

UPCOMING CONCERTS

LIVE AT RICHARDSON AUDITORIUM

PRINCETON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



MARK LAYCOCK MUSIC DIRECTOR



February 4, 2006, 8:00 pm

PSO POPS! Plays Broadway

Judy Kaye starring in *He Said, She Said*

A musical battle of the sexes with great Broadway show tunes by Sondheim, Rodgers, Porter, Bernstein, and more. With Jeff Keller.

\$60, 48, 33, 15



March 12, 2006, 4:00 pm

Collaborations with the Princeton University Art Museum and American Repertory Ballet

Debussy Prélude à l'Après-midi d'un faune
Stravinsky Suite from *The Firebird*
Budashkin Festive Overture
Lanner Steyrische Tänze
Stravinsky Petrouchka

\$60, 48, 33, 15



April 23, 2006, 4:00 pm

Jaakko Kuusisto, violin

Barber Overture to *The School
for Scandal*

Rautavaara Violin Concerto

Rachmaninoff Symphony No. 2 \$60, 48, 33, 15

\$60, 48, 33, 15

*Dates, times, programs and artists
subject to change.*

This program is funded in part by
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Princeton Symphony Orchestra | www.princetonsymphony.org
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PROGRAM

SUNDAY, JANUARY 22, 2006 4:00 P.M. RICHARDSON AUDITORIUM PRINCETON

PRINCETON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART
250th Birthday Celebration



EXCERPTS FROM THE DA PONTE OPERAS

CAROL CHICKERING, *soprano*
WONJUNG KIM, *soprano*
ANNA NIEDBALA, *mezzo-soprano*
TODD THOMAS, *baritone*
CHARLES ROBERT STEPHENS, *bass*
JOHN ZUCKERMAN, *tenor*

MARK LAYCOCK, *conducting*

DON GIOVANNI K. 527

Overture
Notte e giorno (Leporello)
Madamina! Il catalogo (Leporello)
La ci darem la mano (Zerlina, Don Giovanni)
Ah, fuggi (Donna Elvira)
Finch 'han del vino (Don Giovanni)
Batti, batti (Zerlina)
Eh via buffone (Don Giovanni, Leporello)
Deh vieni alla finestra (Don Giovanni)
In quail eccessi (Donna Elvira)
Non mir dir (Donna Anna)

Don Giovanni Todd Thomas
Leporello..... Charles Robert Stephens
Zerlina..... Anna Niedbala
Donna Elvira Carol Chickering
Donna Anna Wonjung Kim

PRINCETON
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

COSI FAN TUTTE K. 588

Overture
Finale, Act II (Fiordiligi, Dorabella, Despina, Ferrando, Alphonso, Guglielmo):
Fate presto, o cari amici
Benedetti doppi coniugi
E nel tuo, nel moi bicchiere
Mei signori, tutto e fatto
Sani e salvi agli amplessi amorosi

Fiordiligi Carol Chickering
Dorabella Anna Niedbala
Despina Wonjung Kim
Ferrando John Zuckerman
Alphonso Todd Thomas
Guglielmo Charles Robert Stephens

INTERMISSION

THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO K. 492

Overture
Se a caso madama (Figaro, Susanna)
Non so piu cosa son (Cherubino)
Non piu andrai (Figaro)
Voi che sapete (Cherubino)
Crude! Perche finora (Count Almaviva, Susanna, Figaro)
Dove sono i bei momenti (Contessa)
Sull'aria (Susanna, Contessa)
Deh vieni non tardar (Susanna)
Finale, Act IV (tutti)

Figaro Todd Thomas
Almaviva..... Charles Robert Stephens
Susanna Carol Chickering
Contessa..... Wonjung Kim
Cherubino Anna Niedbala

No audio or video recording or photography permitted.
No one will be admitted during the performance of a piece.



Large print programs available by request.

This program is funded in part by the
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HAPPY ANNIVERSARY, MAESTRO!



MARK LAYCOCK - 20TH SEASON

Twenty years ago, the board of trustees of what was then known as the Chamber Symphony of Princeton convened an extraordinary session, confronting the ultimate question of whether the orchestra should, or even could, continue to exist, given the untimely death of its founder and music director, Portia Sonnenfeld. Deciding that the music must not stop, they tapped a rising young conductor to lead the six-year-old

ensemble, a decision that has been consistently redeemed over the years as **Mark Laycock opens his 20th season as Music Director of the Princeton Symphony Orchestra.** Under Maestro Laycock's baton, the Princeton Symphony Orchestra has grown from a small chamber orchestra with a three concert season into a full and critically acclaimed symphony orchestra.

At age 21, Laycock made his conducting debut with the Philadelphia Orchestra, beginning a relationship that has resulted in his reengagement on numerous occasions over the years. His multiple reengagements also include those with L'Orchestre Symphonique d'Montréal, the Philharmonia Orchestra of London at Royal Festival Hall and the Barbican Centre, and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra in St. Paul and on tour.

Maestro Laycock holds the distinction of being the first non-Russian ever invited to appear at the Moscow Autumn Festival, conducting a program at the famed Tchaikovsky Hall. He also conducted the inaugural concert at the new Cairo Opera House in 1988, as well as the sold-out first concert of classical music ever made open to the public in Amman, Jordan. This sequence of events was chronicled in "Classical Caravan," an Emmy Award-winning television documentary produced by public television. His debut in Mexico City's Palacio de Bellas Artes in 2001 resulted in an invitation to return the following summer to teach a week-long master class to Mexico's regional conductors. In February 2004 he conducted a subscription series with the George Enescu Philharmonic in Bucharest, also resulting in immediate reengagement.

Mark Laycock began conducting at the age of 16, advancing his studies at the St. Louis Conservatory of Music, and from 1975 to 1979 studied as a violist under the tutelage of the Curtis String Quartet in Philadelphia. **As a published composer, his works have been performed** by the Philadelphia Orchestra, New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, Alabama Symphony Orchestra, Canton (OH) Symphony Orchestra and the Princeton Symphony Orchestra, among others. Having conducted more than 1,200 works, Laycock has developed a reputation for being able to step in at the last minute, including being called on very short notice to conduct programs that have included Brahms' 1st and 4th Symphonies, as well as Strauss' monumental *Ein Heldenleben*, without rehearsal and to great acclaim.



Mark Laycock

Maestro Laycock was a Conducting Fellow at the Aspen Music Festival, and the winner of the Leopold Stokowski Memorial Conducting Competition in 1978. As a participant of "Project Uplift," in the Spring of 2005 he traveled to donate his services conducting the Verdi Requiem in Chelyabinsk, and makes his formal Paris debut with the Orchestral Ensemble de Paris in October 2005.

Laycock was also recently appointed Artistic Director of the Lake Placid Sinfonietta, with whom he completed his second season during the summer of 2005. He also served previously as Associate Conductor of the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra and Music Director of Orchestra London Canada.

"Laycock makes clear with every composition, with every phrase, that his heart is in the music, that he is not playing it because it is fashionable or that some parts of his audience demand it."

— The Times of Trenton

"The sense of self-assurance and belief in one's personal integrity and approach to life as a source of spiritual inspiration and strength were the elements Laycock chose, creating a musical experience that left listeners moved and thoughtful."

— Classical New Jersey

"Last Sunday I heard the Princeton Symphony Orchestra. It was an experience to savor and to cherish forever. The performance was musically excellent, and the orchestra managed to keep up with its maestro, Mark Laycock, who was passionate about what he was doing and brought that fervor to every performer...this is one day I'll never forget."

— Asbury Park Press

Guest Artist

Princeton Symphony Orchestra



CAROL CHICKERING, soprano, made her debut recently with the Philadelphia Orchestra, in Nielsen's *Symphony No. 3 (Espansiva)*. She also appeared last season with the Singapore Symphony (*Messiah*), The Mendelssohn Club (*Mozart C Minor Mass*), Ars Musica (*Bach Magnificat* and *St. John Passion*), Princeton Singers (*Bach Cantata No. 140*), and the Riverside Symphonia (*Mozart Exsultate, Jubilate*). Recent seasons have included the Berkshire Choral Festival, The National Chorale, the New Philharmonic of

New Jersey, the Real Orquesta Sinfónica de Sevilla, the Orquestra Sinfonica Portuguesa, Musica Sacra, and the Orchestra of St. Luke's. As an opera singer, she sang such roles as Lucia di Lammermoor, Gilda (*Rigoletto*), Adele (*Die Fledermaus*), The Fairy (*Cendrillon*), and Norina (*Don Pasquale*) in the United States, Canada and Europe. Ms. Chickering was a regional prize winner in the 1991 Metropolitan Opera competition, and a winner of the 1994 Liederkrantz competition.



WONJUNG KIM, soprano, performs in major opera houses, among them Paris Opera de Garnier, Dresden Semper Opera, Opera de Monte Carlo, Los Angeles Music Center Opera, and the Salzburg Festival, Istanbul Music Festival and Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival. She is a frequent soloist with the ensemble Continuum, and has made concert and recital appearances with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Korean Broadcasting System Orchestra, Lisbon's Gulbenkian Symphony, at San Marco Basilica

in Venice and with I Solisti Veneti in Rome. Wonjung Kim has been awarded the Korean Broadcast Association Award for Best Classical Singer, and has also been named Best Actress by the Korean Musical Awards for her starring role as Queen Min in *The Last Empress*, as produced in New York, Los Angeles, and Seoul.



ANNA NIEDBALA, mezzo-soprano, received First Place and Grand Prize at the Chicago-Chapter NATS Competition, the Richard F. Gold career grant while at the Sarasota Opera, and The Farwell Award from Chicago's The Musicians Club of Women. Ms. Niedbala's credits include *Madama Butterfly*, *Faust*, and *Otello* with the Minnesota Opera; *Hansel and Gretel*, *The Coronation of Poppea*, and *The Mikado* in Texas; and *Cavalleria Rusticana* with Bayerische Zwei-Groschen-Oper in Germany. In 2004, Ms. Niedbala sang in

Rossini's *La Scala di Seta* with the Baltimore Opera Studio, and was later heard in the company's mainstage production of *Salome*. In 2005, Ms. Niedbala sang in *Cavalleria Rusticana* with New York's Chelsea Opera. Future engagements include the Atlantic Coast Opera Festival and Mozart's *Mass in C Minor* with the Downer's Grove Symphony Orchestra.

Guest Artist

Princeton Symphony Orchestra



CHARLES ROBERT STEPHENS, baritone, recently sang the role of Professor Friedrich Bhaer in the New York premiere of Adamo's *Little Women* at the New York City Opera. This season, Mr. Stephens' orchestral engagements include the Santa Fe Symphony, Portland Baroque Orchestra, Helena Symphony, and Tacoma Symphony. Last season's highlights included the title role in *Elijah* with the Portland Chamber Orchestra, a return engagement at the Spoleto Festival in the Brahms *Requiem* with

the Westminster Choir, Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* in Seattle, the Mozart *Requiem* in Boise, *Viva La Mamma* with Tacoma Opera, and appearances at the Methow Music Festiva. Recent Carnegie Hall performances with Opera Orchestra of New York have included roles in *Otello* with Carlo Bergonzi, *Lucrezia Borgia* with Renée Fleming, and *Adriana Lecouvreur* with Aprile Millo. Since his debut as Marcello in *La Bohème*, Mr. Stephens' New York City Opera roles include Frank in *Die Tote Stadt*, Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly*, and Germont in *La Traviata*.



TODD THOMAS, baritone, performed with the PSO last season in its concert presentation of Verdi's *La Traviata*, and at PSO's 2003 New Year's Eve *Operafest* at The State Theatre in New Brunswick. He spent four years in Giessen, Germany at the Stadttheater Giessen as principal baritone. After his return in 1998, he performed with such companies as Harrisburg Opera, New York's DiCapo Opera Theatre and touring divisions of such companies as Houston Grand Opera and San Francisco Opera. In addition to having won

several awards and contests, including the Loren L. Zachary Award, the Pennsylvania Artists Fellowship Recital Grant, and a Sullivan Foundation Award, he was privileged to be associated with the world premiere of *Nixon in China*, where he was the cover artist for the role of Richard Nixon.



JOHN ZUCKERMAN, tenor, studied voice at Manhattan School of Music and the University of Southern California. This season he will make his role debut as Don Ramiro in *La Cenerentola* with Lyric Opera San Diego and immediately reprise the role at the Pacific Repertory Opera. He has sung with the Caramoor Festival, Opera Vivente, Baltimore Opera Studio, West Bay Opera, and Atlantic Coast Opera Festival. Mr. Zuckerman has participated in young artist programs at Opera Theatre of St. Louis,

Tanglewood, Caramoor, and the Baltimore Opera Studio, and has received additional training at the Canadian Vocal Arts Institute in Montreal, the Austrian American Mozart Academy in Salzburg, and the Centro Studi Italiani in Urbania, Italy.

MARK LAYCOCK, *Music Director*

Violin I

Basia Danilow, *concertmaster*
Margaret Banks
Kiri Murakami
Catherine Mandelbaum
Ruotao Mao
Hanfang Zhang
Kevin Tsai
Tito Munoz
Janey Choi
Linda Howard

Violin II

Michelle Bishop
Michelle Brazier
Carmina Gagliardi
Nancy Ronquist
Rachel Golub
Susan Dominguez
Lara Hicks
Mariko Komura

Viola

Clifford Young
Elizabeth Schulze Hostetter
Lisa Hammell
Jacqueline Watson
Joel Rudin
Emily Laycock

Cello

Jodi Beder
Elizabeth Loughran
Elizabeth Thompson
Talia Schiff
Alistair MacRae

Bass

Joanne Bates
Daniel Hudson

Flute

Jayn Rosenfeld
Amy Wolfe

Oboe

James Button
Meredeth Rouse

Clarinet

David Hattner
Sherry Hartman Apgar

Bassoon

Roe Goodman
Seth Baer

Horn

Douglas Lundeen
Victor Sungarian

Trumpet

Eric Schweingruber
Gerald Serfass

Trombone

Brendan Hartz
Lars Wendt
Jonathan Schubert

Timpani

Adrienne Ostrander

Mark Miller

Mozart – da Ponte Operas

Magical collaborations in the world of [music + libretto =] opera are legion; within the past 500 years nearly a thousand operas have been produced, mostly in cooperative effort: Verdi had his Boito, Ghislanzoni and Piave; Rossini his Sterbini, de Jouy & Bis, di Salsa and Rossi; Puccini his Giacosa & Illica, Adami & Sumoni. Mozart's librettists included Schikaneder, Varesco, Mazzola and his favorite, Lorenzo da Ponte.

Opera plots can and do traverse the imagination, deriving their story lines from events historical, political, mythical, jovial and fantastical. In this, the 250th anniversary year of Mozart's birth, music-lovers everywhere are saluting this event with a focus on the 600+ works bequeathed to us from his illustrious 35-year reign as genius-composer: sublime and enduring works, masterpieces, symphonic, concerto, chamber, instrumental, choral, religious and operatic.

Happy Birthday, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart! Princeton Symphony Orchestra celebrates this special day (actually January 27th, to be precise) with a concert performance of your three operas written to libretti by Lorenzo da Ponte, a trio of perfectly-paired accomplishments, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Don Giovanni* and *Così fan tutti*.

Lorenzo da Ponte: A Life in Five Acts

Mozart's favorite librettist, da Ponte, led a life at times stranger than fiction, replete with events and adventures rivaling the best to be found in operatic literature – a story truly worthy of a five-act Met blockbuster. Why five acts? da Ponte's *Memoirs* are presented in 5 parts, 472 pages' worth of recollections committed to paper across three decades and chock full of outrageous inventions often crossing the line into the preposterous, with an added healthy dollop of *chutzpah*. An example? This is a direct quote from these *Memoirs*, from page 127: "Though gifted with talents superior perhaps to those of any other composer in the world, past, present or future, Mozart had, thanks to the intrigues of his rivals, never been able to exercise his divine genius in Vienna, and was living there unknown and obscure...it was my perseverance and firmness alone that Europe and the world in great part owe the compositions of that admirable genius." This claim is simply outrageous.

Our librettist for today was born Emanuele Conegliano on March 10th, 1749 (a year older than Salieri and seven years Mozart's senior) to a couple residing in Cenada (now the Vittorio Veneto), the Jewish ghetto outside Venice. His father was a leather tanner, or, certainly, in the leather business. There were also two younger brothers.

At age 5 Emanuele's mother died and for ten years his widower father managed to continue work and care for the boys. Emanuele would later complain that he was neglected intellectually by his father through this time. At age 40, in 1763, Geremia Conegliano, in search of a mother for his brood and an appropriate companion for himself, set his eyes upon Orsola Patetta – a nearly 17 year old and most propitious bridal candidate.

Required prior to the marriage, a religious conversion to Christianity took place; Geremia became Gasparo, Emanuele was given the name of the local Bishop, Lorenzo da Ponte, and younger brothers Baruch and Anania became Girolamo and Luigi. Also in this transaction the newly-converted lads acquired three half-brothers and seven half-sisters.

Taken under the Bishop's wing and protection, the 14 year-old apparently convinced the prelate to enroll him and Girolamo in the local seminary from which the newly-named Lorenzo da Ponte emerged seven years later, prepared to take his minor orders in 1770 and ordained a celebrant priest in 1773.

Armed with an education, amazingly well-read and conversant in several languages (and Latin literate) da Ponte ventured forth to discover his destined and special place on the world scene.

Now is a perfect opportunity to interrupt this story for a comment about our subject, (not intended to upstage the flow of this tale but, rather, to seek an early conclusion). He was not a criminal, nor an insincere scoundrel, nor was he lacking in conscience; he had some bad habits and weaknesses that would forever put him at odds with the authorities, jealous husbands, people from whom he would borrow money and a collection of individuals he believed were against him out of pure envy.

Yes, he was a professional gambler, a political agitator, he did operate a bordello. His "difficulties" in Venice, Trentino, Austria, Paris and London branded him with "banishments, immoralities and bankruptcies," and as a brilliant, likeable and gregarious fellow, a close friend and confidant of Giacomo Casanova (also a native of Venice), with a genius for poetry and libretti to out-shadow any mischief.

Departing from his native Italy after resigning his post, steps ahead of the authorities, da Ponte arrived in Austria in September 1777. An excerpt from Part 2 of these *Memoirs* amply illustrates both his pre-occupation with the opposite sex and the shameless self-assuredness which permeates this book: "So much baggage did not dismay the mistress of the inn. Scarcely had I entered, than she came toward me, gave me an expressive glance, which foretold what was to happen between us, and led me to a good room. She was a young woman, very pretty, fresh and vivacious beyond all belief..."

Masterfully employing his linguistic talents, da Ponte worked his way from town to city to town, finally, some seven years later, to Dresden, there securing a letter of introduction from Mazzola to his friend Salieri, in Vienna – his ship was launched, his ticket to stardom issued, luck was in his timing and the future was practically assured. That letter reads, "My dear Salieri; My beloved da Ponte will hand you these few lines. Do for him everything you would do for me. His heart and his talents deserve everything. Your Mazzola."

Once in Salieri's camp, da Ponte's fortunes blossomed. He provided libretti for his host, Mozart and other of the court composers and, if he is to be believed, established a personal, almost advisory relationship with Joseph II, the newly-crowned Hapsburg monarch (upon the death of his mother, Empress Maria Teresa) who named him court poet.

Recounting his first meeting with Mozart, da Ponte suggests the composer was fearful of seeking approval from Joseph for production of an opera based on the play *Marriage of Figaro*

by Beaumarchais, due to the story's controversial political message. (Maria Teresa would have rejected this and any other opera subject that was either controversial or remotely sexual in nature, such as her unenlightened and prudish personal policy.) Promising Mozart the winning of this approval for them was assured. da Ponte must, obviously, have convinced Joseph that certain changes in the plot would be made, and that after all, this was only an opera and not a stage play. Approval was granted by Joseph – the rest is history.

In their collaborations Mozart and da Ponte display a respect for women, hardly a universal attribution in those times. All three story lines contain an overall message of forgiveness, to those characters having erred in their ways, for offenses not intended to injure, and to reflect that duo's core beliefs.

Eleven years and fifteen opera libretti after arriving in the Hapsburg capital da Ponte was obliged to leave Vienna, again under duress, making for Venice to visit his family. Warned to leave Italy by the police, da Ponte journeyed to Dux, near Prague, to visit with Casanova, who urged self-banishment, with da Ponte reluctantly acquiescing. (At first da Ponte introduced his wife to Casanova as his mistress, embarrassed to admit before his infamously-womanizing friend that he had actually married.)

Further adventures in Paris and London found da Ponte, consistent fellow, outside of the law and on the move yet again. And move he did – this time across the ocean to Philadelphia, in 1805, then to New York City after transferring his assets into his wife's name. Nancy's father, who accompanied them on the voyage, was a valuable partner for da Ponte in the operation of their brandy still set up in Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania; and in the general/grocery store da Ponte opened in nearby Sunbury, PA. Nancy, who was fluent in English, Italian, French and Dutch, was a sensation among their circle, they finally settled in New York; her skills at cooking, baking, hat making and with fabrics brought her popularity and regular customers.

An innocent visit to Riley's bookstore on Broadway one day in 1807 was to bring to da Ponte a new career and, at age 58, a surge of expressive energy he longed to experience once again. Overhearing a conversation about the Italian writer, Metastasio, between Mr. Riley and a stranger (who turned out to be Clement Moore) da Ponte joined in, explaining that he not only had read Metastasio – but knew the man personally, and well. Riley and Moore had found a treasure in this encyclopedic authority on everything Italian.

Here, in New York, was Mozart's favorite librettist, Joseph II's court poet, Salieri's protégé and a linguist of rare talent to be found in the America of that period. In true da Ponte fashion, Moore, a trustee of Columbia University, arranged for his discovery to become the first Professor of Italian at Columbia, to teach classes in language and literature and establish himself as a sought-after intellect; books 4 and 5 of his *Memoirs* were on their way to completion and his children on their way to success and accomplishment in the New World.

Through his bookstore operation and classroom exposure, da Ponte enlightened New York and his adopted American homeland (realizing citizenship in 1811), to the beauty of the Italian language and its significant culture of poetry, literature and drama (and music), in advance of that century's substantial influx of native Italians transplanted to these welcoming shores.

In 1838, at age eighty-nine, Emanuele Conegliano, later Lorenzo da Ponte, died. However history chooses to view his life, that mélange of truths and fabrications, his libretti stand out and apart for the gems they are and will remain forever.

Don Giovanni

Tirso de Molina, a Spanish monk and prior of a monastery near Madrid wrote a play entitled *El Burlador de Sevilla y Convidada de piedra*; it is believed to be the mother of all ensuing *Don Juan* and *Don Giovanni* plays and operas. This drama's central character and plot, variously altered and reconfigured by many over many years, was reborn as *Il convitato di pietra* in one instance, with libretto by Giovanni Bertati and music by Giuseppe Gazzaniga. In January, 1787, newly produced in Venice, this vehicle caught the attention of Mozart and da Ponte; albeit with significant changes and innovations rendering *Il convitato* a hardly-related distant cousin - presenting this glorious partnership's creative triumph: *Don Giovanni*.

Così fan tutte

This Mozart – da Ponte opera's title was lifted from Act 1, Number 7, of their own *Marriage of Figaro*; Don Basilio sings "Così fan tutte le belle, non c'è alcuna novità" ("That's what all beautiful women do, there's nothing new in that"). *Così fan tutte* might be translated into "So do we all."

Constanze Mozart, quoted in conversation in 1829 acknowledged that "she did not admire the plot of *Così fan tutte*" but agreed that "such music would carry any piece through...". Antonio Salieri had undertaken to write an opera of the same name but abandoned the project as unworthy of his efforts; once again outdone by Mozart.

Georg Nikolaus Nissen, who married Constanze in 1809, speculated that *Così* was hardly a text of Mozart's first choosing, but "it was not within his powers to turn down the commission, and the text was specifically recommended to him." Was that recommendation from Joseph II and his commission to Mozart and da Ponte based on a story the monarch heard during his participation in the Ottoman Wars?

Whatever the inspiration, Joseph II's story exposed and reflected his negative and distrustful view of women in general. And the story? "It seems that in 1788, shortly after the outbreak of the war with the Ottoman Empire, one of the annual masked balls was held in the Redoutensaal. Two gentlemen of the Court were to escort their two ladies there, but explained at the last minute that they had been called up by the War Ministry and must leave at once to fight the Turks. They did not leave, however, but disguised themselves completely and, using a friend, arranged to be introduced to their ladies, but each, as it were, to the wrong lady. The seduction seemed not only possible, but was put to the test and with success." No evidence to back this story ever surfaced.

Librettist da Ponte, a confirmed cynic, foresaw the monumental cynicism awaiting development in *Così*'s text; not so Mozart, as observed by scholar H.C. Robbins Landon, "I submit that *Così fan tutte* is the supreme example of Mozart's loving forgiveness because, in this most musically perfect of all his operas, there is the most to forgive, and consequently the greatest demand on true love."

Robbins Landon adds this wry comment, "The seduction plot has, perhaps, a very 18th century quality, something that the 19th century found repugnant and the 20th finds fascinating."

The Marriage of Figaro

Josef Haydn, dear friend and mentor to Mozart (1756-1791), was born in the year 1732. Another arrival that very same year, Pierre Caron, invented a new clock escapement mechanism when he was just nineteen. Ensuing wealth and fame enabled the young man to "run with the rich," marry a much-moneyed widow, re-emerging as Pierre Augustin de Caron Beaumarchais. By age twenty-seven, now teaching harp to the daughters of Louis XV, "PACB," avid social climber skillfully maneuvering in and about the court, soon achieved the title of Count Beaumarchais. A political upstart bent on fomenting revolution, Beaumarchais took to play-writing in support of his goal – from within the palace walls.

Barber of Seville and its sequel, *Marriage of Figaro*, breezy comedies wherein servants regularly outwitted the nobility, no doubt brought apoplectic pains to court censors and, for its creator, made for risky business. In the end, and in this instance the garden scene, a human comedy with six aspects of mistaken identity realizes an elaborately involved plot intended, ultimately, to expose Count Almaviva, who then seeks and is granted the Countess's forgiveness.

This forgiveness is displayed and celebrated in these stories by Beaumarchais, the libretti by da Ponte and, especially via the genius of Mozart's music in its heaven-sent capability to compliment, even supplant mere words.

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