Haydn's Hidden Homage to Mozart: Echoes of "Voi che sapete" in Opus 64, No. 3*

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The first movement of Haydn's Quartet in B♭ major, Op. 64, No. 3 and the well-known *arietta* "Voi che sapete" from Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* might seem, on first comparison, to have little in common except the key of B♭. The pieces differ in genre, tempo, meter, affect, and thematic design. However, the development section of the Quartet and the middle section of the *arietta* have remarkably similar tonal plans, which are striking enough to suggest that Haydn had "Voi che sapete" in mind when he wrote the Quartet. There is also external evidence in support of this hypothesis. In a well-known letter of February 9, 1790 to Maria Anna von Genzinger, a distressed Haydn writes that, while he was happily dreaming that he was listening to *Figaro*, the horrible north wind woke him and nearly blew his nightcap off his head. Haydn evidently first heard *Figaro* during his winter stay in Vienna in January 1790—a few months before he finished the Quartet. Documents also indicate that Haydn directed a trial performance of *Figaro* in the summer of 1790 at the Eszterháza Court Theater.[1]

The claim that Haydn's Quartet alludes to "Voi che sapete" is unusual in that it is based on the observation of somewhat concealed structural similarities, rather than overt thematic resemblances. Besides the question of influence, it seems useful to

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* An earlier version of this paper was read at the Cambridge University Music Analysis Conference, held August 7-10, 1997 at the University of Cambridge. I would like to thank Carl Schachter and Dean Sutcliffe for their helpful comments.

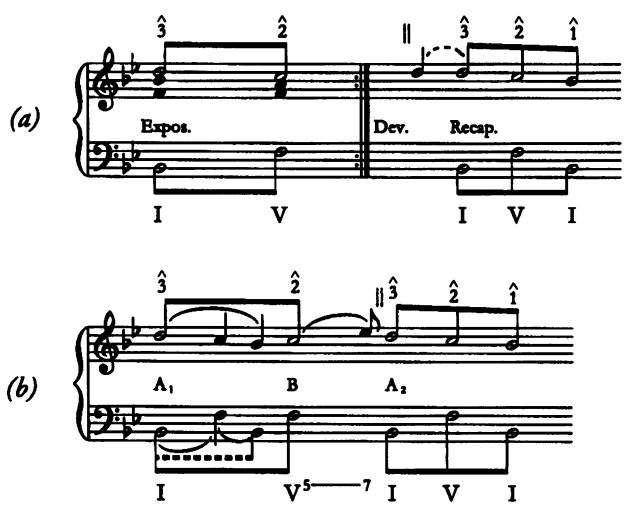
[1] The letter appears in *The Collected Correspondence and London Notebooks of Joseph Haydn*, ed. H.C. Robbins Landon (Fairlawn, N.J.: Essential Books, 1959): 96-98. See also Landon, *Haydn: Chronicle and Works* (5 vols., Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1976-80), vol. 2: 737; reference to the Eszterháza production of *Figaro* appears on p. 733.

consider how similar underlying structures assume quite different identities at later levels. It is just as important to reflect on how two or more compositions might resemble one other and yet remain individual, as it is to infer the possibility of influence or allusion. The latter part of this paper explores possible reasons for Haydn's allusion to Mozart's *arietta.*

The Structures: A Tandem Reading

Both movements have interrupted structures (in the Schenkerian sense). But the formal designs intersect with the structures in different ways. The main difference lies in the formal disposition of the structural dominant. The Quartet, as shown at Example 1a, is in sonata form, with a dominant prolongation beginning in the exposition and continuing into the development. By contrast, "Voi che sapete," shown at Example 1b, is in ternary (ABA) form, with tonally closed A sections and a B section prolonging the structural dominant (see the capital letters between the staves). Two things about Mozart's B section are remarkable: its length (roughly twice that of the A section) and its tonal complexity, which could hardly be predicted from the simple A section.

Example 1. Background structures in relation to formal designs.
a. Op. 64, No. 3
b. "Voi che sapete"



The structural function of VI (G minor) is somewhat different in each piece. In "Voi che sapete," whose middleground is shown in Example 2, the VI at m. 52 acts as an upper neighbor to V, which is resumed in m. 61 after a fairly elaborate retransitional passage. Carl Schachter, in his analysis of the *arietta*, interprets the VI as a passing chord rather than a neighboring chord at a deeper level, part of a rising fourth F-G-A-B♭. This fourth is completed on the foreground in an inner voice; see m. 60 of Example 2, where the G is transferred upward.[2]

Haydn's development, in contrast to Mozart's B section, has VI as its final goal, with no return to V prior to the recapitulation. As Example 3 illustrates, the bass G in m. 120 acts as a neighbor to the structural dominant; it implicitly resolves in m. 126 to F, the fifth of the tonic chord. Incidentally, a direct motion from VI to the recapitulatory tonic is infrequent in Haydn's music. Two other examples are also from works in B♭: the first movement of the Piano Sonata No. 18, and the finale of the Quartet Op. 33, No. 4. As Wayne Petty points out in his dissertation on C.P.E. Bach's keyboard sonatas, C.P.E. Bach used this pattern quite often; however, the procedure has not been addressed in the analytical literature.[3]

In the first nine bars of Haydn's development, three chords are tonicized in quick succession: E♭ major, C minor, and F minor. As Example 4 shows, the last of these chords completes a prolongation of the dominant chord from the end of the exposition to m. 75, where it is altered to minor. The passage concludes in m. 77 with a half cadence in F minor. A more detailed interpretation of mm. 69-77 is shown in Example 5, a foreground graph of the whole development.

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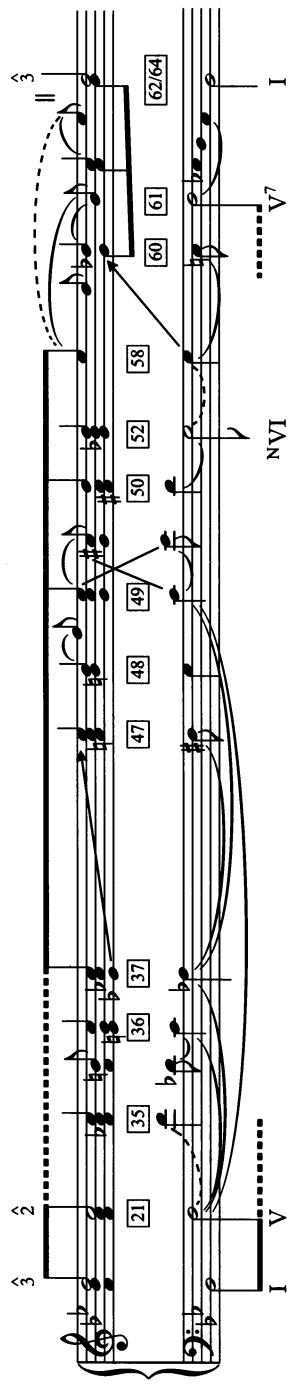
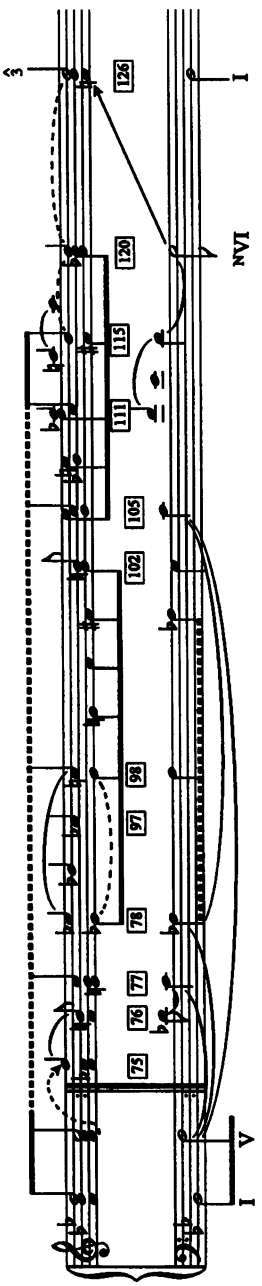
[2] My reading of "Voi che sapete" is based on Schachter's, presented in "Analysis by Key: Another Look at Modulation," *Music Analysis* 6/3 (1987): 289-318; reprinted in Schachter, *Unfoldings*, ed. Joseph N. Straus (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999): 134-160 (see Ex. 5.15 on p. 156).

[3] Wayne Christopher Petty, "Compositional Techniques in the Keyboard Sonatas of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach: Reimagining the Foundations of a Musical Style" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1995): 288-289.



Example 2. Mozart, Le Nozze di Figaro, *"Voi che sapete," middleground of B section (after Schachter).*



Example 3. Haydn, Op. 64, No. 3/I, middleground of development.

Interestingly, the opening of the development is foreshadowed by the lyrical second theme. The latter begins in m. 33 with a four-bar phrase that is answered by a similar phrase in the parallel minor. Haydn leads this second, longer phrase to a half cadence in m. 42, which is articulated by an augmented sixth on D♭ in m. 41. Both the shift to F minor and the augmented sixth are then echoed in the opening eight measures of the development.

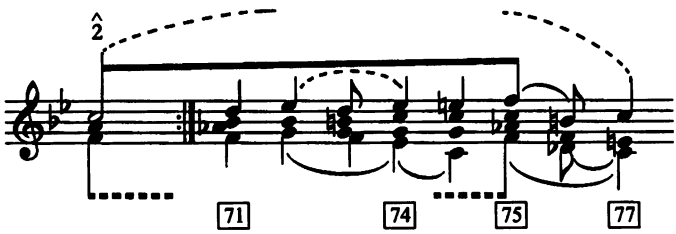
So far, three features of the Quartet's development appear to be modelled after the *arietta*'s B section: the modal shift to F minor, the half cadence on C by way of an augmented sixth on D♭, and the descending motion from C to A♭. The structural correspondence can readily be seen by comparing Example 2 (mm. 35-37) and Example 3 (mm. 75-78). In both the Mozart and the Haydn, the C-major chord functions as a divider, and the main harmonic motion is from F to A♭, rather than from C to A♭. As Wye Allanbrook notes in her account of "Voi che sapete," the key of A♭ has "a remote and cool relation to the tonality of the aria. This strange modulation is suited to the text—Cherubino's description of the fire and ice of infatuation..."[4]

The motion to A♭ major marks the beginning of a new phase in both the *arietta* and the Quartet. Mozart prolongs A♭ for nine measures—approximately one quarter of the duration of the B section. But Haydn places greater thematic and durational emphasis on A♭, which he prolongs in the bass for 21 measures of the development (see mm. 78-101). The first seven measures of Haydn's A♭ prolongation, mm. 78-84, are a literal transposition of mm. 8-14 down a whole step. The transposed passage sounds like a parody of the original not only because of its location nine

[4] Wye Jamison Allanbrook, *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart:* Le nozze di Figaro *and* Don Giovanni (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1983): 108. Allanbrook views the form of the *arietta* as not ABA but a "key-area plan" (Leonard Ratner's term for what is usually called sonata form), consisting of a tonic area (mm. 1-20), a dominant area (mm. 21-44), an X-section (mm. 45-61), and a final tonic section (mm. 62-79). In Allanbrook's view, Mozart violates an established principle of the key-area plan by ending the exposition in the alien key of A♭. The very absence of closure in the dominant key, however, speaks against the inference of a key-area plan.

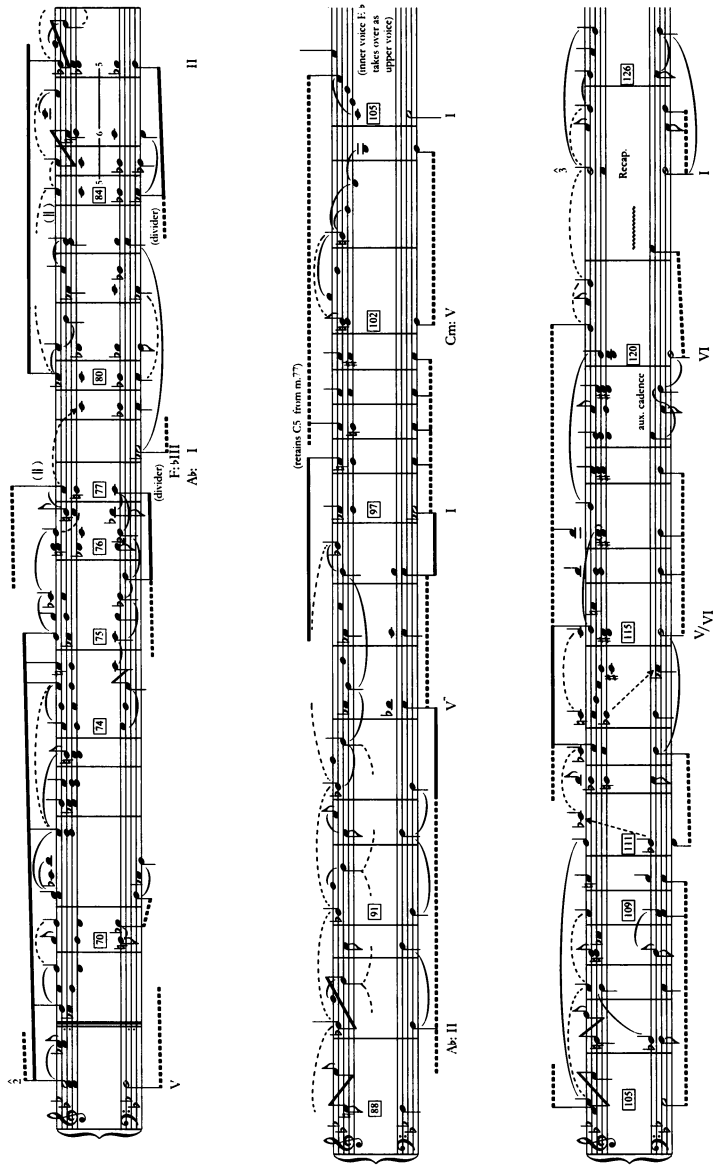
measures into the development (nearly the exact location of the original passage within the exposition), but also because of the small interval of transposition. The A♭ major passage in "Voi che sapete" likewise involves transposition of material first heard near the outset of the movement (mm. 5-8). The association of that four-bar theme with closure lends a false air of stability to the remote key of A♭, a stability which vanishes in the next two measures.

Example 4. Haydn, Op. 64, No. 3/I, reduction of mm. 69-77.



Returning to Example 5, consider the prolongation of A♭ major in the Quartet. C5, the top voice in m. 77, gives way in m. 80 to E♭5, the latter being an inner voice transferred to the top register. In m. 87, E♭5 descends to D♭5, over a tonicized II of A♭. The tonicization coincides with a statement of another theme from the exposition: the second, lyrical theme from mm. 33ff. It is interesting that while both this theme and the material preceding it in mm. 78-85 recur in the development, they do not appear in the recapitulation. Following the prolongation of B♭ minor in mm. 87-93, the harmony progresses to the dominant of A♭ in m. 94. The top voice has unfolded at this point from D♭ down to G, but regains D♭ in m. 96 by means of a series of reachings-over. The resolution of D♭ to C♭ in the top voice of m. 97 comes as a surprise, but is corrected a bar later by the semitone adjustment to C♮. The latter pitch retains the C5 from m. 77 and completes a large third-progression E♭-D♭-C spanning mm. 80-98.

Example 5. Haydn, Op. 64, No. 3/I, foreground of development.

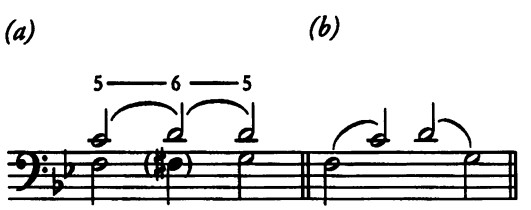


The rising semitone C♭-C♮ in mm. 97-98 seems to set off a chain reaction in the inner voice, which rises chromatically in mm. 98-102 (E♭-E♮-F-F♯-G). Meanwhile, the bass A♭ and top voice C remain stationary until the last link in the chain is completed, where the augmented sixth in m. 101 resolves to a G-major chord in m. 102. Although the B♮ to which the upper voice resolves in m. 102 is locally stable, it functions at a deeper level as a neighbor to C, which is retained in m. 105 when the music cadences in C minor. Note how the lower-neighbor figure B♮-C occurs three times during this part of the development: first in mm. 76-77; then in mm. 97-98 (here manifested enharmonically as C♭-C♮); and lastly in mm. 102-105.

The middleground structures of Haydn's development and Mozart's B section may now be compared. As Example 3 shows, the path of Haydn's bass from the end of the exposition until m. 105 is an arpeggiated F-minor chord. Mozart likewise arpeggiates an F-minor triad (see Example 2), but he proceeds from A♭ to G by way of an applied diminished seventh on F♯, rather than an augmented sixth on A♭; the two applied chords are nonetheless functionally equivalent.

After reaching C minor, both Mozart and Haydn progress to the dominant of G minor, which then cadences in G minor (compare Example 2, mm. 49-52, and Example 3, mm. 105-20). The bass unfolding from F to C is thus answered by a descending fifth D-G. As Example 6 illustrates, the pair of unfolded fifths composes out what is basically a 5-6-5 contrapuntal progression. Whereas Mozart moves within the space of a single measure from C minor to V of G minor, Haydn achieves essentially the same motion in eleven measures.

Example 6.



As shown at the bottom of Example 5, Haydn prolongs C minor in mm. 105-9 with E♭5 as the local upper voice. I believe the E♭5 represents an inner voice transferred above C5, which is the main upper voice at a deeper level. From m. 109 to m. 120, there is a large-scale statement of the rising chromatic line E♭-E♮-F-F♯-G that we observed in mm. 98-102. The enlarged statement is somewhat obscured by changes of register. The parallelism is highlighted in Example 3 (see the beams between the staves).

The modulation from F minor in m. 111 to G minor in m. 120 is difficult to understand if one only thinks in terms of keys, since F minor is quite remote from G minor. But once one grasps the linear process that guides the whole passage, the apparent detour to F minor makes sense. An interesting foreground detail, incidentally, is the augmented sixth that occurs at the very end of m. 114, which corresponds to m. 49 of "Voi che sapete" (Mozart's augmented sixth has greater structural significance than Haydn's).

As mentioned near the beginning of this article, the connection between G minor and the return to tonic is handled quite differently in each piece. Whereas Mozart follows a rather elaborate sequential path from VI to V^7 in mm. 52-61, Haydn virtually juxtaposes VI with the recapitulatory tonic: by jettisoning the root of G minor in m. 124, Haydn is able to reinterpret D and B♭ as members of tonic harmony.

Examples 2 and 3 should be reviewed in three corresponding sections. The first section ends with the half cadence on C (Example 2 up to m. 36; Example 3 up to m. 77). The second phase begins on A♭ and concludes with a cadence in C minor (Example 2 up to m. 49; Example 3 up to m. 105). The third section cadences in G minor, then leads into the reprise.

Similarities to Op. 64, No. 3 in Haydn's Own Music

Two other developments by Haydn share features of the works we have been considering. The development of the first movement of Symphony No. 89 in F (written in 1787), is shown in Example 7 at three levels of reduction. Similarities to the *arietta* and the

Quartet can be seen at level (c): first, in m. 62, there is a half cadence on V of the minor dominant (marked by an augmented sixth, as in the other pieces); the subsequent drop by a major third to E♭ is analogous to the drop to A♭ in the other works; this E♭ connects with the augmented sixth in m. 87, analogous to the one on A♭ in Op. 64, No. 3.

The development of Op. 74, No. 2/I (written in 1793) is shown in Example 8 at three levels of reduction. On the whole, this development is less similar to Op. 64, No. 3 and "Voi che sapete" than that of Symphony No. 89. Both these examples reveal that the points of correspondence between Op. 64, No. 3 and "Voi che sapete"—taken individually—are not extraordinary. The progression from one major chord to another by a descent of a major third (e.g., from C major to A♭ major) is actually a characteristic feature of numerous developments by Haydn, as James Webster has noted in his book on Haydn's "Farewell" Symphony (this is one of three progressions Webster refers to as "remote harmonic juxtapositions"[5]). Yet the similarities between "Voi che sapete" and the Quartet, taken altogether, are too consistent and unusual to be simply a coincidental result of two composers writing in a common musical language. The likelihood of a coincidence is also reduced by the closeness in time of Haydn's exposure to *Figaro* and his work on the Quartet in the spring and summer of 1790.[6]

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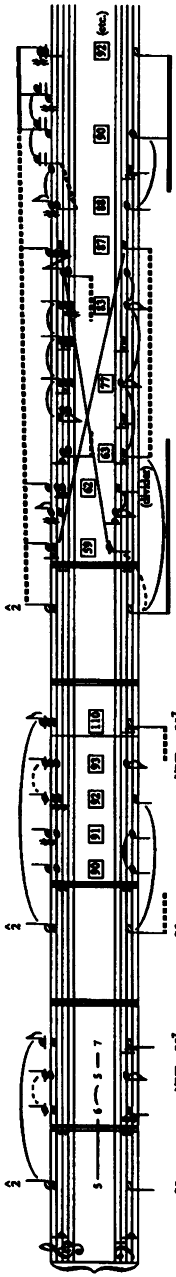
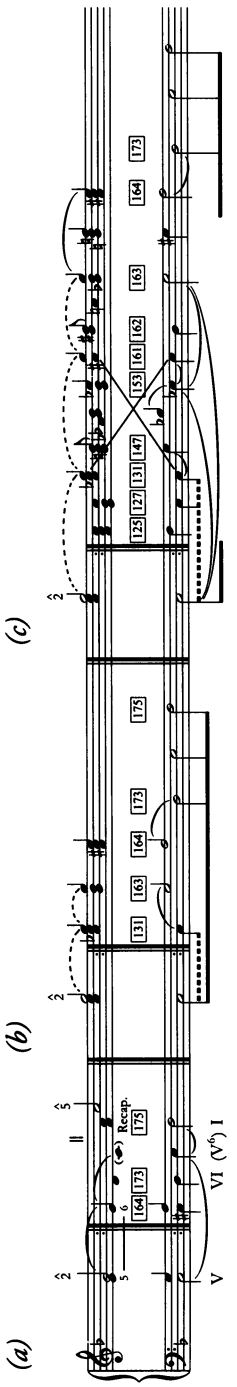
[5] James Webster, *Haydn's "Farewell" Symphony and the Idea of Classical Style* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991): 134-138.

[6] Yet another Haydn work of comparable interest is the chorus *The Storm* (London, 24 February 1792). This D minor work has a modulatory plan that, in its central portion, resembles that of the Quartet's development, except that the larger context is D minor rather than B♭ major. The plan (up until the Andante section that commences in m. 198) may be summarized as follows: D minor, F major (m. 88), A♭ major (m. 121), C minor (m. 141), G minor (m. 149), A minor (m. 171, altered to major as V of D in m. 193).

Example 7. Haydn, Symphony No. 89/I, development.

(a) (b) (c)





Example 8. Haydn, Op. 74, No. 2/II, development.

Aesthetic Implications of the Allusion

To claim that Op. 64, No. 3 alludes to the tonal structure of "Voi che sapete" is not simply to claim that "Voi che sapete" influenced the Quartet. Much has been written on musical influence in recent years, and reference to some of this literature will clarify the present argument.

In a valuable essay focusing on Gluck's influence on *Idomeneo*, John Platoff draws upon the work of the art historian Göran Hermerén, whom he quotes as follows:

> If X influenced Y with respect to a, then Y must be different (with respect to a) than it would have been, had there been no influence.

Following this quotation, Platoff remarks:

> This statement, which seems self-evident in the abstract, concisely defines what Leonard Meyer has called a deflecting influence, one that leads a composer to make choices other than those he would probably have made in the absence of the influence. And it is almost exclusively deflecting influences that attract the interest of music historians.[7]

"Voi che sapete" does not constitute a deflecting influence on the Quartet. The point here is not that Haydn wrote differently than he had in the past because of his knowledge of "Voi che sapete," or that he could not have written it without such knowledge, but that Haydn chose to express his admiration for the *arietta*'s remarkable tonal plan by, in a sense, troping that plan. An homage of this sort is quite different in nature from, say, the pronounced influence of Haydn's Op. 33 quartets upon Mozart's "Haydn" quartets.

Two important questions arise from the hypothesis of an homage: (1) why did Haydn choose an operatic number (as opposed to a quartet) as a model for his development section; and (2) why conceal the allusion to the *arietta*? The answer to the first

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[7] John Platoff, "Writing About Influences: *Idomeneo*, a Case Study," in *Explorations in Music, the Arts, and Ideas: Essays in Honor of Leonard B. Meyer*, ed. Eugene Narmour and Ruth S. Solie. Festschrift Series No. 7 (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon, 1988): 50-51.

question must begin with the fact that "Voi che sapete" is no ordinary operatic number. In the dramatic context, Cherubino is actually singing his own recently composed *canzone* to Susanna's guitar accompaniment. The initial simplicity of the *arietta* makes it seem as though an amateur could have written it. Yet the B section leads much further afield tonally than the A section would lead one to expect, thus threatening the generic norms established at the beginning. Indeed, the tonal drama of the B section is rather like that of a development section, and surely exceeds Cherubino's compositional ability.

The ironic blend of simple realism and sophisticated tonal maneuvers in "Voi che sapete" exemplifies Mozart's ability to please both the connoisseur and the less learned listener, about which he himself had written in a well-known letter to his father (dated December 28, 1782). Concerning the Piano Concertos K. 413, 414, and 415, Mozart wrote:

> These concertos are a happy medium between what is too easy and too difficult; they are very brilliant, pleasing to the ear, and natural, without being vapid. There are passages here and there from which the connoisseurs alone can derive satisfaction; but these passages are written in such a way that the less learned cannot fail to be pleased, though without knowing why.[8]

I believe that the modulations in "Voi che sapete" are aimed at connoisseurs, but that they would also please even those listeners who fail to grasp their structural significance. Surely, the audiences that heard *Figaro* in Mozart's time would have included a larger proportion of non-connoisseurs than the typical audience at a string quartet performance. Because the string quartet is written for connoisseurs—particularly the players themselves—it sets up a more challenging "horizon of expectations," one that includes remote modulations. And so, by echoing the tonal plan of "Voi che sapete" in Op. 64, No. 3, Haydn, in a sense, restores "learned"

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[8] Emily Anderson, trans. and ed. *The Letters of Mozart and His Family* (rev. ed. by A. Hyatt King and Monica Carolan, London: Macmillan, 1966), letter no. 476: 833.

material to the medium of chamber music. That Haydn's allusion to Mozart should be concealed is in keeping with the notion that music for string quartet is *musica reservata*; accordingly, only a few listeners need be aware of the homage.

In an important article on plagiarism and influence, Charles Rosen acknowledges the difficulty in verifying an allusion that does not involve obvious quotation. Rosen argues that the opening of Brahms's Violin Concerto alludes to that of Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto, while conceding that the allusion

> is for connoisseurs alone...For Beethoven's V of vi, Brahms substitutes the even more remote triad of the flat seventh degree...This last borrowing from the Fourth Piano Concerto may be doubted, and I have proposed it deliberately because it is dubious...It approaches the sort of transformation of a model which is so complete that it is almost undetectable and certainly unprovable without a signed affidavit from the composer admitting the borrowing.[9]

The transformation of the B section of "Voi che sapete" into the Quartet's development is easier to detect than Brahms's allusion, but remains, of course, unprovable. There is a limit to the number of verifiable claims about influence that historians and analysts can make; yet this need not stand in the way of interpretative claims about how a piece of music might be heard. To recognize connections between the *arietta* and the Quartet enriches our understanding not only of these works but also of Haydn's admiration for Mozart.

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[9] Charles Rosen, "Influence: Plagiarism and Inspiration," *19th-Century Music* 4/2 (1980): 100.