What to listen for in

The Marriage of FIGARO

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

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

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

NOTES:

- **CD tracks and Libretto pages** refer to the EMI Classics (Blackdog) Recording of The Marriage of FIGARO by the English Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Daniel Barenboim, © 2005. Featured artists are Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (Count Almaviva), Heather Harper (Countess Almaviva), Judith Blegen (SUSANNA), Geraint Evans (FIGARO), Teresa Berganza (Cherubino), and Birgit Finnalä (Marcellina). Sung in Italian.

- The Marriage of FIGARO is organized in **four acts**. The Pittsburgh Opera performances include an intermission between Act II and Act III.

- **The Marriage of FIGARO** employs a **medium number of artists**:
  - Principal artists  11
  - Orchestra         42
  - Chorus            12
  - Supernumeraries   4

- **The Marriage of FIGARO orchestra** includes:
  - 2 flutes  2 French horns  Violins  Timpani
  - 2 oboes  2 trumpets  Violas  Harpsichord
  - 2 clarinets  Celli
  - 2 bassoons  Double Basses

**SOURCES for descriptions and musical excerpts:**


WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Selection

Act I

WTLF 1    CD 1, Track 1: Overture    4:21, p. 56

The Overture to *The Marriage of Figaro* is one of the most celebrated pieces of music in all of opera. It is based on three main themes, none appearing anywhere else in the opera. The music is bubbling and delightful, conveying the humor and intrigue of the story. Its elegance and carefully crafted detail are a testament to the genius of Mozart, who composed the Overture only a few hours before the premiere performance.
The little "ringing bells" duet between FIGARO and SUSANNA plays on the ominous undercurrents beneath the veneer of life's pleasantries in the Count's household.

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

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

FIGARO SUSANNA, pian, pian.

SUSANNA
Ascolta ...

FIGARO
Fa presto ...

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

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

SUSANNA
Or bene; ascolta, e taci!

FIGARO
Parla: che c'è di nuovo?

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

FIGARO
E di chi dunque?

SUSANNA
Della tua Susanetta.

FIGARO
Di te?

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

FIGARO
Bravo! Tiriamo avanti.

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

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

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

FIGARO SUSANNA, hush.

SUSANNA
Listen ...

FIGARO
Make it quick ...

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

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

SUSANNA
Well, then; listen, and be quiet!

FIGARO
Tell me: what's going on?

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

FIGARO
And who's he turned it to?

SUSANNA
Your little SUSANNA.

FIGARO
To you?

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

FIGARO
Bravo! Let's hear more.

SUSANNA
This is the reason for all these graces, all
these favors which he has been lavishing on you, on
your intended.
FIGARO Oh guarda un po', che carità pelosa!

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

FIGARO Chi? Basilio? Oh birbante!

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

FIGARO Me n'ero lusingato.

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

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

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

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

SUSANNA Addio, addio, FIGARO bello ...

FIGARO Coraggio, mio tesoro.

SUSANNA E tu, cervello.

FIGARO What generosity!

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

FIGARO Who, Basilio? The scoundrel!

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

FIGARO I flattered myself so.

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

FIGARO What? Hasn't he abolished those rights?

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

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

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

FIGARO Have courage, my love.

SUSANNA And you, be careful.

WTLF 3 CD 1, Track 4: Cavatina, “Bravo, signor padrone!” 3:18, p. 62 (FIGARO)

The first solo (Aria) of the opera is FIGARO’s denunciation of the Count and his dastardly scheme to exercise his droit de seigneur over FIGARO’s fiancée, SUSANNA. The text is bitter and defiant, and the basses add an ominous tone, but Mozart keeps the mood light with the rhythm of an easy-going minuet (courtly dance in triple meter).
FIGARO
Bravo, signor padrone! Ora incomincio
A capir il mistero . . . e a veder schietto
Tutto il vostro progetto: a Londra, é vero?
Voi ministro, io corriero, e la SUSANNA
Segreta ambasciatrice . .
Non sará, non sará: FIGARO il dice.

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

Se vuol ballare,
Signor Contino,
Il chitarrino
Le suonerò.
Se vuol venire
Nella mia scuola,
La capriole
Le insegnèrò.
Sapró . . . Ma, piano:
Meglio ogni arcano,
Dissimulando,
Scoprir potrò.
L’arte schemendo,
L’arte adoprando,
Di qua pungendo,
Di là scherzando,
Tutte le machine
Rovescierò.

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

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

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

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

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

**FIGARO** vinto sarà, ecc

**RECITATIVE**

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

**SUSANNA** Di me favella

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

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

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

**SUSANNA** (Megkui è partir!)

**MARCELLINA** (Che cara spose!)

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

**RECITATIVE**

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

**SUSANNA** She’s chattering about me.

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

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

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

**SUSANNA** (Now’s the time to leave)

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

**CHERUBINO**

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

**CHERUBINO**

Is it pain, is it pleasure that fills me,
And with feverish ecstasy thrills me?
At the sight of a woman I tremble,
And my heart seems to burst into flame,
Love! That word sets me hoping and fearing,
Love! That word that I always am hearing!
Love! Ah love! How can I dissemble
Those desires that I hardly dare name?
Only for love I languish,
Dream of delicious anguish!
To every vale and mountain,
To stream, to lake, and fountain,
For love, for love I’m sighing;
And echo’s voice replying
Bears back my tender moan . . .
And even if none be near me,
I talk of love alone, talk of it all alone.
By this time, the Count has found SUSANNA and Cherubino in two compromising situations and has wrongly concluded that they are having an affair, which infuriates the Count because he himself has failed to seduce SUSANNA. She begs the Count to pardon Cherubino, and he agrees, but in return, the boy will receive a military commission in Spain.

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

FIGARO
Non più andrai, farfallone amoroso, notte e giorno
d’intorno girando, delle belle turbando il riposo,
Narcisetto, Adoncino d’amor, ecc. Non più avrai questi
di pennacchini, quel cappello leggiero e galante,
quella chioma, quell’aria brillante, quel verme color.
Non più andrai, ecc. Tra guerrieri
poffar Bacco! Gran mustacchi, holding your
pack,a gun on your shoulder,a sabre hanging at your
right,musket ready,or some great helmet or
surcoat,winning honours,but little money,and in place
of the fandango a march through the mud.Over
mountains over valleys,through the snow and burning
sun. To the music of trumpets, of shells and
cannons,with balls sounding thunder, making your
ears ring. Cherubino, on to victory, on to victory in
war!
Act II

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

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

**CONTESSA**

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

**COUNTESS**

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

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

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

**CHERUBINO**

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

**CHERUBINO**

You who know what love is, ladies, see whether it’s in my heart. What I experience I’ll describe for you; it’s new to me, I don’t understand it. I feel an emotion full of desire that is now pleasure, and now suffering. I freeze, then I feel my soul burning up, and in a moment I’m freezing again. I seek a blessing outside myself, from whom I know not or what it is. I sigh and moan without meaning to, palpitate and tremble without knowing it. I find no peace night or day, and yet I enjoy languishing so. You who know what I love is, etc.
The finale to Act II is a full 20 minutes of unprecedented, integrated dramatic meaning, beginning with a duet and growing with the entrances of characters to a trio, a quartet, a quintet, and finally ending with a septet. The scene begins and ends with confusion, with Cherubino’s dressing as a girl and jumping out the window followed by accusations, apologies, and contrivances between the Count and Countess, Figaro and Susanna. In the final scene, Marcellina, Bartolo, and Basilio arrive to demand the fulfillment of Marcellina’s legal right to marry Figaro, theatrically and energetically bringing down the curtain.
Act III

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

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

Peace returns as FIGARO and Marcellina explain the situation to SUSANNA, who embraces her future parents-in-law.
MARCELLINA (abbracciando Figaro) Riconosci in questo amplesso una madre, amato figlio

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

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

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

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

MARCELLINA & BARTOLO Figlio amato!

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

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

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

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

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

SUSANNA (dà uno schiaffo a Figaro) Senti questa!

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

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

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

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

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

SUSANNA Sua madre?

BARTOLO Sua madre!
SUSANNA: Sua madre?
IL CONTE: Sua madre!
SUSANNA: Sua madre?
DON CURZIO: Sua madre!
SUSANNA: Sua madre?
MARCELLINA: Sua madre!
SUSANNA: (to Figaro) Tua madre?
FIGARO: (to Susanna) E quello è mio padre che a te lo dirà.
SUSANNA: Suo padre?
BARTOLO: Suo padre!
SUSANNA: Suo padre?
IL CONTE: Suo padre!
SUSANNA: Suo padre?
DON CURZIO: Suo padre!
SUSANNA: Suo padre?
MARCELLINA: Suo padre!
SUSANNA: (to Figaro) Tuo padre?
FIGARO: (to Susanna) E quella è mia madre che a te lo dirà. (tutti quattro abbraccianosi)
SUSANNA, MARCELLINA, BARTOLO & FIGARO: Al dolce contento di questo momento, quest'anima appena resister or sa.
DON CURZIO & IL CONTE: Al fiero tormento di questo momento quell'/quest'anima appena resister or sa.
SUSANNA: His mother?
COUNT: His mother!
SUSANNA: His mother?
DON CURZIO: His mother!
SUSANNA: His mother?
MARCELLINA: His mother!
SUSANNA: (to Figaro) Your mother?
FIGARO: (to Susanna) And that is my father as he will tell you.
SUSANNA: His father?
BARTOLO: His father!
SUSANNA: His father?
COUNT: His father!
SUSANNA: His father?
DON CURZIO: His father!
SUSANNA: His father?
MARCELLINA: His father!
SUSANNA: (to Figaro) Your father?
FIGARO: (to Susanna) And that is my mother, as she will tell you. (all four embrace)
SUSANNA, MARCELLINA, BARTOLO & FIGARO: My soul hardly knows how to withstand the sweet content of this moment.
DON CURZIO & COUNT: My/His soul hardly knows how to withstand the fiery torments of this moment.
The Countess is deeply concerned about her husband’s possible reaction to her plan of deception. She loves the Count, and wants to punish him for his own deception, but deplores the fact that she must seek help from her maid, SUSANNA, by changing clothes with her. Sadly, the Countess sings a beautiful and tender aria, recalling her former happiness with the Count and expressing her hopes of renewing the Count’s devotion and the pleasures of the past.

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

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

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

WTLF 16  CD 2, Track 17: Recitative and Aria,  4:22, p. 157
“Tutto è disposto...Aprite un po’ quegli occhi” (FIGARO)

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

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

FIGARO
Everything is ready: the hour must be near, I hear them coming; it’s she; no it’s no one. The night is dark, and I’m already beginning to ply the foolish trade of cuckolded husband. Ungrateful! At the moment of my wedding ceremony he embraced her through a letter, and seeing him I laughed at myself without knowing it. Oh Susanna, Susanna, how many pains have you cost me! With that artless face, with those innocent eyes, who would have believed it! Ah! it’s always madness to trust a woman! Open your eyes for a moment, rash and foolish men, look at these women, look at what they are. You call them goddesses, with your befuddled senses, and pay them tribute with your weakened minds. They are wiches who work spells to make you miserable, sirens who sing to make you drown, screech-owls that lure you to pluck out your feathers, comets that flash to take away your light. They are thorny roses, cunning vixen, hugging bears, spiteful doves, masters of deceit, friends of trouble, who pretend, lie, feel no love, feel no pity, no, no, no, no! The rest I won’t say, because everyone knows it already. Open your eyes for a moment, etc/
Figaro hides in the garden as Susanna and the Countess arrive, dressed in each other’s clothes. Susanna knows Figaro is hiding and decides to teach him a lesson for his distrust. She sings a beautiful aria addressed to her supposed lover, anticipating this night of love, while she is really thinking of Figaro and the joys of their wedded bliss.

**Susanna**

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

Deh, vieni, non tardar, o gioia bella,
Vieni ove amore per goder t’appella,
Finchè non splende in ciel notturna face
Finchè l’aria è ancor bruna e il mondo tace.

Qui mormora il ruscel, qui scherza l’aura,
Che col dolce sussurro il cor ristaura;
Qui ridono i fiori, e l’erba è fresca:
Ai piaceri d’amor qui tutto adesca.

Ti vo’ la fronte incoronar di rose.

**Susanna**

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

Then come, my heart’s delight, no more delaying,
Come where awaits your love, and would be playing.
Not yet the moon on us her watch is keeping,
While in twilight veiled the world is sleeping.
I hear afar the ceaseless fountain sobbing;
Night winds whisper and set my pulses throbbing.
The grass is cool with flowers the senses exciting,
All to sweet delight of love inviting.
Come, let us hide among these bowers of roses;
Come, my dearest! Sweetest of all is that flower that love uncloses.
Confusion, mistaken identities, humiliation, playfulness, and reconciliation come together in the finale. In the darkness, Cherubino, who has delayed his departure a second time, tries to make love to the Countess, who is dressed as Susanna. The Count arrives and accidentally gets a kiss from Cherubino, who runs away and leaves the Count to seduce “Susanna.” Figaro finds the real Susanna dressed as the Countess, recognizes her, and turns the tables on her by trying to seduce the “Countess.” Finally, the real Countess makes a dignified appearance in her own clothes, clears up the confusion of the crazy day, and advises everyone to stop playing foolish games.

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

ANTONIO Mia figlia!

FIGARO Mia madre!

BASILIO, CURZIO, ANTONIO, BARTOLO Madama!

CONTE Scoperta è la trama la perfide è qua!

SUSANNA (inginocchiandosi). Perdono, perdono!

CONTE No, no! Nonsperarlo!

FIGARO (inginocchiandosi) Perdono, Perdono!

CONTE No, no, non vo’darlo!

TUTTI SLAVO IL CONTE (inginocchiandosi) Perdono! . .

CONTE No!

CONTESSA Almeno io per loro perdono otterrò.

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

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

CONTESSA Più docile io sono, e dico di sì.

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

END

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

ANTONIO My daughter!

FIGARO My mother!

BASILIO, CURZIO, ANTONIO, BARTOLO Madame!

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

SUSANNA (kneeling) Pardon, pardon

CONTE No, no, do not expect it!

FIGARO (kneeling) Pardon, pardon!

CONTE No, no, I will not!

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

CONTE No!

CONTESSA At least I may obtain their pardon.

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

CONTE (kneeling) Countess, your pardon! Pardon!

CONTESSA I am more clement, and answer, yes.

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

END
A Song to Learn from *The Marriage of FIGARO*
A Classroom Activity to Try

**SE VUOL BALLARE**
(If you wish to dance)

*Figaro’s cavatina*
(a song, shorter than an aria)

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

Well, my dear Count, if you wish to start dancing, well, my dear Count, if you wish to start dancing, I’ll strum the music on my fine guitar, yes, my fine guitar.

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