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MUSIC AND THE POLITICS OF NEGATION

MUSICAL MEANING & INTERPRETATION

Robert S. Hatten, editor

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FOR THE WORLD OUTSIDE THIS BOOK.

TO MY BELOVED PARENTS

JENNY AND DAVID CURRIE

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PREFACE

A No-Music

Music says yes—to its historical and cultural participation in the worldliness of social life and its meanings. The past twenty years and more of politically oriented musicological thinking in the academy has been adamant on this point. It has claimed to bring music back from banishment within formalist abstractions; it has striven to make it autonomous of aesthetic autonomy. Music can now benefit *once more* from the warmth and wisdom of belonging to the already existent human worlds that have both engendered it and continued to offer it a place to stay when it finds itself abroad. As a result, music study in the academy today enjoys many intellectual liberties that would not have been possible had certain scholars not been prepared to fight for them for us, sometimes at considerable professional cost—a point this book neither forgets nor takes lightly.

However, the implications of “once more” in the penultimate sentence above should give us pause. On the one hand, what we might broadly label as this postmodern turn of contemporary academic music studies has often perceived itself historically as the manifestation of something particular to its own moment; and so, on one level, as something new. (Hence its most obvious symptom, the “New Musicology.”) Yet, on the other hand, it has also validated itself by means of a sometimes transhistorical set of assumptions. For this new turn has simultaneously also been considered as a *re-*turn, in which musical discourse reasserts (once more) music's fundamentally located and determined status within and by culture and so wakes up (at last) from the nightmare of what postmodern musicologists often consider to have been the disastrous turn it took, particularly in Germanic lands, toward aesthetic autonomy at the end of the eighteenth century. Thus, with no apparent qualms, Susan McClary can effectively assert that we have always been postmodern musicians¹—the problem was simply that a frequently privileged Western minority spent nearly two hundred years actively forgetting this point, often as a means of solidifying their own ideological ground. Or so the argument often runs.

But if postmodern musicology asserts that music must be understood in terms of the particularity of its relations to, broadly conceived, its various contexts, why is it that its own claims are sometime allowed to exceed such bounds and become, as I say, transhistorical? In fact, as a particular discourse located in a specific context that nevertheless frequently rests on such transhistorical assumptions (acknowledged or not), postmodern musicology is formally speaking not unlike its own formulation

the discourse of aesthetic autonomy. Thus, it replicates the structural dynamics of the very object that it nearly always rejects in order to validate itself, as if, in psychoanalytic terms, it were suffering from some kind of projectional disavowal. Is it therefore possible that postmodern musicology itself, like aesthetic autonomy, is also ideological? After all, a key defining feature of an ideology is that, by means of a state of exception to an established law, a certain politics of exclusion can be kept afloat. Exception is created here by the fact that postmodern musicology insists on an interpretive law of contextual particularity for music but is relinquished from full submission to such restrictions itself. So what is being excluded?

This book gives two answers: music and politics. And stated in such a stark fashion, they must undoubtedly seem harsh. After all, as the 1990s progressed, musicology seemed increasingly to be enjoying the creation of an academic environment that could at last let music be music, and attendant on this was the assumption that musicology could now discuss politics. Today, at the beginning of the second decade of the new millennium, such assumptions in musicology are quite pro forma. But without any desire to play the Grinch, this book nevertheless does not align itself with the discipline's general sense of political well-being. And this, primarily, is because my arguments are haunted by a historical analogy whose broad implications as stated in this preface will appear somewhat crude, but whose basic provocation the following set of essays frequently returns to reinvestigate.

If postmodern musicology, particularly in the later 1990s, sometimes celebrated the historical particularity of its arrival as a moment when a certain transhistorical set of values in relationship to music could at last establish themselves, we should remember that during the course of that decade, the vast majority of Western discourses (political, economic, intellectual, journalistic, commercial, technological, lifestyle, and otherwise) were likewise wrapped up in similar forms of partying.² For with the demise of Eastern European communisms, the West in the 1990s took to celebrating its particular historical moment as one that would soon, in Francis Fukuyama's famous pseudo-Hegelian terms, usher in the end of history: the beginning of a world in which the transhistorical truths of social democracy would reign *in perpetuum* by means of the similarly transhistorical truths of the market. Over ten years on, with the political stability of the planet in a catastrophic state, the market unmasked in all its spectacularly raw and excessive indifference, and the prospects for democracy, even in democratic countries, worrying, the best one can say about the West's optimism in the late twentieth century is that it was preemptively narcissistic. More realistically, I think we should just see it as a purchase made with often quite willful myopia regarding who would have to foot the bill. It was a fantasy quite knowingly constructed by the increasingly indistinguishable realms of finance and government, and many opted for a completely uncritical relationship toward it.

In much public political discourse, the 1990s were taken up with a lot of talk about the claims of different identity groups. It was as if the question of what the basic political-economic structure of this increasingly global world should be had been answered by the fact that the power of Western capitalism had been able to dissipate the focus of Eastern European communism until it collapsed—as if capitalism's force here were the unalloyed sign of its value. The foundation stone of the new millennium seemingly in place, we set about making sure that there would be as many rooms available for difference in the mansion we were then to build. The obvious proviso was that accommodation could only be secured by signing an agreement to support the landlord; and for a relatively large percentage of westerners in the 1990s, lulled into a totally bogus sense of security by this fundamentally fantasmatic world resting on seductive credit and insane financial speculation, that seemed fair enough. The world of politics in its epic nineteenth- and twentieth-century form was deemed to be over, and citizens could now vote for politicians according to their ability to act as

economic caretakers rather than formulators of ideas. Attendant on this was the practice of seeing the presence of ideas in politics as denoting the intellectual's betrayal of a commonsense empirical understanding of what is, for the supposedly anti-humanist idea of what should be, a sacrifice of pragmatics for utopia. A particularly telling symptom of this historical moment would be the triumph of so-called New Labour in the United Kingdom, whereby the British, believing that the market itself could create the conditions for a well-functioning democracy, ended up with a left-wing government that managed to expunge its politics of anything left-wing, and thereby, I would argue, opened up the way to the steady eradication of what remained of the welfare state, particularly the education system which is now in a disastrous condition. Blair, we should remember, was one of Thatcher's favorite backbenchers.³

It is not so much that the discussion of questions concerning identity and difference are not necessarily important—although there are indeed instances where they are not as pressing as sometimes default assumptions might insist. Rather, it is that in the context of Western life in the 1990s it was possible to discuss such things without dialectically mediating the analyses in terms of global capitalism, since the privileged (and essentially fake) conditions in which many of us were then living meant that most of the time we could avoid much direct exposure to the price that has to be paid in order for such a set of economic relations to function. For example, true to its reliance on the concept of surplus value, capitalist manufacturing had been exported from the West to where it now ensues, according to most reports, in appalling conditions—conditions that are not an aberration within the economic coordinates of our world but constitutive. The problem here, then, is not that differences are not being made, but precisely that they are: there is one way of life for one group, where questions of identity and the like seem pressing, and another way of life for those who provide the material conditions for the former group. What the latter group needs is not to be distinguished from the other but to be treated on the *same* terms—which of course it is not possible to do without simultaneously and directly critiquing and changing the presently existing set of global economic relations. As a result, much of what tended to constitute political debate in musicology in the 1990s now appears somewhat like a red herring: a politically flavored distraction that potentially enabled politics in its proper transformative sense *not* to happen.

If I were to attempt a summary of the problematic of the 1990s, I would probably begin by noting that much of the rhetoric of political life in that decade was primarily oriented around the affirmation of things both particular and universal that were *already existent*: on the one hand, this was quite consciously performed, as was the case in relationship to various particular identity groups, often within mostly Western contexts; on the other hand, this was inadvertently achieved, since one of the resultant effects of affirming particulars was, as I state, precisely to allow for an affirmation of the increasingly universal economic forces. Since many prominent governments were kept in power by the popularity of the economic bubble that they were able to pass off as if it were the result of their own wise financial planning, they were also more than happy to follow suit. The 1990s was a decade that wanted to say yes to what was, rather than adopting a politics of negation and saying no so that something genuinely different, and actually necessary, might emerge. In many prominent instances, musicology tended to follow along and, with a certain insensitivity to context that is somewhat ironic considering that it usually claims that context is its business, it has often continued to do so. What constitutes political work in the discipline is still predominantly oriented toward the affirmation of the claims of particular groups—toward a music that says yes. Moreover, should one invoke the economy and its effects on music in any kind of fashion that would directly question the validity of capitalism in its present disastrous global form, one can still easily find oneself either being dismissed as lunatic or condemned by the violent sophistry of certain public intellectuals as being guilty of uncritical

support of the totalitarian projects of the twentieth century. The fact that there have indeed been intellectuals who *have been guilty as charged* does not mean that one therefore *is* simply because you have raised the question of whether or not what constitutes political debate in musicology is reliant on ignoring the staggering violence of the set of relations that perhaps have allowed for that academic context to exist in the first place. The one small but not insignificant ray of light that might come from the present dire straits in which many universities in the Western world now find themselves is that such a political avoidance is increasingly untenable, since what was avoided now turns its attention, with unambiguously sinister intent, toward the academy. In a sense, we have fallen into the frame that we had ignored in order to picture ourselves attractively.

If it is indeed the case that what we need is a politics of negation rather than of affirmation, and if we continue to assert that music can or even should be the bearer of the values that might inspire and edify us, then maybe it would be strategically expedient now for musicology to investigate once more how music says no—and so to formulate a no-music. This is one of the things that this book sets out to achieve, and in each chapter, with the exception of the last, which concerns Edward Said and the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, it does so by means of a set of historical short-circuits between political and intellectual concerns of the present and the historical moment that, as I have already noted, many postmodernist musicologists locate as the point at which things started to go wrong: the late eighteenth century. In part, then, this book is a reaffirmation of the continuing import and relevance of the so-called Viennese classical repertoire and of the founding arguments of mature modernity that resonate through it. Each of the first four chapters lets the pressure of contemporary political concerns be felt in the workings of close readings (ranging across formal, stylistic, expressive, and historical parameters) of examples drawn from pieces of late eighteenth-century music: in [chapter 1](#), the finale of Mozart's Piano Concerto in F Major, K. 459; in [chapter 2](#), a generalized consideration of fugal counterpoint in Viennese classical instrumental music; [chapter 3](#) turns to Haydn's String Quartet, op. 33, no. 5 in G Major; and [chapter 4](#) to an extensive set of multiple readings of one aria from Mozart's late opera *La clemenza di Tito*. Moreover, each of the chapters is organized around an idea that attempts to capture the different ways in which music negates what already exists. So instead of mirroring the world, [chapter 1](#) shows music veiled. Instead of being awake to its surroundings, [chapter 2](#) investigates how we might conceive of music asleep and dreaming. Instead of being at home, [chapter 3](#) shows music taking up residency in its own exile. In [chapter 4](#), music is allowed to enchant us into believing that the aesthetic is more real than the world of human concerns that has produced it. Finally, in [chapter 5](#), music's profound indifference even encourages us to forget who we are.

This is a dialectical book; the word “negation” in its title is there to make this allegiance unambiguous. But it is not a studied attempt to apply the details of dialectical philosophy to music, as for example Maire Jaanus Kurrik famously did for literature back in the late 1970s.⁴ I neither claim to sustain engagement with a particular dialectical philosopher's line of argumentation consistently, nor do I argue against remarkable examples of such endeavors by which I have been inspired: amongst others, Berthold Hoeckner's work on the idea of the moment in nineteenth-century German music, Michael Spitzer's monograph on late Beethoven, Daniel Chua's critique of absolute music, particularly in relationship to Beethoven, Lydia Goehr's ongoing projects, much of Richard Leppert's more recent commentaries, many of Martin Scherzinger's publications, and Alastair Williams's study of the claim of the post-World War II avant-garde.⁵ Since it was only at a relatively late stage in the progress of the various essays that are gathered here that I was fully aware that negation was my theme, I saw no reason to posture as if I'd been organized enough to have known so from the get-go.

Nevertheless, it transpired that the overall orientation was dialectically orthodox enough that my conclusion could not merely be a prescription for a large dosage of “no.” After all, repeating “no,” *ad infinitum*, merely creates a kind of endless deferral; something that a Hegel might have termed “bad infinity,” or a Freud, hysteria. Of course, what is so politically laudable about “no” when employed dialectically is that it halts the fake immediacy of that which smugly presents itself as “just the way things are.” This is what the discourse of the hysteric performs in Lacanian psychoanalysis, and considering that the violence of the economy has been increasingly scripted as a kind of fact of human nature—rather than the historical product of a consciously made set of mostly clear-headed, if deeply cynical, decisions—hysteria is not necessarily to be dismissed simply as poor behavior. When we witness angry demonstrations on the streets of Athens or London, to take but two examples, it should make us feel optimistic: that there is still the possibility of the antagonism which, following the position of Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau, is defining of political culture proper.⁶ But if we make a law out of no-saying, then “no” becomes just as smug as an uncritical indulgence in affirming one's privileged comforts as if they were simply organic constituents of the natural way of the world. And the result of such a convention of no is that the possibility of a political act devolves into mere acting out—a dialectical paradox that I return to more analytically in [chapter 3](#). One could argue, for example, that one of the many problems with supporters of Democrats in the United States is that they are so often wrapped up in endlessly quibbling and no-saying about what their party should be doing that they are unable to affirm a political vision that could solidify their control of power.⁷ “No” makes a space in things, a potentially productive absence or lack; what the Republicans can sometimes better understand strategically at this historical moment is that you need to put something in that space in order to gain control of government. In other words, without some kind of rectifying presence, the hollowing out achieved by negation verges toward politically indulgent quietism. So at times I can admire the Republicans for their present historical understanding of power, even though I consistently consider their policies utterly contemptible.

In the earlier stages of my thinking about the following studies, I had still believed that intellectual investigation into music justified its validity by making manifest political values that could either inspire or repel. As such, this book began very much within the methodological orbit of musicology within the postmodern academy, even though I was already concerned about what constituted politics there. To a not inconsiderable degree this remained the case, and so since it was felt that political negation required presence, then the question of where presence could positively manifest itself with music without becoming mere bullish assertion became pressing. Thus, as the project ensued, affirmation increasingly emerged from within the predominantly dialectical proceedings. In this regard, [chapter 1](#) is the odd one out, since it concludes with the most uncompromising negations of the whole book. But in two of the later chapters, the work of negation is only able to preserve its credentials and persevere authentically because something resists the restlessness of its movement and the resulting production of lack. In [chapter 3](#), for example, the dialogic critique of the handed-down quality of musical conventions is preserved from becoming merely a litany of theatrical interruptions by a concluding acceptance of certain conventions. In [chapter 4](#), the most densely argued and theoretically sprawling part of the book, the possibility of a political subject that can dissent and say “no” is only made possible when that subject is periodically able to emanate a certain presence; like the enchanted work of art, the political subject can only negate when it somehow affirms its own unique self-sufficiency.

All this affirming and negating bespeaks of music's fundamental engagement with the human world, and so if I had merely remained on this level of illustrating the complexities of music's acts of agreement and dissent, this study, dialectical as it may be, would still have been a work of postmodern

musicology: it would have questioned how postmodern musicology tends to relate music to the human world without having disputed whether music had the relationship per se. What distinguishes this study, then, are the places where it articulates how music can also be quite indifferent to the human worlds from which it, and also its performers, have come—where instead of saying yes or no, music simply looks elsewhere, or closes its eyes completely. This thread begins most forcefully in the [second chapter](#), where I try to articulate how the dynamics created by music's formal tendencies open up something other than the cultural intentions that had perhaps initially set them in motion. It then makes its pressure felt at certain moments in the arguments of [chapters 3](#) and [4](#) until it becomes the presiding theme of the final chapter, where I argue that music's value can just as easily lie in its ability to make us forget cultural origins. On the one hand, I let the pressure of this line of thinking have its way with my thinking because I had come to feel that so much attention had been given to how music was cultural that it had become almost impossible, both logically and ethically, to say how music might be musical. Or to put it another way, there was such an insistence that music must say yes that we had ended up with no music.⁸ Not only does this state of affairs strike me as symptomatic of an exceedingly Western, late twentieth-century version of the Protestant work ethic—where music, caught in a not infrequently politically self-righteous matrix, must always be doing cultural work—but also that the great benefits that can arise from situations where musical participants neither perceive nor want to perceive their musical activities as culturally located were being barred. On the other hand, I had come to hold the suspicion that the use of the cultural argument as a means of making music politically active was perhaps symptomatic of what in psychoanalysis is called fetishistic disavowal: the overdetermining of one object (in this case music) in order to mask a lack in another (here, politics). For in the Anglo-American academy, music started being most consciously scripted as capable of a political act precisely at the moment (the late 1980s) when the possibilities of such a thing in the West started to radically disappear. (My brief political sketch of the 1990s above was an attempt to give some sense of this.) So it is perhaps not ridiculous to pose the question whether in our present historical moment the freedom to allow for some instances of the musical in music might be the positive sign that we still believed that there was anything to be achieved by the political in politics. And since it is still too early historically to tell, this book answers neither yes nor no.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Academic acknowledgments often give the impression that scholarly work takes place at parties, and that the resulting books are but the progeny of all the wonderful conversations that have been had there. The research experience for some is evidently a jolly and inspiringly collective one. But this book came into being in a colder climate: in the early years of the new millennium my then partner, Carlos Arévalo-Gómez, died a nasty death from AIDS, and, as if aping a pathetic fallacy, the hopes and delusions of 1990s political culture in the West were brought to a sharp halt through a series of sobering and traumatic events whose repercussions we are still thoroughly enmeshed within. It would be ridiculously narcissistic to conflate the two worlds—even though any death from AIDS is always en route to being politically bruised. But the sad outrage that fueled my response to what I considered to be the shocking, if inadvertent, superimposition of the personal and the political, also fueled the quite pronouncedly solitary activities of this book's protracted beginnings. So although this book has its fair share of jokes and playful formulations, the marks made upon my outlook by the grim light in which I first tried to see the page I was writing upon have been allowed to remain. Perhaps the book would have been better if I'd applied some gentle cosmetics. But even now, years later, my petulance snaps back: the dead died! And something of that fury refuses to aestheticize for the sake of a smile. So, rightly or wrongly, I acknowledge it before others, even if it can hardly be thanked.

Considering how well formed my edges were for the inflicting of wounds, it is perhaps remarkable how much kindness I encountered as an author, especially in the final years of the book's messy adolescence. Richard Leppert, a marvelous mentor and comforting friend, took me seriously when it seemed that practically nobody else could be bothered. At a point when, as an unknown scholar, I had seriously started to wonder whether any of this was worth it, he inspired me to keep on board, and so remain enormously in his debt. Similarly, Robert Hatten, gentlest and firmest of editors, was patient during the lunch in which I snarled at him that he wouldn't be interested in what I was working on, and by following through allowed me to think that maybe I wouldn't have to spend the rest of my professional life as a lunatic shouting at myself in private. Other editors who had read earlier versions of some of the material in this book (Mark Burford, Simon Keefe, Elaine Sisman) were similarly generous. The one part of this book that did socialize properly, the final chapter, benefited from the kindness of invitations to give talks: from Olle Edström in the Department of Cultural Studies at the University of Gothenburg (Sweden), from my dear friend Tia Dinora at the Department of Sociology at the University of Exeter (UK), and Nicholas Cook at the Department of Music, Cambridge University (UK). Various colleagues, in particular Michael Long, Peter Schmelz, and Stephanie Vanderwel, had the good grace to play the well-behaved audience when I wanted the stage for extended aria practice.

And where other presses can make one feel that in approaching them with a project one is approaching the deity itself, the staff at Indiana University Press, by contrast, have been unfailingly human. Easy, proficient, pleasant, professional, and full of humor and grace, they made the whole process seem utterly normal, pragmatic, and never cause for undue concern. I raise my glass to you all—to Jane Behnken, Nancy Lightfoot, Sarah Wyatt Swanson, Eric Schramm, Mollie Ables. Thank you!

Although it is the case that I did not tend to discuss directly the material of this book with others, have done a lot of talking over the years, and so acknowledgement is particularly due to those special ones who have been the rare combination of both dearest of friends and intellectual interlocutors. Most importantly here would be Jenny Marsh. As a poised adult professional, she listened to my nonsense when I was but a messy sixteen year-old lugging self-consciously on a cigarette in her living room. Although every conversation I have had with her since has offered me the strange kind of hope and happiness that only the pleasures of intelligent talk with those one loves can give, our first talk, sitting on the sofa, looking out into the magical world of her garden, is one of the few genuinely unsullied memories I hold: then I was truly happy. To Jo Malt, who has been so dear to me since that foggy day in Cambridge all those sad, sad years ago when first we spoke. You were heard, my love, and thank you for listening. To Andrea Spain, mighty mountain woman, desert companion, inspiration, and maker of space; I have been honored indeed. And finally to Martin Scherzinger, fellow foreigner and accompaniment in late-night walks through the empty streets of the cities of this world. You relinquished me from feeling ashamed when I did not have a home, and at times that has meant everything to me.

Then, of course, there are all of those who gave not a hoot about this book and what it was about, and in so doing gave me a life elsewhere. To Jessica Mckinnon, who, like truth, even when hidden, was there. To Beth Evans, amongst many other things, for an afternoon of sublime hysterics that nearly made me wet myself on a street corner in Lisbon. To Danny Chiarelli, the only ludic genius I know. (As only you will understand, you are the sister I've always wanted to be.) To the outrageously witty Scott Stevens, who I am lucky enough to have as my beloved boyfriend—for cutting off any attempt I might make to discuss this project with an immediate “Music?! Gross!!” which always made me laugh. And finally to my remarkable parents: hardy, funny, generous, life-loving, Jenny and David Currie; better humans than I could ever hope to be. With apologies if the poorly behaved vitriol of parts of this book disappoint. You are the sweetest thought I have. This pittance I dedicate to you.

Veils

(Mozart, Piano Concerto K. 459, Finale)

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Once a year we acknowledge our love for others by making them queen of a touchingly comic realm of pantomime fanfares from plastic trumpets, cakes aglow with candles, champagne overflowing from popping bottles. But what are we really doing at this birthday party? Only the morally Spartan would insist that the event is solely concerned with celebrating the particularity of a dear friend, for surely we are also celebrating the reciprocity of love: that I love my friend not only for who she is, in and of herself, but also for what she enables me to actualize surprisingly from out of myself; I celebrate her because she makes celebration overflow from out of me, like champagne from popping bottles at a birthday party. And so in 2006 we raised a glass to Mozart (250 years old!) and made a toast: to the “who he is” that allows this celebrating somebody else from out of us to emerge.

If Mozart can still activate a celebration within our being, then that is indeed remarkable. But it is also somewhat disturbing, a fact that encourages me to kick-start this book into motion with a hysterical line of attack: for we are all participants in a world that, even though it has had 250 years of opportunity to listen to Mozart's music, is nevertheless catastrophically broken. Just one quotation is needed here, from Derrida, over fifteen years ago, when many in the West might not have imagined how bad things were about to become:

It must be cried out...never have violence, inequality, exclusion, famine, and thus economic oppression affected as many human beings in the history of the earth and of humanity. Instead of singing the advent of the ideal of liberal democracy and of the capitalist market in the euphoria of the end of history, instead of celebrating the ‘end of ideologies’ and the end of the great emancipatory discourses, let us never neglect this obvious macroscopic fact, made up of innumerable singular sites of suffering: no degree of progress allows one to ignore that never before, in absolute figures, never have so many men, women, and children been subjugated, starved, or exterminated on earth.¹

So thank you Mozart! But for what exactly? For helping us to preserve the fundamental humanity that glows from out of the heart of our celebration of you? Or for helping us to forget the fundamental inhumanity of a world that, in our day-to-day lives, we are inextricably implicated in sustaining?

MIRROR MOZART

Mirror Mozart on the wall, who is the fairest of them all? It is a relative given of reception history that each age seems both to ask this question of Mozart and also to find the same answer: "You are the fairest." Maybe this narcissism that Mozart's music can inspire in us is not only a negative shadow cast by historical relativism. Maybe Mozart's music does, in fact, have the ability to reveal a certain best in us—not just our best, but a best that is indistinguishable from the best that other ages have had to offer. Maybe we are the fairest not because we are human at a particular time and place, but simply because we are human, *per se*. Maybe Mozart's music is the mirror that reflects not us, but the universal within us.

In the still pervasively postmodern climate of contemporary academia, such statements are unfashionable, if not deemed politically irresponsible. To talk about the universal is to avoid the matter at hand. At best, the universalist is inconsiderate, like someone lecturing about metaphysics to a mother trying to cook dinner for three screaming children. At worst, she is someone who puts Mozart on and turns up the volume while violence takes place outside her front door. Within the court of postmodernism, the notion of the universal has been found guilty of war crimes (both literally and metaphorically). However, as my essay will show, this should neither lead us to conclude that postmodernism has had an unfruitful relationship with mirrors, nor that it would reject the concept (in the style of Jeff Koons) of a mirror-coated Mozart.² Although postmodern thinking in general would undoubtedly reject the notion that Mozart's music reflects the universal in man, a certain line of inquiry within musicology can in contrast validate a particular set of reflections between Mozart and the postmodern present. In this essay, I examine these reflections so as to negotiate my opening challenge regarding how Mozart's music is to be celebrated in the face of the political catastrophes of the present. Organizing my discussion around the metaphor of the mirror, I start by outlining the reflections between art and politics that postmodernism has set in place. This is followed by an improvisation on some suggestions from Wye Jamison Allanbrook concerning Mozart and postmodernism, in which I discuss the late eighteenth-century discourse regarding learned and *galant* styles via an extensive reading of the stylistic processes of the finale of Mozart's Piano Concerto in F Major, K. 459. To conclude, I suggest why certain political situations demand that mirrors should be smashed or veiled and what that might mean in terms of the relationship between Mozart's music and the possibility of a better world, should we even consider it still appropriate to talk about such things in the same breath.

POLITICAL REFLECTIONS

At the end of the eighteenth century, after nearly two uninterrupted centuries of confidently reflecting how the West wished to understand itself and its art, the metaphor of the mirror started to tarnish. Instead of grounding the understanding of reality, reflections (particularly of the self) acquired the potential to cause great anxiety, exiling the human subject from out of the validating home she had once found in the recognition of her own appearance and the appearance of her world, and into a realm of the uncanny, the *Unheimlich*, where the comforts of home became the horrors of alienation. Like ghosts, reflections of the already existent were things to be avoided at all costs—a warning that the Romantics were to communicate particularly through *Doppelgänger*, that cast of terrifying reflection that Romantics allowed periodically to haunt and sometimes penetrate the secure limits of narrative and discourse. However, contrary to a common understanding of Romanticism, one might provocatively argue that the problem was not so much a fear of what unexpected horror might suddenly stare back at one from the mirror's surface. It was not that we might suddenly come face-to-face with the Other looking over our shoulder; Glenn Close in the famous bathroom scene finale to

Fatal Attraction, dribblingly mad, wielding a kitchen cleaver. Rather it was that there might not be anything more than what one already saw. Looking into the mirror we see ourselves looking back at ourselves looking at ourselves in the mirror, ad infinitum; an unending ricochet between reality and reflection stretching without variation into a future of the infinite same. Horrified, we smash the mirror, but are then confronted by an even greater trauma: that our terrifying anxiety is but a trick played by the light on a flat surface. For the Romantics there had to be depth, for in the depths lay the possibility that there might be something more to life than the merely apparent. The exploration of depth did, of course, run the risk of confronting unforeseen, even annihilating, terrors, but it was a risk that had to be taken in the name of a certain political hope.³ As is now well documented, Romantic music became a prime medium by which such depths could be fathomed. Romantic hermeneutics, remaining consistent to this discourse, argued that what was most important about this music was not its immediately heard surface but the secrets that it kept hidden down below. And so Keats was famously to write in "Ode on a Grecian Urn": "Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard / Are sweeter."

Thus, at the very moment that music assumed her position at the top of the hierarchy of the arts, her acceptance song became inaudible, a state of affairs that causes eyebrows to be raised among certain critics. But as Allanbrook asks rhetorically: "Should one really be disturbed to think that music could concern surfaces?"⁴ Indeed, why shouldn't the tangibility of music's surface, its inextricable embodiment in audible sound, constitute the alpha and omega for celebrating it in the first place? Surely we should work with the already existing plenitude of music as it is, rather than, to appropriate E. T. A. Hoffmann, the "infinite longing" created by the question of what it might be hiding.⁵ As Susan Sontag famously once put it: "In place of a hermeneutics we need an erotics of art."⁶

Such statements have the quality of calls for hedonistic luxuriation in the merely sensuous, for an aestheticization of all existence including thought. Undoubtedly, there is an element of this in certain postmodern writings, most notably the later work of Roland Barthes. Critics of postmodernism, such as Eagleton, are then perhaps right to question the political validity of such positions.⁷ But across the disciplines, postmodern suspicions regarding the hermeneutic impulse toward depth and the art that encourages it have also been motivated by perfectly justifiable political anxieties.⁸ On the one hand, postmodernists often suggest that the tendency to talk first and foremost of what lies beneath the surface of art may be analogous to the means by which, time and again in the sphere of our political consciousness, our gaze has been directed away from the self-evident political and economic inadequacies of reality and redirected toward claims either of an underlying political order or of a more broken (but strangely invisible) part of reality that has greater moral and ethical claims on our attention. Thus, in part, postmodernism seriously entertains the notion that analysis of depth may be isomorphic with the disavowals of consciously constructed projects of political oppression. In doing so, it is strangely in accordance with the Enlightenment critique of authority that tends to work on the assumption that arcane mysteries are merely functional, acting as smokescreens for the machinery that supports the elite and inequality. (As I soon articulate in more detail, postmodernism, irrespective of its suspicions regarding metaphysics, is somewhat like the Enlightenment in this regard; it seeks to shine a certain light onto all existence, thus banishing the smoky theatrical shadows that are so much part of depth's dramatic success.)

On the other hand, postmodernism has been concerned not only with how depth obfuscates the problems of our political reality, but also how it disempowers us by training us in a second nature, whereby we then assume that the first move to be made in negotiating the difficulties of our world (whether personal or political) is to look for an underlying cause or origin that must be known or

confronted before further progress can be made. In the collaborative work of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, for example, such depths, whether they occur in the scene of psychoanalysis or broader social dialogues, are considered chimerical; they are dangled in front of us as unattainable goals that merely make us forget that we could, to use their terminology, “become” the skills of which we are already in possession (on our surface, as it were) but whose revolutionary potential we have as yet failed to activate.⁹ In following this line of thought, postmodernism has shared similarities with the methods of critique that led Marx to assert, for example, that religion was the opium of the people.

So postmodernism's famous celebration of surface is not just to be taken as an avoidance of seriousness (although, taking its cue from Dada and surrealism, it has at times made a form of political commitment out of its rejection of what normatively constitutes seriousness in art). In fact, its call for depths to be collapsed into completely self-present surfaces issues from the radically democratic project that it claims lies at the heart of most of its discourses. In the context of postmodernism, we should aim at hiding nothing, and also at making everything as available as possible. On a musical level this can lead, as in Alfred Schnittke's discussion of the “polystylistic method,” to talk of a kind of “documentary objectivity of musical reality, presented not just as something reflected individually but as an actual quotation”; the third part of Luciano Berio's *Sinfonia* has thus been explained not just as a collage of quotations, but also as “musical ‘documents’ from various ages—reminding one of the cinema in the 1970s.”¹⁰ On the other hand, this discourse of availability helps to explain postmodernism's reassertion (purportedly in contradistinction to modernism) of the virtues of pleasure, quotation, citation, representation, communication, conventional functionality, sociability, dialogue, style, self-evidence, mass culture, consumer-oriented values, and popularism. To take but one musicological example, Robert Fink writes that Schenker “had no interest in analyses that appeal to the general experience of listeners untrained in structural hearing.” By comparison, “our more democratic, materialist era may demand a stricter accountability to listener response—and thus to musical surface.”¹¹ Hence the value of a supposedly postmodern musical style such as minimalism: “Minimalism is so obviously *flat* that even the most flexible depth theorist must quail before it: what is there on this surface that needs generating or explaining through a theory of structural levels?”¹² By maximizing visibility we move toward maximizing availability, and the more of the world that is made available, the more likely it will be that we will move toward an equality of representation and a respect for difference, which, by implication, should eventually result in an equality of human rights and economic distribution. Postmodernism seeks to transform the entirety of social existence into one massive surface by relocating the economically and representationally dispossessed from the invisible depths, where they act as a foundation, and on to the visible surface; by comparison, to date the economically and ideologically dispossessed have provided a supportive foundation enabling the minuscule minority of the world's privileged to have something on which comfortably to rest. If this relocation could be achieved, then a certain conceptual gravity would take over, since putting a foundation on the place that the foundation is meant to support would cause the entire structure to fall down to the same flat surface of equality, thus creating—to invoke a phrase of McClary's again—a pile of rubble in which to revel.¹³

Whereas Romanticism banishes mirrors since they threaten to eradicate the possibility of a redemptive something else offered by depth, postmodernism seeks to better the world precisely through making all of its surfaces as reflective as possible. In so doing it strives to guarantee that there will be no place where the world cannot be confronted by itself, no gated mirror-free community where the agents of oppression, domination, and inequality can hide from the reflection either of their own agency or from the reflected images of their victims. Total “mirrorization” of the world will in

essence erase censorship, leaving oppression standing naked. It is in the context of this discourse of reflective surfaces that we can most fruitfully understand the deeply political implications of— postmodern art's most characteristic feature: its pluralistic, collage-like surface, constituted from a kind of euphoric babble of samples, fragmentary representations, quotations, vignettes of ironic mimicry, straight-faced pastiche, (mal) appropriations, snap-shorts, *objets trouvés*, and stylistic clashes between trash and transcendence. Like an enormous (global?) disco ball, the polyglot surface of postmodern art is, in a sense, coated with a collage of mirror-coated fragments, endlessly reflecting anything and everything that comes within the enormous orbit of its voraciously mimetic appetite. As Schnittke puts it with regard to the “polystylistic method”: “It widens the range of expressive possibilities, it allows for the integration of ‘low’ and ‘high’ styles, of the ‘banal’ and the ‘recherché’ that is, it creates a wider musical world and a general democratization of style.”¹⁴ Since everything gets reflected, yet no reflection gets to dominate (since all are fragmentary), the mirror-coated surface of postmodern art thus provides us with a powerful analogy for the characteristic dynamic of any democratic politics of difference: that our fundamental right to be represented must always resist the hegemonic tendency that encourages us to turn our representations into rolls of wall paper with which we then set about covering every surface of discursive space. Unlike paintings, which do not change, and encourage us through static images to entertain narcissistic delusions of permanence and universality, images caught in mirrors are images that can never be caught. The people reflected there are either constantly twitching and moving about as they try (always unsuccessfully) to get a complete picture of themselves, or someone walks between them and their reflections, thus momentarily projecting them into that supposedly primary ethical realm, where someone else must be acknowledged. Mirrors do not humiliate but create humility. Reflections should make us reflect.

POSTMODERN MOZART

Let us now invite Allanbrook to do the honors and ask the question: “Is Mozart himself post-modern? In balancing an awareness of historical relativism with a pragmatist's preference for the functional rather than truth-value of assertions, Allanbrook's answer reveals her postmodern inclinations: “Frankly I like this seemingly absurd idea, or at least I have learned something about Mozart and his contemporaries by entertaining it.”¹⁵ Mozart's music, like postmodern art, is mirror coated, and endlessly draws on the “universe of topoi,” in V. Kofi Agawu's phrase, that “thesaurus of *characteristic figures*,” in Leonard Ratner's terms, that music in the early eighteenth century developed “from its contacts with worship, poetry, drama, entertainment, dance, ceremony, the military, the hunt, and the life of the lower classes.”¹⁶ It is drenched in reflections.

Allanbrook's stylistically exquisite work combines sophisticated interpretations of Mozart's stylistic discourse that are contextualized within eighteenth-century thought with an approval of the values that she finds therein (an approval that is laudable for its complete unambiguousness). By co-opting this work in my construction of a Postmodern Mozart, I open up two hitherto unexplored lines of inquiry. First, in insisting on the importance of stylistic play and surface in Mozart's music, Allanbrook allows for Mozart to reflect postmodernism's documentary tendency, in which, as already mentioned, the realities of the world's existing surface appearances are recorded in political repudiation of the disavowals of depth. Thus, *Le nozze di Figaro* “is not a revolutionary's manual.... Mozart had no desire to obliterate class distinctions, because for him the way to the most important truths lay through the surface of things as they are. The attempt to shrug off one's skin,” rather like feigning blindness in the face of one's reflection in the mirror, “is a vain and ultimately circumscribing act of violence; one struggles impotently, caught in the coils of the unwilling self.”

And so “true freedom begins with carefully articulated orders, true knowledge with the patience of the receptive eye,” that mirror reflecting the truth of the world's appearances.¹⁷ Second, for Allanbrook, the polystylistic, mixed surfaces of postmodern art are “mongrel, democratic; they cannot pretend to be elite.”¹⁸ And so Mozart's music, in reflecting the postmodern, is therefore democratic. As Allanbrook writes of the first movement of the Piano Sonata in F Major, K. 332: “The movement's stylistic multiplicity neutralizes any suggestion of a thematic hierarchy: the aria gives way to learned counterpoint, which in turn moves to closure by way of a hunting minuet.”¹⁹ If we raise the question as to which of these styles is most important, we are missing the sonic image of a certain political freedom that this music offers: “With comic flux—the mixture of stylistic modes—comes a democracy of thematic material not possible in the monoaffective style of the Baroque.”²⁰ As in life, so too in music; a true politics of difference knows no colonization of one particularity by another. Thus, “one such moment is not reducible to another: an aria is not the same as a minuet”;²¹ and in a similar vein “Simply by co-existing, these various *topoi* frame and undermine one another, in the course of a single movement ceding stylistic authority playfully one to the next.”²² In short: “*Topoi* articulate each other's differences in the same way as modern linguistics understand phonic units as delimiting each other: by juxtaposition and opposition, by rubbing shoulders, ‘jostling each other about.’”²³

STYLISTIC INTERPLAY IN THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT

We can elaborate further on our reflections by turning to the discourse on learned and *galant* styles that arises in response to the stylistically mixed language of Mozart and his contemporaries. This discourse propounds the musical values of popularity, clarity, comprehensibility, approachability, pleasure, and familiarity, which it attempts to validate via an implicit co-opting of late eighteenth-century Enlightenment philosophy of history. This philosophy, manifest in numerous texts—from Charles Burney's *A General History of Music from the Earliest Age to the Present Period* (1776–1789) and Edward Gibbon's *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776–1788) to Immanuel Kant's essay “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose” (1784) and the Marquis de Condorcet's *Sketch for an Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind* (1795)—views history as a rational, optimistic, and progress-oriented process toward the *telos* of its own already enlightened age, or the one that was, it was believed, soon to come. As such, it was critical historiography, antithetical to historical relativism, and completely comfortable with taking the past to task for failing to live up to the ideals of the present.²⁴ The past was either to be rejected for failing to be the enlightened present, or appropriated as something that could be educated (or coerced), as it were, into being adapted to the needs and ideals of Enlightenment.

Within musical discourse, this philosophy of history was used to script the Baroque past, as manifest in the strict contrapuntal artifices of learned styles, as an authoritarian Other: difficult, stiff, inflexible, arcane, lacking in a clear expressive immediacy, and thus dissonant in relationship to the democratic accessibility of the contemporary musical language.²⁵ This was a reading that was supported, in part, by the continuing association of fugal counterpoint with the church. Johann Georg Albrechtberger, for example, bluntly stated that “fugue is the kind of music most necessary for the church.”²⁶ Such a critical view of learned styles was, of course, hardly new to discourse on music in the second half of the eighteenth century; both Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Johann Adolf Scheibe—to cite two obvious examples—had railed against counterpoint and the musical culture of the baroque for failing to live up to the aesthetic benchmark of clarity.²⁷ However, in calling for a rejection of learned styles from composition, one might argue that writers such as Rousseau and Scheibe simultaneously

turned the notion of composition into ideology, that is, a discursive space organized around a politics of exclusion. By contrast, in the later eighteenth century, it was argued not only that this authoritarian Other could, in fact, occur in the context of the accessible *galant* style (rubbing shoulders with it, to follow Allanbrook), but also that it could take on attributes of the *galant*. Learned style was now capable of acting in a less rigidly authoritarian manner and of being more flexible and open to stylistic interplay than supposedly had been the case during the Baroque.

For example, in *Der angehende praktische Organist* (Erfurt, 1801–1808), J. C. Kittel states that “the strict [Baroque] style of fugal writing is troublesome in that it favors fiery enthusiasm but not clarity. The course of modulations, at least for anyone who is not exactly a connoisseur, is not sufficiently intelligible, lacking in points of repose, in light and shade, in illustrative episodes. In recent times, therefore, composers have begun to merge stricter and freer styles, thereby creating a third genre in which solemn seriousness can be united with charm.”²⁸ In particular, the difficulty arising from the musically demanding experience of contrapuntal artifices was perceived as being lessened by the adaptation of those artifices to the clear harmonic and melodic syntax of the normative *galant* instrumental style of late eighteenth-century music. In his *Historischbiographisches Lexicon der Tonkünstler* (Leipzig, 1790–1792), Ernst Ludwig Gerber writes the following about Haydn: “Every harmonic device is at his command, even those of the gothic age of grey contrapuntalists. But instead of their former stiffness, they assume a pleasing manner as soon as he prepares them for our ears. He has a great gift for making a piece sound familiar. In this way, despite all their contrapuntal artifices, he achieves a popular style and is agreeable to every amateur.”²⁹ And in an anonymous review of 1809, one reads that “Haydn's fugues, almost without exception, are distinguished by the popularity of their invention and organization, by simplicity and excellent flow in each part, by the general clarity which results from this, and by many erudite devices, though these are employed only incidentally.”³⁰

The fact that commentators were prepared to believe that fugal counterpoint had become more enlightened was mirrored by the fact that late eighteenth-century descriptions of different contrapuntal styles were frequently more fluid than might have been expected from an age still so seemingly devoted to taxonomy. Johann Friedrich Daube in *Der musikalische Dilettant* (1773) rather bizarrely designates symphonies, arias, and concertos as “ungebundene oder uneigentliche Fugen” (unbound [free] or pseudo fugues).³¹ Elaine Sisman has pointed out similarities between Heinrich Christoph Koch's 1802 definitions of *thematisch* and *kontrapuntisch* and comes to the conclusion that “what we think of as ‘thematic working-out’ or motivic development may have had eighteenth-century applications comparable to the ‘strict’ techniques of double counterpoint.”³² Even as late as the 1820s, Anton Reicha in his *Traité de haute composition musicale* (1824–1826), groups together interpolated fugal expositions both with other contrapuntal techniques and, similar to Koch's definitions, with thematic development. Moreover, Reicha does this without feeling the need to make any strong distinction between the different functions that these styles could perform: “In the course of a movement of a quartet, quintet, overture, symphony, etc. (above all in the second part of a movement) one may employ with great success a fugal exposition, imitations, strettos, more or less canonic, the inversion of a double counterpoint, the partial development of one or several motives.”³³ And Kirkendale, in a discussion of an exchange in 1798 between Privy Councillor Karl Spazier and Johann Anton André, notes that “vagueness about the concepts ‘fugue’ and ‘fugato’ was widespread at that time.”³⁴

In scripting learned styles as more flexible than they had been during the Baroque period, this late eighteenth-century discourse was able to explain stylistically mixed music of the late eighteenth

century as evidence of historical progress. At a broader level, in revealing learned style to be capable as it were, of negotiating aspects of its identity with other styles for the good of the musical whole, the discourse created a set of potential reflections between the behavior of musical styles and the social responsibilities that autonomous individuals were meant to honor in order to qualify as enlightened: that without a moderating, social counterbalance, unrestrained individuals might be drawn into rampant and essentially socially destructive and dominating forms of behavior.³⁵ For political and moral purposes, the desires of the solitary individual or groups had to come to some kind of compromise with those of other individuals or groups, creating the compromise called society.³⁶ This society would neither be rigid nor repressive, but fluid and diverse while retaining stability.

In the following section I investigate what seems at first to be a credible musical reflection of such a society, the remarkable finale of Mozart's Piano Concerto in F Major, K. 459, which Charles Rosen asserts to be the “greatest of all Mozart's concerto finales.”³⁷ In general, the movement is important for my argument in that it highlights the two features that are vital for an enlightened stylistic discourse in music to function: negotiation and resolution. The need for negotiation is forefronted in this music by the sheer variety of different influences and associations with which the movement juggles. As Rosen writes, the “movement is a complex synthesis of fugue, sonata-rondo-finale, and *opera buffa* style. The weightiest and the lightest forms of music are fused here in a work of unimaginable brilliance and gaiety.... [It is] the synthesis of Mozart's experience and his ideals of form. Everything plays a role here—operatic style, pianistic virtuosity, Mozart's increasing knowledge of Baroque counterpoint and of Bach in particular, and the symmetrical balance and dramatic tension of sonata style.”³⁸ And resolution is highlighted, not only because this is a finale, but also because Mozart has framed it in such a way that, in the words of Cuthbert Girdlestone, it acts as the “center of gravity of the concerto,”³⁹ a point supported by Rosen's observation that the “first two movements of this work are already heavy with Baroque sequences and contrapuntal imitation, as if to prepare for the final Allegro assai.”⁴⁰ Similarly, Simon Keefe, in an impressive systematic examination of dialogue in Mozart's piano concertos, has shown how in K. 459 the piano and orchestra “demonstrate teleological relational development, carefully establishing and reinforcing dialogic cooperation in the first and second movements and reaping the rewards of their toil in the finale's uninhibited affirmation of cooperation”—although he is careful to point out that this process is counterbalanced by a sophisticated set of references in the finale back to earlier procedures from the first two movements.⁴¹

THE FINALE OF MOZART'S K. 459

The movement begins with a solidly homophonic, rondo-like theme, whose undemanding, relaxed comic grace is created by the playful and slightly cheeky dialogue between the solo piano and wind instruments, the solid four-bar antecedent and consequent of the theme, and a highly repetitive rhythmic structure based on a motive of two eighth notes followed by a quarter note. We are immediately dropped into the “here and now” world of *opera buffa*, and the particular images the music evokes are therefore those of rapid interactions between people in complex social situations. Admittedly, we should be wary of making such an association too easily, since, as Allanbrook remarks, “*opera buffa* is not responsible for every witty, quicksilver passage of instrumental writing we may encounter, in the concertos or anywhere else.” For Allanbrook, “*Buffa* contributed to concert writing not so much its materials as its procedures.... In short, the ability to embed references to many musical styles in the continuous context of a piece.”⁴² Indeed, such stylistic pluralism is one of the defining features of this movement. However, we can locate specific *buffa* gestures in the concertos i

the endings, cadences, and finales, where “in both low- and high-level structure [they] serve as signs of termination and areas of arrival.”⁴³ And so at the end of the movement the underlying *buffa* qualities of the opening theme are made unambiguous when that opening material appears in the context of a mixture of patter-song style and rapid interchanges between the solo piano and orchestra from m. 486 to the end, which anticipates the comic antiphonal interplay between Papageno and Papagena in the act 2 finale of *Die Zauberflöte* (1791).⁴⁴

The fugato starting in m. 32, though, immediately transports us into the different and more authoritarian world of learned style. In fact, Mozart emphasizes the sense of authority here by invoking the idea of quotation, since the fugal subject is made up of a learned *alla breve* vocal head motive, recalling the motet style and the imitative ricercar of the Renaissance, followed by a specifically instrumental-style continuation (**x** and **y**, respectively, in [Example 1.1a](#)).⁴⁵ The intensity of this passage of fugal counterpoint is also emphasized by the fact that it begins with entries of the subject already in stretto, and when the second set of entries begins in m. 43 the stretto overlap is made even shorter. Although the sharp divide between these two styles at the opening of the movement nicely illustrates Allanbrook's notion of the different styles “jostling each other about” (perhaps like people at a busy corner in a large city), it doesn't capture the full democratic potential of fugal counterpoint that emerges in late eighteenth-century discourse of stylistic interplay. Later in the movement, however, such potential is momentarily realized.

The movement that follows is essentially a sophisticated sonata rondo form in six sections: **A (1)**-**(1)**-**A (2)**-**C**-**B (2)**-**A (3)**. The first section, **A (1)** (mm. 1–202), is all in the tonic and can be divided into two main sections, the first (mm. 1–119) being for the orchestra alone and the second (mm. 120–202) for orchestra and piano; **B** (mm. 203–54) introduces new thematic material and is all in the dominant; **A** and **B** combined hold a certain similarity to the double exposition of the first movement of a concerto. **A (2)** (mm. 254–87) immediately begins back on the tonic but quickly deflects onto D minor for the beginning of **C**, which begins with an intensified reworking of the fugal material starting in m. 32 of **A (1)**, passing in mm. 322–53 through developmental-style material and then concluding (mm. 354–90) with a transposed reworking of mm. 166–202 from **A (1)**. **B (2)** (mm. 399–433) presents **B (1)** in the tonic, and then the movement is rounded off with **A (3)** (mm. 453–506), which functions as a coda. After the opening (starting in m. 32 of **A (1)**), elements of the learned style passage subsequently appear on five prominent occasions: as a closing theme at the end of both **B (1)** (mm. 228–44) and **B (2)** (mm. 415–29); in section **C** at mm. 288–322 and in the passage that follows in mm. 332–45; and in Mozart's extant cadenza for this movement (m. 453).

In the closing-theme passages of **B (1)** and **B (2)**, the musical style is a mixture of opera *buffa* and concerto style. From the language of the *opera buffa* finale there are short two-bar phrase groups that reiterate perfect cadences, and from the world of instrumental virtuosity there are running scalar passages in the piano, the kind of brilliant-style bravura entirely to be expected in an Allegro concert movement. This is a very different stylistic world from the passage of learned style (mm. 32ff.) that we have been discussing and, obviously, any material that is transported from the learned-style passage into this new one is going to have to be altered in order to be comfortably recontextualized. Thus, when the fugal subject is transplanted into this musical environment, it relinquishes its status as one line in a contrapuntal texture and adopts the garb of a theme in a homophonic texture. In order for this to happen, Mozart forefronts an extension of the length of the instrumental continuation of the subject which had only been presented in passing in the flute and first violin in mm. 42–45 (compare -y- in [Example 1.1a](#) with [Example 1.1b](#) from the end of **B (1)**). Onto that he then appends a cadential cliché (-z-, [Example 1.1b](#)). Later on in the cadenza the descent of -y- is extended further ([Example 1.1c](#)).

1.1a. Mozart, Piano Concerto in F, K. 459, 3rd movement, measures 32–43

Not only might one hear a pleasing mixture of the learned and the *galant* in these passages, one could also say that the two styles come to some kind of democratic compromise. And this interpretation does give the movement a satisfying form: as the movement progresses, the “difficulty created by the mildly intrusive entrance of learned style in m. 32 is eased out when learned style allows its fugal subject to be transformed by its interaction with the less demanding and more pervasive *buffa* style. Learned style is, thus, made softer and more flexible without it having to relinquish its identity. In fact, one might perceive that the slightly problematic and socially embarrassing gap between learned style and less elevated styles already begins to be bridged from m. 44 onward. Here the contrapuntal texture of the fugato begins smoothly, and almost imperceptibly, to transform itself into the passage of brilliant style homophony that eventually leads to the cadence in m. 65. Thus, although learned style enters as a mildly disruptive character that creates a stylistic disjunction, it exits graciously and considerately, leading the music back toward a more popular style and then modestly stepping aside in order to let that style speak. In the [next chapter](#), I offer a more dissonant reading of what happens here.

1.1b. Mozart, Piano Concerto in F, K. 459, 3rd movement, measures 225–44

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