THE 1786 PRAGUE VERSION OF MOZART'S 'LE NOZZE DI FIGARO'

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ANYONE who is familiar with Mozart's letters is likely to recall the famous one that he wrote from Prague on 15 January 1787 to his friend Baron Gottfried von Jacquin in Vienna. Describing the Bohemians' reception of Le nozze di Figaro at Prague from the last weeks of 1786 onwards, Mozart proudly declared:

For here nothing is talked about except Figaro; nothing is played, blown, sung, and whistled except Figaro; no opera draws the crowds like Figaro—it's always Figaro. Certainly it's a great honour for me.¹

Thus it is obvious to us that in Prague this opera was enjoying a much greater popularity than it had experienced in Vienna in the months following its first performance there on 1 May 1786. (In Vienna it had received only nine performances by the end of 1786, and it was not staged there at all in 1787 or 1788.)

Was the version of the opera that Prague welcomed so warmly significantly different from the version that Vienna had witnessed? The aim of the present discussion is to consider what evidence we have for the form of Figaro that made such a success in Prague from the time of its first performance there near the end of 1786.

There are at present only two sources known to me that appear to offer much valuable and reliable information concerning the early Prague form of Figaro—although the fact that we have recently been celebrating the two-hundredth anniversary of the opera's first performance in that city may have resulted in further Bohemian sources being brought to light there, or perhaps even elsewhere. The two most useful sources at present known to me, then, are a libretto, the title-page of which states: 'Da Rappresentarsi Nei Teatri di Praga l'Anno 1786', and a copyists' score of the first half of the opera (Acts I and II only) in the Fürstlich Fürstenbergische Hofbibliothek, Donaueschingen.

LET US FIRST consider the evidence provided by the Prague libretto, since it extends over all four of the opera's acts. Copies of it can be seen in a number of places, including the Stadtbibliothek, Vienna (A 82551), and the Muzeum České Hudby, Prague (B 4715). These should be compared with copies of the 1786 Vienna libretto: there is a famous one of the latter in the Library of Congress, Washington, DC (Schatz 6826), and another in the collection of James J. Fuld, New York.²

Such a comparison gives rise to a quantity of interesting information. In general it will be noted that the differences between the texts of the Prague and the Vienna


² For a description of this 1786 Vienna edition see James J. Fuld, The Book of World-Famous Libretti, New York, 1984, pp. 222–3. The Library of Congress copy of the Vienna libretto has a number of pencil entries which appear to adapt it in places to the Prague version.
librettos are not very marked, and that such differences as attract one's attention are confined almost entirely to the first two acts.

The comparison will also convince one that the compositor of the Prague libretto had a somewhat altered copy of the Vienna libretto in front of him when he set the work; for the layout of the lines, the hyphenation of certain words, and even one or two spelling mistakes or similar peculiarities serve to indicate that the text supplied to the Prague compositor was not basically a manuscript, but an amended copy of the Viennese printed text.

On the other hand it is important to observe that some of the passages in which the Prague libretto differs from the Vienna one do not represent special 'Prague changes'; they are merely changes to bring the text into line with the version that Mozart had set to music in the first place, and that had now been transferred to Prague. In the middle of Act III, for instance, the Vienna libretto includes eight lines of an arietta for Cherubino, 'Se così brami teco verrò', which Mozart originally planned to include in the opera at this place but seems never to have composed; it was probably replaced at a late stage of production by another number for Cherubino, the aria 'Voi che sapete' near the beginning of Act II. And just before the Act IV finale the Vienna libretto gives Cherubino four lines, beginning 'Voi che intendete', not to be found in any score of Figaro. None of these superfluous lines is printed in the Prague libretto; in such places and elsewhere the Prague libretto often corresponds more closely than the Vienna one to the version of the opera first performed in both cities.

But when one moves on to consider the most striking differences between the two librettos, one comes across the following three curious features in the Prague libretto that receive no support from Mozart's autograph score:

1. Instead of the autograph's version of No. 5 in Act I, the duettino for Marcellina and Susanna which starts with them curtseying to each other but which ends with insults, there is a cavatina for Marcellina alone, 'Signora mia garbata'.
2. Cherubino's first aria, No. 6 of Act I, 'Non so piu cosa son, cosa faccio', is totally omitted.
3. In the finale of Act II the whole of the passage beginning 'Conoscete, Signor Figaro', and ending at the point where Antonio makes his entry, is omitted.

IN ADDITION to these major differences, there are several brief cuts, and one or two changes in the words, within the recitatives. And since all the more important divergences come in the first two acts, it would seem appropriate to turn our attention now to the other source for the Prague version of Figaro listed above: the copyists' score at Donaueschingen, Acts I-II only, in two volumes, Mus. Ms. 1393 and 1393/II. This supplies us with the music, as well as the words.4

1 For a fuller account of these eight and four lines in the Vienna libretto, see my articles 'Le nozze di Figaro: Lessons from the Autograph Score', The Musical Times, cxxii (1981), 456-61 (esp. p. 458), and 'Some Problems in the Text of Le nozze di Figaro: Did Mozart Have a Hand in Them?', Journal of the Royal Musical Association, cxii (1987), 99-131 (esp. pp. 120-22). A setting of 'Voi che intendete . . .' is to be found only in a performance part for Cherubino, made in Vienna no later than the middle of 1789, and now in Budapest.

4 The first long account of the Donaueschingen score and its variants is by Siegfried Anheisser, 'Die unbekannte Urfassung von Mozarts Figaro', Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft, xv (1952-3), 301-17. But it will be clear that I reject his conclusions as to the date of its origin.
Although there is nothing on the Act I title-page to indicate that this score was produced in Prague, it is written on a Bohemian paper, with a watermark of the same type as is found in the paper used by Mozart in Prague in the late summer of 1787 when he was finishing *Don Giovanni*. This watermark shows the letter B with something like a small crown on the top (see Fig. 1). Moreover, the handwriting of the Donaueschingen score’s two copyists is to be found in other Prague scores, such as the important score of *Don Giovanni* in the Prague Conservatory.\(^5\) It is generally supposed that the Donaueschingen score, obviously at first consisting of all four acts, served as the basis for a performance of *Figaro* at Donaueschingen on 23 September 1787. Yet a few local changes were made; although the score’s text is in Italian, it was in German, as a Singspiel, with the recitatives not sung but spoken, that it was in fact performed there. (We have the local libretto and some locally copied parts for the singers, all with German words.\(^6\) Thus it seems clear that the copyists’ score was produced in Prague no later than the middle of 1787, and possibly even by the end of 1786. And in the three major divergences between the Vienna and Prague librettos listed above, the Donaueschingen copy fully agrees with the Prague libretto.

![Fig. 1](image)

So we have a full musical backing for every aspect of the Prague libretto, at least in the first two acts of the opera. It is its peculiar musical features that have given the Donaueschingen score a high reputation, ever since its significance was first observed and reported to Alfred Einstein by Edward J. Dent.

The most interesting of these features is undoubtedly the new No. 5 of Act I, Marcellina’s cavatina ‘Signora mia garbata’ (see Pl. I), replacing the duettino for Marcellina and Susanna, ‘Via resti servita’. (The words at the end of the preceding recitative have also been changed a little, as well as their secco accompaniment—not unexpectedly, since the duettino in A major is replaced by the cavatina in C major.) In 1931 Alfred Einstein wrote an article about this cavatina

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\(^6\) The 1787 Donaueschingen libretto is to be found in the Fürstlich Fürstenbergische Hofbibliothek, Donaueschingen (I UB 9g), and (a slightly defective copy) in the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, Vienna (Tb 6241/2). The locally copied vocal parts are also in the Donaueschingen Hofbibliothek (Mus. Ms. 1393, Tasche III).
Marcellina's cavatina 'Signora mia garbata', the Prague version's Act I No. 5 (in the Donaueschingen score)

By permission of the Fürstlich Fürstenbergische Hofbibliothek, Donaueschingen

and published its text, believing it to be an unknown composition of Mozart's. But in 1937, in the entry on Figaro in the third edition of Köchel's catalogue which he edited, he expressed his doubts about Mozart's authorship—a view that has henceforth been shared by most Mozart scholars. Yet the true composer of the cavatina has never yet been determined.

The dropping of Cherubino's first aria, No. 6 of Act I, is shown by the Donaueschingen score to have been a planned matter. For the recitative directly preceding the aria, and ending with Susanna's words 'povero Cherubin, siete voi pazzo?', is linked to Cherubino's opening words of the recitative after the aria, 'Ah son perdutol', by a bass-line figure that recalls the motif used several times in Figaro's Scene 2 recitative before his cavatina, No. 3 of Act I (see Pl. II). This is evidence that careful provision was made for the omission of Cherubino's aria.

Something similar is to be found in the equally careful omission of the 2/4 Andante section of the Act II finale, 'Conoscete, Signor Figaro', bars 398–466; in the Donaueschingen score the following section, in which Antonio makes his entry, is neatly grafted on to the section ending at bar 397.


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IN ADDITION to these main cuts and alterations in the orchestral numbers, there are several small cuts or changes in the *secco* recitatives. Before considering the possible reasons why all these changes were made, being departures from the text in Mozart's autograph score, it would seem to be useful to list most of them here:

(a) In the recitative following No. 2 of Act I there is a cut of five lines in the Prague libretto (and the Donaueschingen score). The Vienna libretto has the following lines:

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**Fig.** Oh guarda un po che carità pelosa!
**Sus.** Chetati: or viene il meglio: Don Basilio
Mio maestro di canto, e suo mezzano,
Nel darmi la lezione
Mi ripete ogni di questa canzone.
**Fig.** Chi? Basilio? oh birbante!
**Sus.** E tu forse credevi
Che fosse la mia dote
Merto del tuo bel muso!
The cut lines are from 'Chetati' to 'birbante'.

(b) There is also a cut of about three lines in the recitative following No. 5 of Act I. In the Vienna libretto Cherubino has the following lines:

\[
\text{Cher.} \quad \text{Ah che troppo rispetto ella m'ispira!} \\
\text{Felicie te che puoi} \\
\text{Vederla quando vuoi!} \\
\text{Che la vesti il mattino,} \\
\text{Che la sera la spogli, che le metti . . .} \\
\text{Gli spilloni, i merletti . . . ah se in tuo loco . . .} \\
\text{(con un sospiro.)} \\
\text{Cos'hai li? dimmi un poco . . .}
\]

In the Prague libretto (and in the Donaueschingen score) the words from 'Che la vesti' to 'i merletti' are cut. There is also a small change in the first line of the recitative after No. 5. Whereas the Vienna libretto begins with the words for Susanna, 'Va là, vecchia pedante', the Prague libretto has the words 'Va là, donna pedante'. Here, however, the Donaueschingen score has 'vecchia', not 'donna'.

(c) In the recitative shortly before No. 7 of Act I, there are four lines cut in the Prague libretto (and in the Donaueschingen score). For the Vienna libretto has:

\[
\text{Sus.} \quad \text{A Cherubino! (con ansietà.)} \\
\text{Bas.} \quad \text{A Cherubino! Al Cherubin d'amore} \\
\text{Ch'oggi sul far del giorno} \\
\text{Passeggiava qui intorno,} \\
\text{Per entrar . . .} \\
\text{Sus.} \quad \text{Uom maligno (con forza.} \\
\text{Un'impostura è questa.}
\]

In the Prague libretto Basilio's four lines are omitted.

(d) The recitative that immediately follows Susanna's Act II aria, 'Venite, inginocchiatevi', in the course of which Cherubino becomes dressed up as a girl, begins in the Vienna libretto as follows:

\[
\text{la Con.} \quad \text{Quante buffonerie!} \\
\text{Sus.} \quad \text{Ma se ne sono} \\
\text{Io medesma gelosa; ehi serpentina,} \\
\text{Volete tralasciar d'esser si bello?} \\
\text{(prende pel mento Cher.)} \\
\text{la Con.} \quad \text{Finiam le ragazzate: or quelle maniche} \\
\text{Oltre il gomito gli alza,}
\]

But the Prague libretto (as well as the Donaueschingen score) has a different text; after giving Susanna the stage direction '(Torna in Gabinetto a prendere due buccoli', it has the following words:

\[
\text{la Con.} \quad \text{Quante lepidezze,} \\
\text{E bizzarrie!} \\
\text{Ell'è tanto vivace, e manierosa,} \\
\text{Che s'ella è amata non è strana cosa.} \\
\text{Ehi, Susanna, Susanna? (Susanna sorte} \\
\text{Or quelle maniche} \\
\text{Oltre il gomito gli alza,}
\]
It does not appear that there are any other changes of much significance in the words to be found in the Prague libretto; though a couple of small distinctions might at least serve to identify a score that contains them as originating in Prague.

(e) In the Act II finale, near the end, in the Scena Ultima, the Vienna libretto gives the Count these two lines:

\[
\text{Pian pianin, senza schiamazzi} \\
\text{Dica ognun quel che gli par.}
\]

(They are to be found in the autograph score in bars 722–6 of this finale.) But in the Prague libretto (and in the Donaueschingen score) they have been changed to:

\[
\text{Pian pianin, senza schiamazzi,} \\
\text{Io son qui per ascoltar.}
\]

(f) Finally, a very small change will be found in the recitative just before the Act III sestetto. Whereas the Vienna libretto (like the autograph score) has:

\[
\text{Bartolo Ecco tua Madre,} \\
\text{Figaro Balia . . .}
\]

the Prague libretto (like the Donaueschingen score) has:

\[
\text{Bartolo Ecco tua Madre,} \\
\text{Figaro Nutrice . . .}
\]

No doubt this is simply a desire to replace a somewhat unfamiliar word, ‘balia’, with a better-known word, ‘nutrice’.

To return to the musical text: apart from the three striking peculiarities already described—the replacement of the opera’s third duettino, Act I No. 5, by a cavatina for Marcellina, the removal of Cherubino’s first aria, Act I No. 6, and the dropping of 69 bars before Antonio’s entry in the Act II finale—the text of the musical numbers in the Prague Figgaro does not appear to differ significantly from that of the Vienna version. Yet there is one small variant found in many of the numbers that needs to be examined with care, especially since some of its features have been described in the past, though in my view given a wrong explanation. This variant of the Prague Figgaro is the elimination of many of Susanna’s high notes, a process that is brought about in more than one way.

The notes in Susanna’s part that have a tendency to be eliminated are usually g” (and of course any higher notes), as well as sometimes f” and f”#. By no means all these high notes get removed, but many of them do. Take, for instance, Act I No. 1, the opening duettino for Figaro and Susanna. In the Prague version Susanna’s first g”, the last note of bar 34, is replaced by d”; but in bars 73, 75 and 79, where the same figure occurs again, Susanna keeps her g” —no doubt because here she is singing in harmony with Figaro, who has d’ at the same points. Susanna’s g” at the beginning of bar 82 and bar 83 is replaced twice in the Prague version by b’; but her last g”, on the third beat of bar 83, is retained. Thus in the opera’s first number Susanna’s g” is eliminated in three of its seven places. Similar changes are to be found in nine bars of the second duettino, Act I No. 2, and in several places in the other numbers where Susanna has g”, f” etc., although the quantity of the alterations varies. In Susanna’s Act II aria, ‘Venite inginocchiataevi’, for instance, the g”
and $d''$ in bar 20 are replaced by $d''$ and $g'$, and the $g''$ in bar 116 is replaced by $b'$. Yet in bars 11, 84, 88, 95, 102 and 106 there is a $g''$ that is left unchanged—thus only 25 per cent are changed in this number.

That the alterations to Susanna's part were carefully organized is suggested for the first time by a couple of passages in Act I No. 7, the terzetto for Susanna, Basilio and the Count. For Susanna's first note in bar 35, $a''\flat$, is changed to $f''$, while the tenor Basilio's first note in the same bar, $c'$, is changed to $ab$. And in bars 120-21 Susanna's $e''\flat$, $e''\flat$, $f''$ are changed to $b'b'$, $b'b'$, $a''$ while Basilio's $b'b'$, $bb$, $a$ are changed to $e'\flat$, $e'\flat$, $f'$. Thus the elimination of Susanna's high notes was achieved by giving them to Basilio (at a lower octave), and giving his lower notes to her.

Similar exchanges of parts are to be found in some other numbers: in the Act II duettino for Susanna and Cherubino, for instance, Susanna is given Cherubino's lower notes and Cherubino her higher notes in bars 20-25 and in bars 29-30.

But it is the Prague version's elimination of many of Susanna's high notes in the Act II terzetto, 'Susanna or via sortite', and in the Act II finale, usually by a partial exchange of parts between her and the Countess, that has stimulated a past assessment of the Donaueschingen score. Yet a wrong conclusion was evidently reached concerning its time of creation.

The source of that faulty conclusion was obviously some confusing evidence that is to be found in Mozart's autograph. In writing the Act II terzetto and the Act II finale, Mozart not only placed the Countess's part on the uppermost vocal stave, above the stave that he assigned to Susanna, but at first almost always gave her the higher notes whenever she was singing together with Susanna. Yet when he went on to write those portions of Act III and Act IV in which the Countess and Susanna were to sing together (the duettino 'Sull'aria' and the Act IV finale), Mozart had evidently changed his mind; for he now gave Susanna the uppermost vocal stave and in general the higher notes. Furthermore, he carried out extensive revisions to his autograph of the Act II terzetto and finale, rewriting the parts of Susanna and the Countess, often adding the words 'Sus:' before some passages on the Countess's stave and 'La Con:' on Susanna's stave below it, thus transferring the higher notes to Susanna.

Some bewilderment has been aroused in modern performers of Mozart (though probably not in those of Mozart's day) by the fact that in revising the initial version of his autograph in order to assign the upper role to Susanna, Mozart somewhat puzzlingly did not modify the whole of the Act II terzetto. Yet the fact that all the early copyists' scores give Susanna the highest part throughout this number seems to suggest that Mozart may have decided to alter the performing parts of the original singers, and perhaps the court-copyist's master score, without making a mess in this section of his autograph.

Thus it seems clear that at the first performance of Figaro in Vienna in 1786 Susanna had the highest vocal part throughout the opera. Perhaps Mozart found that the soprano who sang the Countess, Luisa Laschi, experienced some difficulties with the notes that he initially gave her, and that it was better to assign them to the soprano who sang Susanna, Nancy Storace.

WAS IT, then, a similar problem that resulted in the Prague version of Susanna's part, and of the Countess's (and of Basilio's and Cherubino's in one or two places

8 A detailed discussion of this aspect of the autograph will also be found on pp. 112-16 of my 1987 article mentioned in note 3, above. An early account of this problem is in Stefan Strasser, 'Susanna und die Gräfin', Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft, x (1927-8), 208-16.
mentioned above)? I assume this to have been the case—it looks as if the singer who took the part of Susanna at Prague had a bit of difficulty with some of her high notes, so that several were eliminated from her part in a variety of ways, including their assignment to other singers.

The role of Susanna at Prague was sung by Caterina Bondini, that of Figaro by Felice Ponziani, and that of the Count by Luigi Bassi; a performance of the opera for Signora Bondini’s benefit was given on 14 December 1786, and one for Ponziani’s benefit on 4 January 1787, as recorded by Otto Erich Deutsch. Although there is no information in Deutsch as to who sang the Countess and the other parts, some speculation is encouraged by the fact that much of the same cast appeared in the first performance of Don Giovanni, produced at Prague on 29 October 1787. For Zerlina was played by Caterina Bondini, Leporello by Felice Ponziani, and Don Giovanni by Luigi Bassi; so the Countess in Figaro may have been played by the soprano who sang Donna Anna (Teresa Saporiti), or perhaps Donna Elvira (Caterina Micelli).

An examination of Zerlina’s part, no doubt written specifically for Caterina Bondini, reveals an avoidance of many high notes that is similar to that in the Donaueschingen score’s part for Susanna. This would appear to confirm the idea that the elimination of Susanna’s high notes at several places within that score was simply an attempt to help Caterina Bondini to perform that role at Prague.

A very different explanation of the changes in Susanna’s part, and in the Countess’s, as provided by the Donaueschingen score, was put forward by Siegfried Anheisser. For him the transfer of the upper role in the later sections of Act II from Susanna to the Countess appeared to be a restoration of Mozart’s original concept as to how these two parts should be characterized, since in first writing out the Act II finale, as I have mentioned above, Mozart gave the Countess the highest notes—only later did he exchange her part in many places with Susanna’s, perhaps because the higher notes were able to be sung better by the Vienna production’s Susanna than by its Countess.

Anheisser, then, did not link the Donaueschingen score with the version of Figaro produced at Prague at the end of 1786. Instead, he regarded it as the Viennese version, and as an earlier form of it than the text to be found in Mozart’s autograph—hence his description of it as the ‘unbekannte Urfassung’ of the opera. Yet today the evidence that links the Donaueschingen score with Prague cannot be dismissed; and the autograph’s claim to depict the earliest versions of each section of the score—except for one or two rejected drafts, which are earlier—must also be accepted.

It does not seem likely that it was Mozart himself who pressed the Prague performers to restore his initial plan of Susanna’s and the Countess’s parts—indeed, the elimination of some of Susanna’s high notes at a few places in Act I and Act II slightly damages his autograph version. Nevertheless, he may have been pleased by some of the places at which the Countess was given the upper role. Near the end of

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9 Mozart: die Dokumente seines Lebens, Kassel, 1961, p. 246; Eng. trans. as Mozart: a Documentary Biography, London & Stanford, 1965, p. 281. This is Deutsch’s commentary on an interesting extract from the Prager Oberpostamtszeitung of 12 December 1786, where Figaro’s greater success in Prague than in Vienna is thought to be due to better performances, perhaps derived from the Bohemians’ skill with wind instruments.

10 For instance, the replacement of g” by d” as the last note in bar 34 of Act I No. 1 corrupts a figure that is repeated by both Figaro and Susanna throughout this number.
the Act II finale, for instance, in bars 824–33, 842–9 and 879–87, Figaro's part was closely matched by Susanna’s, while the Countess had different melodic figures and rhythms, and soared above the other two. But when Mozart felt obliged to exchange the parts that he had originally written for the Countess and Susanna, he produced a final version of these passages for the first performance in Vienna—one that is normally played everywhere today—in which Figaro’s part was closely matched by the Countess’s, and Susanna soared above them both. Did this spoil Mozart’s original concept of this ensemble? If so, he will have welcomed the Prague version, at any rate at certain places in the Act II finale. He may also have liked the Prague version of the Act II terzetto—although it consists of only 123 bars, not 146, and gives the Countess the higher part even in a few places at which Mozart’s earliest autograph entries placed Susanna higher.  

If the difference in the capacities of the sopranos who took the parts of Susanna and the Countess at Vienna and at Prague is the reason for some of the differences between the Vienna and the Prague scores, we should see if an explanation can be found for any of the other differences between the two versions reviewed above. The most important problem, of course—though probably impossible in any instance to solve—is whether Mozart himself was responsible for any of the alterations. 

Take, first, the changed version of Act I No. 5. It might be suggested that the Prague Susanna’s reluctance to sing any high notes that she could avoid was the reason for the dropping of the duettino which she was booked to sing with Marcellina, and for its replacement at Prague by a cavatina for Marcellina alone, ‘Signora mia garbata’. There is at present no evidence that Mozart was involved in this alteration, or that he composed the cavatina itself. Was its introduction not due to Susanna, or to Mozart, but to a demand by the Prague Marcellina for a solo number (written locally?) in Act I? Not that it would seem that she had been deprived of her Act IV aria, ‘Il capro, e la capretta’, for it is included in the Prague libretto as well as ‘Signora mia garbata’. Or was it simply the case that Prague wished to shorten the opera’s first act, the duettino of 74 bars being replaced by the cavatina of 40 bars? Marcellina’s expression of her sentiments concerning Susanna are not very different from those of the duettino, so that the plot is unchanged. 

As for the elimination of Cherubino’s first aria, ‘Non so piu cosa son, cosa faccio’, Act I No. 6, the question arises as to whether the Prague Cherubino had something to do with it. Nothing is known about this—and once again the question arises whether Prague wished merely to shorten the opera’s first act. At any rate the loss of Cherubino’s account of the effect of women on him—‘Ogni donna mi fa palpitar’—scarcely affects the opera’s main plot. 

Not quite the same thing can be said about the passage omitted from the finale of Act II, bars 398–466—the 69 bars of the Andante in 2/4 metre beginning ‘Conoscete, Signor Figaro’. For it contains Figaro’s denial that he knew anything about the letter brought by Basilio which the Count was showing to him—a denial that even Susanna and the Countess did not support. The passage offers no performance difficulty, and is of pretty short duration. Nevertheless it might be necessary to accept that Prague was prepared once again to find a passage that could be eliminated, in order to shorten the second act to a small extent, or possibly even to exculpate Don Basilio in respect of some of his activities.

11 In bars 8–12, for instance.
THERE IS no sure evidence as to the reasons for the changes in the various passages within the recitatives that have been listed above (see pp. 325–7). But some speculation is attemptable:

(a) The cut lines from ‘Chetati’ to ‘birbante’: these contain Susanna’s description of Don Basilio, the musical priest, as a ‘procurer’ on the Count’s behalf, provoking Figaro’s denunciation of him as a villain. It is possible that in Prague this was regarded as somewhat insulting a role to be assigned to a priest—or perhaps the character who played Don Basilio urged them to be omitted.

(b) Cherubino’s cut lines praising Susanna’s luck in having the job of dressing the Countess in the morning, undressing her in the evening, and putting on her brooches and ribbons. Could it be that it was desired to minimize Cherubino’s erotic interest in the Countess? (After all, his aria about the effect on him of ‘ogni donna’ had been dropped.)

(c) Don Basilio’s four cut lines denouncing Cherubino, and claiming that the young man had tried to get access to Susanna’s room—causing Susanna to say that Don Basilio was a malignant man. The elimination of these lines prevents a priest from being insulted, and reduces the insinuations about Cherubino’s eroticism once more.

(d) The first few lines of the recitative after Susanna’s Act II aria are quite different in the Prague version. Instead of Susanna calling Cherubino a little rascal, though praising his looks, she disappears into the closet in order to get two ringlets, and the Countess makes a brief comment on her character before she comes out (see P1. III). It is very hard to propose a reason for these variants.

None of these changes appears to owe anything to Mozart. Thus we should be ready to accept the notion that the variants of the Prague version of Figaro have nothing to do with the opera’s composer, in spite of the enthusiasm for Mozart that the production produced, and the pleasure that it brought to him.

Indeed it may have been the case that Mozart proceeded to eliminate the changes during the time that he spent at Prague in January–February and again in September–November 1787. Today there is a copyists’ score of Acts I–II of Figaro in Berlin; but although it is written on Bohemian paper, and its title-page includes the words ‘Rappresentata nel Teatro di Praga l’Anno 1787’, its text is identical with that of all the early Viennese copyists’ scores. There is another copyists’ score of all four acts, written on Bohemian paper (with watermarks showing various forms of a moon with a face, and of a star), in Copenhagen. But apart from one or two features that confirm a small connection with the Prague version, this score, too, basically corresponds with the Viennese version. Furthermore, a number of manuscript vocal scores were produced in Prague, based on the piano reduction of the opera made by Johann Baptist Kucharz of that city; and these, too, appear to correspond throughout with the original Viennese version. Was this pattern, then, a concession to Mozart’s wishes?

12 Berlin, Deutsche Staatsbibliothek, K-H/M 3056.
13 Copenhagen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, C I, 280 ms 7502.0131. It includes Marcellina’s cavatina ‘Signora mia garbata’, which ends on the recto of a leaf; but, surprisingly, this is immediately followed by the number that it apparently replaced, the duettino ‘Via resti servita’, which starts on the verso of the same leaf. In bar 35 of the early terzetto (No. 7 of Act I) Susanna and Basilio are given the notes of the Prague version (see above, p. 328), but the original notes of the Viennese version are also added. Moreover, the Act II terzetto, ‘Susanna or via sortite’, has been written with the Countess, not Susanna, having the higher notes—though later hands have changed the names on the two staves, and have inserted a few new leaves to restore the Vienna version.
The Prague version of the opening of the recitative after Susanna's Act II aria (in the Donaueschingen score)

By permission of the Fürstlich Fürstenbergische Hofbibliothek, Donaueschingen

Since the Donaueschingen score contains only Acts I and II, Prague's precise musical version of Acts III and IV will remain uncertain until a full score of it is discovered. It is possible that before that a partial impression will be gained from a vocal score (perhaps lacking the recitatives); for it would appear that whereas Johann Baptist Kucharz's ones, written on Bohemian paper, apparently always contain the Viennese version, those of Vincenz Maschek (Mašek) probably reproduce the Prague version. Although they are not rare, I have not yet located one that covers the second or the fourth act.  

Before a full score of the last two acts comes to light, one might make cautious use of the performance parts prepared for the September 1787 Singspiel at Donaueschingen; these were copied locally, with German words, and without recitatives. In the first two acts one can check them against the Donaueschingen score, of course. Although in the Act II finale they agree with the score in giving the

14 In the Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin, there is a vocal score of Act I only by Maschek (Mus. ms. 15,150/14). As one expects of the Prague version, instead of the Act I No. 5 duettino, it contains Marcellina's cavatina 'Signora mia garbata', and it omits Cherubino's aria, Act I No. 6. In the Muzeum České Hudby, Prague, there is a piano score of Act III by Maschek (XXXIII-D-272); but all the words are left out.
Countess the higher notes, it proves to be the case that in the Act II terzetto, reduced (like the score) in length from 146 to 123 bars, Susanna (unlike in the score) is given the higher notes, and this leaves one wondering how far one can trust these performance parts to show what the score for the last two acts had been like. Nevertheless, when one examines those of Susanna and the Countess in the Act III letter duettino, ‘Sull’aria’, one finds that the Countess is given the higher notes when she and Susanna are singing together (bars 34–36, 50–55 and 60–62) — a divergence from Mozart’s autograph. This seems a strong suggestion as to what will be found in the Prague version of Act III, when it comes to light. Unfortunately Maschek’s piano score of Act III, mentioned in note 14, does not reproduce the separate voice parts in these bars.

When all four acts of the Prague version are available for study, one will no doubt conclude that none of its variants had anything to do with Mozart. Yet it is important that all the variants of the opera should be identified, dated, and connected with their place of origin. For there is always a chance that some Prague variants might possibly throw light on features of the two operas that Mozart wrote for a first performance in that city: *Don Giovanni* and *La clemenza di Tito*.