, one in which he will have to make a decision. He is aware of his change of heart. Questioning and afraid, he is only certain of one thing, his love for Sophie. The Marschallin accepts her inevitable loss and leaves Sophie and Octavian alone as they end with the final verse of their duet, rising in thirds to a high B.

Octavian's Place in the Plot of "Der Rosenkavalier"

Hofmannsthal wrote about the interchanging and interdependency of the characters in Der Rosenkavalier. "They all belong to one another, and that which is the best, lays between them."²² Hofmannsthal considered Octavian this link between the characters, uniting and separating them as the central focus.

Octavian, as the Marschallin's lover, places himself between the Marschallin and the Feldmarschall. Baron Ochs and the Marschallin are opposite and yet complementary

characters; between them, uniting them, stands Octavian. The Marschallin loves Octavian, a fact she tries to hide from Baron Ochs. Ochs attempts to establish a relationship with Mariandl (Octavian) behind the Marschallin's back. Octavian also unites and separates the two women figures of the opera; woman and girl, the Marschallin and Sophie. He separates Ochs and Sophie through his escapades as Mariandl in the third act. When he then appears as Octavian, Sophie commits herself to him. Finally we can see how Octavian unites the Bourgeois world of Faninal to the nobility.

- | | | | |
|-----|-------------|---------------------|-------------|
| (a) | Marschallin | - Octavian | - Marschall |
| (b) | Marschallin | - Octavian-Mariandl | - Ochs |
| (c) | Marschallin | - Octavian | - Sophie |
| (d) | Ochs | - Mariandl-Octavian | - Sophie |
| (d) | Ochs | - Octavian | - Faninal |

(Pörnbacher 1964, p. 53)

It is obvious from the intricacies and difficult transitions Octavian's role presents that it is one of the ultimate challenges of all trouser roles. Der Rosenkavalier provides an opportunity for the mezzo-soprano as few operas do, to gain the recognition and respect of the musical public both as an outstanding singer and as a fine actor.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this research project has been to trace the development of trouser roles in opera and to specifically address through a character analysis the interpretation of two such roles, Cherubino from W. A. Mozart's Le Nozze di Figaro and Octavian from R. Strauss's Der Rosenkavalier.

Chapter II focused on the development of the trouser roles in opera. It addressed the rise and fall of the castrati and the emergence of women in theatre and opera. It also traced the development of the present day lyric mezzo-soprano voice in the performance of opera.

Chapters III and IV focused on the specific study of Cherubino. Chapter III traced the evolution of the character through the libretto history. Chapter IV discussed the character of Cherubino through a character analysis, musical analysis and dramatic analysis.

Octavian's character was discussed in Chapters V and VI. Chapter V traced the development of the character through the libretto history. In Chapter VI, the character analysis, musical analysis and dramatic analysis of Octavian were discussed.

Today, the trouser roles both in the theatre and in opera seem to be respected and accepted in the works of their origin, but appear to be a diminishing element of both stages. Strauss certainly wrote several very popular trouser roles in the early twentieth century, but later twentieth century composers have not included one trouser role as a principal role. Perhaps the novelty of seeing women dressed as men has expired. Another reason might be the nature of the libretti. Recent operas have not centered around courtly, aristocratic environments, in which many of the "page" or "prince" type trouser roles were necessary.

Ellen Boyer believes the twentieth century transvestite representations of Shakespeare's Hamlet may be best classified not as innovative new uses of the trouser role, but rather as unsuccessful remnants of the nineteenth century phenomenon (Boyer 1977, p. 27). Simon Trussler observes that the decline may be due to a ". . . shift in the center of dramatic gravity away from actor, towards the writer and director" (Trussler 1966, p. 56).

At the time of the trouser roles' greatest popularity, the mezzo-soprano did not have female roles available which held the depth and range that many male roles offered. The subject matter, and certainly the liberation of women since the time of the popularity of trouser roles, has allowed the mezzo-soprano to be cast in a variety of

of roles in recent operas. Nevertheless, the majority of the lyric mezzo-soprano's operatic repertory dictates trouser roles as the important, unique role for the voice type. Because of the voice quality and the history of performing these roles, the mezzo-soprano is able to explore this area of specialization necessary for producing traditional opera.

The following information was obtained from the records of the
Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, on
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NOTES

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NOTES

¹The eighteenth century saw the emergence of opera even though it had been conceived in the century before. Depending upon the recognition of Peri's Daphne of 1597 as the first opera as opposed to musical play, or Monteverdi's Orfeo in 1607, one could consider opera either conceived in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century.

²"CHERUBIN. Ce rôle ne peut être joué, comme il l'a été, que par une jeune et très-jolie femme; nous n'avons point à nos théâtres de très-jeune homme assez formé pour en sentir bien les finesses" (Beaumarchais 1917, p. 4).

³". . . diese liebesahnende Gestalt, Verkörperung des jungen Menschen, der zur Liebe erwacht, nicht kühl berechnend noch, nicht wissend erfahren und gesättigt, sondern noch unerfahren. Eine Sängerin wird zum Liebenden. Ihr Körper, in die Kleider des Mannes verhüllt, besitzt einen versteckten aber starken Reiz" (Pörnbacher 1964, p. 63).

⁴Cherubin
Wer bist du, die in meines Herzens Tiefen,
Die nie der Liebe Sonnenblick durchstrahlt,
Mit unbekannter Zaubermacht gegriffen?
Wer bist du, süsse, reizende Gestalt?
Gefühle, die im Grund der Seele schliefen,
Hast du geweckt mit magischer Gewalt;
Gefesselt ist mein ganzes, tiefstes Wesen,
Und Kraft und Wille fehlt, das Band zu lösen!

Seh ich der Glieder zarte Fülle prangen,
 Entstellt durchs schöngeschmückte Knabenkleid,
 Das süsse Rot der schamgefärbten Wangen,
 Die blöde, knabenhafte Schüchternheit,
 Das dunkle, erst erwachende Verlangen,
 Das brennend wünscht und zu begehren scheut.
 Den Flammenblick scheu in den Grund gegraben;
 So scheinst du mir der reizendste der Knaben!

Doch seh ich dieses Busens Wallen wieder,
 Verräterisch durchs neidsche Kleid gebläht,
 Des Nacken Silber, gleich des Schwans Gefieder,
 Vom weichen, seidnen Lockenhaar umweht,
 Hör ich den hellen Klang der Zauberlieder,
 Und was ein jeder Sinn noch leis erspät,
 Horch ich des Herzens ahnungsvollen Tönen;
 So nenn ich dich die Krone aller Schönen.

Schlicht diesen Streit von kämpfenden Gefühlen,
 Bezähme dieses siedend heisse Blut,
 Lass meinen Blick in diesen Reizen wühlen,
 Lass mich der Lippen fieberische Glut
 In dieses Busens regen Weilen kühlen,
 Und meiner Küsse räuberische Flut
 Soll das Geheimnis dir im Sturm entreissen,
 Welch ein Geschlecht du würdigst sein zu heissen.

(Grillparzer, [p. 68-9])

⁵„ . . . einen jungen Menschen beim Erwachen der Leidenschaft. . . . Beaumarchais Cherubin in Figaros Hochzeit ist bei weitem nicht alles, was man in der Hinsicht verlangen kann, nichtsdestoweniger ist er aber, besonders mit Mozarts Seelenmusik, hinreissend“ (Pörnbacher 1964, p. 64).

⁶Adieu, mon petit Chérubin. Tu vas mener un train de vie bien différent . . . tu ne rôderas plus tout le jour au quartier des femmes; plus d'échaudés, de gôtés à la crème. . . (Act I, Scene X).

⁷No. 9, Act I.

⁸Narcissus, in Greek mythology, a youth who pined away for love of his own reflection in a spring and was changed into the narcissus (bulbous plant with clusters of white, yellow and orange flowers).

⁹Adonis, in Greek mythology, a young man loved by Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love and beauty.

¹⁰"Each woman makes me palpitate."

¹¹Perhaps it was, in particular, Apuleius's Cupid who lent his character to the markedly Cupidesque Cherubino of Le Nozze di Figaro, which Mozart composed two years after he became a Mason. One might conjecture that Apuleius was virtually required reading for eighteenth-century Masons (Brophy 1964, p. 169). Brophy states:

Masonry traced itself back to ancient times. The Masons' attention may have been directed to Egypt by an old Masonic tradition that the Children of Israel 'learned ye craft of Masonry' in Egypt. However, it was not to Egyptology directly, whose sources were largely unknown or very far to seek during the eighteenth century, that the Masons applied, but to the cult as it had been practised in the late-classical world, and which had left abundant references in lateish Latin and Greek authors like Apuleius and Diodorus Siculus, who were not merely accessible to the eighteenth century but familiar. (Brophy 1964, p. 133).

¹²"Peut-être il n'est plus un enfant, mais il n'est pas encore un homme."

¹³"Egli è ancora fanciullo. Men di quel che tu credi" (Recit. IX, Act I).

14 "E mi farà il destino ritrovar questo paggio in ogni loco" (Recit. XV, Act I).

15 Shakespeare, A Midsummer Night's Dream.

16 "... und warte mit Schmerzen auf den III. Akt" (Pörnbacher 1964, p. 25).

17 "... zwei grosse Rollen ... für einen Bariton und ein als Mann verkleidetes graziöses Mädchen" (Pörnbacher 1964, p. 63).

18 "Ein Tenor in der Rolle des Octavian liesse das Tête-à-tête zu Beginn des I. Aktes für den Zuschauer zumindest geschmacklos erscheinen, wenn nicht gar widerlich oder peinlich. Dadurch, dass es sich um zwei Frauengestalten handelt, bleibt das Spiel auf der Bühne diskret zurückhaltend und vornehm. Erst die Cherubin-Rolle, die Hofmannsthal dem Octavian gab, ermöglicht ausserdem das Verhältnis zwischen den einzelnen Personen, wie es sich Hofmannsthal gedacht und gewünscht hatte" (Pörnbacher 1964, p. 118).

19 "... immer wieder pantomimisch auf seine Hose verweisen lässt, durch die er sich als Mann ausweisen will" (Pörnbacher 1964, p. 64).

20 "... wollte ich versuchen, das Eigentümliche des Pagen in einem einzigen Prädikat zu fassen, so würde ich sagen: er ist liebestrunken" (Pörnbacher 1964, p. 64).

21 "In Octavian, so scheint es, finden wir wiederum

den unverbindlichen Liebhaber, den Abenteurer" (Pörnbacher 1964, p. 14).

72 "Sie gehören alle zueinander, und was das Beste ist, liegt zwischen ihnen" (Pörnbacher 1964, p. 53).

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Discography

Peter Gammond in his book The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Recorded Opera has compiled a list of available recordings. This writer offers Gammond's discography along with an asterisk depicting recordings of outstanding merit.

LE NOZZE DI FIGARO

Angel S-3608 (4) (US)
Philharmonia Chorus and Orchestra
c. Carlo Maria Giulini
Count Almaviva Eberhard Wächter
Countess Elisabeth Schwarzkopf
Figaro Giuseppe Taddei
Susanna Anna Moffo
Cherubino Fiorenze Cossotto

*Phillips 6707 014 (4) (US)
BBC Chorus and Symphony Orchestra
c. Colin Davis
Count Ingvar Wixell
Countess Jessye Norman
Figaro Wladimiro Ganzarolli
Susanna Mirella Freni
Cherubino Yvonne Minton

DG 2711 007 (4) (US)
German Opera Chorus and Orchestra
c. Karl Böhm
Count Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau
Countess Gundula Janowitz
Figaro Hermann Prey
Susanna Edith Mathis
Cherubino Tatiana Troyanos

HMV SLS995 (4)

John Alldis Choir/English Chamber Orchestra
c. Daniel Darenboim

Count	Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau
Countess	Heather Harper
Figaro	Geraint Evans
Susanna	Judith Blegen
Cherubino	Teresa Berganza

HMV SLS995 (4)

John Alldis Choir/National Philharmonic Orchestra
c. Otto Klemperer

Count	Gabriel Bacquier
Countess	Elisabeth Söderstrom
Figaro	Geraint Evans
Susanna	Reri Grist
Cherubino	Teresa Berganza

Decca Eclipse ECS743/5

Vienna State Opera Chorus/Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra
c. Erich Leinsdorf

Count	George London
Countess	Lisa della Casa
Figaro	Giorgio Tozzi
Susanna	Roberta Peters
Cherubino	Rosalind Elias

DG 2728 004 (3)

Berlin RIAS Chamber Choir/Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra
c. Ferenc Fricsay

Count	Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau
Countess	Maria Stader
Figaro	Renato Capecchi
Susanna	Irmgard Seefried
Cherubino	Hertha Topper

(Gammond 1979, p. 132)

DER ROSENKAVALIER

*HMV SLS810 (4)

Angel S-3563 (4) (US)

Philharmonia Chorus and Orchestra

c. Herbert von Karajan

Marschallin	Elisabeth Schwarzkopf
Octavian	Christa Ludwig
Baron Ochs	Otto Edelman
Sophie	Teresa Stich-Randall
Faninal	Eberhard Wächter

Decca SET418/21
 London 1435 (US)
 Vienna State Opera Chorus/Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra
 c. Sir Georg Solti
 Marschallin Régine Crespin
 Octavian Yvonne Minton
 Baron Ochs Manfred Jungwirth
 Sophie Helen Donath
 Faninal Otto Weiner

Decca 4BB115-8 (4)
 Vienna State Opera Chorus/Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra
 c. Erich Kleiber
 Marschallin Maria Reining
 Octavian Sena Jurinac
 Baron Ochs Ludwig Weber
 Sophie Hilde Gueden
 Faninal Alfred Poell

Philips 6707 030 (4) (US)
 Helmond Concert Choir/Netherlands Opera Chorus/
 Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra
 c. Edc de Waart
 Marschallin Evelyn Lear
 Octavian Fredrica von Stade
 Baron Ochs Jules Bastin
 Sophie Ruth Welting
 Faninal Derek Hammond Stroud

CBS 77416
 Columbia D4M-30652 (4) (US)
 Vienna State Opera Chorus/Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra
 c. Leonard Bernstein
 Marschallin Christa Ludwig
 Octavian Gwyneth Jones
 Baron Ochs Walter Berry
 Sophie Lucia Popp
 Faninal Ernst Gutstein

(Gammond 1979, p. 185)

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