

MOZART'S BAWDY CANONS, VULGARITY AND DEBAUCHERY AT THE WIEDNER THEATER

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ABSTRACT

Mozart's bawdy canons and use of scatological parlance in his letters have been described as indicative of a personality given to crass expression. Moreover, his association with Emanuel Schikaneder's supposedly dissolute Theater auf der Wieden, a boisterous venue for German stage works, has been taken as further evidence of his profligate tendencies. A review of the original source materials reveals that these views are apocryphal, originating after Mozart's death and embellished in nineteenth-century commentary and scholarship. Examples of even raunchier canons, composed by musicians with connections to Mozart, Schikaneder and the Theater auf der Wieden, provide new insight into the genre. An examination of surviving bawdy Viennese canons in their social context, together with a reconsideration of the Mozart family letters and attitudes toward vulgarity in Viennese popular theatre, reveals that lewd expressions on the stage were relatively uncommon in this period, that Mozart's use of scatological language was relatively mild for the time and that accounts of the composer's debauchery in his last years have little evidentiary basis.



Milos Forman's 1984 film *Amadeus* presents a striking picture of Mozart in Emanuel Schikaneder's theatrical circle at the Freihaus auf der Wieden, a depiction that has been accepted to a degree in some academic commentary.¹ The company appears as a lusty troupe of young actors, musicians and circus-like performers regularly indulging in bacchanals. Sexual freedom is the rule, and Mozart, already portrayed as given to lewd public speech, participates with gusto. One scene depicts a 'vaudeville' performance at the theatre, a kaleidoscopic pasticcio not of separate numbers, but of short, parodied phrases from Mozart's Italian and German operas. A giant stage horse from *Don Giovanni* defecates sausages, champagne and a live bird to the delight of the intoxicated and demonstrative audience. It may be that this strange production, an invocation of carnivalesque revelry, was loosely based on nineteenth-century accounts of the theatre as a kind of operatic house of ill repute and a site for lascivious behaviour.² In reality, Schikaneder never staged a semi-improvised low farce at the Wiednertheater like the blatantly crass one depicted in *Amadeus*.³ This was

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I would like to thank Dexter Edge for offering insightful comments on an early draft of this article.

1 David P. Schroeder, *Mozart in Revolt: Strategies of Resistance, Mischief, and Deception* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 180: 'Mozart and Schikaneder spent their time together clearly doing more than collaborating on *Die Zauberflöte*; the depiction of this by Peter Shaffer and Milos Forman in *Amadeus* was probably not too far off the mark . . .'

2 Carnavalesque is a concept introduced by Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984). The scene in *Amadeus* also depicts inversions that mock political power and social conventions.

3 Otto Erich Deutsch, *Das Freihaustheater auf der Wieden 1787–1801*, second edition (Vienna and Leipzig: Deutscher Verlag für Jugend und Volk, 1937), gives a fairly comprehensive list of the theatre's repertory and there is no trace of any



Table 1 Mozart's scatological canons

Canon	Comments
1. <i>Leck mich im Arsch</i> , K231/382 ^c (a6)	Only this line of text appears in the first edition of 1804. Autograph apparently lost and authenticity questionable. The text may be by Mozart
2. <i>Leck mir den Arsch fein recht schön sauber</i> , K233/382 ^d (a3)	Mozart only wrote the text line to a pre-existing canon. The earliest source is the first edition of 1804. Autograph apparently lost and authenticity questionable. The music is probably by Wenzel Trnka and the text may be by Mozart
3. <i>Grechtele's enk</i> , K556 (a4)	Listed in Mozart's <i>Verzeichnüss aller meiner Werke</i> as '4stimmige Canoni' and dated 2 September 1788. Autograph apparently lost, formerly in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz; copy in Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Musiksammlung, Mus. Hs. 17554
4. <i>Gehn wir im Prater, gehn wir in d'Hetz</i> , K558 (a4)	Listed in the <i>Verzeichnüss</i> as '4stimmige Canoni' and dated 2 September 1788. Autograph in the Badische Landesbibliothek Karlsruhe, Musikabteilung, Don. Mus. Autogr. 4379 (formerly in the Fürstlich Fürstenbergische Hofbibliothek Donaueschingen)
5. <i>Difficile lectu mihi Mars et jonicu difficile</i> , K559 (a3)	Listed in the <i>Verzeichnüss</i> as '2. 3stimmige Canoni' and dated 2 September 1788. Autograph in the British Library, Zweig MS. 58
6. <i>O du eselhafter Peierll</i> , K560/559a (a4)	Listed in the <i>Verzeichnüss</i> as '4stimmige Canoni' and dated 2 September 1788. Autograph in the British Library, Zweig MS. 58. Identical to <i>O du eselhafter Martin (Jakob)</i> , K560b/560. Autograph in the Bibliotheca Mozartiana der Internationalen Stiftung Mozarteum Salzburg, Signatur K560 ⁸⁷
7. <i>Bona nox! bist a recht Ox</i> , K561 (a4)	Listed in the <i>Verzeichnüss</i> as '4stimmige Canoni' and dated 2 September 1788. Autograph in the Biblioteka Jagiellonska Kraków, Mus. ms. autogr. W. A. Mozart 561 (formerly in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz)

simply unthinkable for a 'Royal Imperial Privileged Theatre', where all productions required scripts to be approved by the official censor. Robert Gutman's assertion that this theatre specialized in 'outhouse humour' is unsubstantiated and almost certainly false.⁴

Only one musical genre in this period had the degree of vulgarity depicted in Forman's scene: the bawdy canon. In this genre, a brief vocal piece often notated in one musical line, humour resides chiefly in the shock of crude language and scabrous topics rather than in the wit characteristic of English songs such as the catch.⁵ Modern scholars know the bawdy canon mainly through a handful of examples by Mozart, listed in Table 1, but have yet to identify the social context for them.⁶ Their coarse language caused embarrassment among

kind of improvised farce. Moreover, the biographical account of Carl Joseph Schikaneder challenges the assertion that his uncle selected only low comic characters for his roles: 'Dort erfährt nebst andern Unrichtigkeiten aus: daß mein Oheim nur Thadädis und Charaktere gemein-komischer Gattung zu seinem Rollenfache gewählt' (There we learn, along with other mistakes, that my uncle selected for his typical type of role only Thadädis (a Hanswurst-like comic role) and characters of a common comic type). See Carl Joseph Schikaneder, 'Emanuel Schikaneder. Geschildert von seinem Neffen: Joseph Carl Schikaneder', *Der Gesellschafter oder Blätter für Geist und Herz* 18 (3–9 May 1834): 71 (3 May), 353–355; 72 (5 May), 358–359; 73 (7 May), 361–362; 74 (9 May), 370–371.

4 Robert Gutman, *Mozart: A Cultural Biography* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1999), 721: 'He [Schikaneder] inserted fairy, magic, and chivalric tales into popular peasant farces abounding in outhouse humour, the unembarrassed mixture of romance and vulgarity composing the main traffic of the Freihaus theatre's stage – its very speciality.'

5 See David Johnson, 'Catch', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, second edition, ed. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London: Macmillan, 2001), volume 5, 280–281.

6 For an overview of Mozart's canons see Neal Zaslaw, 'The Non-Canonic Status of Mozart's Canons', *Eighteenth-Century Music* 3/1 (2006), 109–123.



nineteenth-century editors and biographers, who consequently bowdlerized the texts.⁷ The restoration of the original texts in the *Neue Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke* allowed a reassessment of the canons, usually as the musical correlate to scatological humour in Mozart's letters.⁸ In recent decades, a number of writers have attempted to gain insight into the composer's personality, or to discover a medical abnormality (such as Tourette's syndrome), by examining the anal and fecal parlance of his canons and correspondence.⁹ Yet, as Alan Dundes has demonstrated, such expressions were not uncommon at the time in informal speech and writing.¹⁰ Moreover, there are even raunchier canons by Johann Baptist Henneberg and Friedrich Sebastian Mayer, two musicians with connections to Mozart, Schikaneder and the Theater auf der Wieden. These previously unknown works contextualize the scatological humour in Mozart's canons and letters and help us assess the putative vulgarity of contemporary Viennese theatre. In this article I discuss Henneberg's and Mayer's canons alongside similar pieces, examine attitudes toward ribald speech and song in Viennese popular theatre and evaluate views of Mozart as a debauchee. The evidence reveals that scatological expressions on the stage were relatively uncommon and that the evidence for Mozart as a profligate is scanty and ultimately unconvincing.

THREE 'LASCIVIOUS' CANONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE WIEDNERTHEATER COMPANY

Three remarkably lewd canons are preserved in Berlin on two sides of single manuscript leaf with a cover page bearing a nineteenth-century inscription by Aloys Fuchs (Figures 1–3):¹¹

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- 7 The prudish editors of *Oeuvres complètes de Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1804), volume 16, replaced the canons' texts; the editors of *Wolfgang Amadeus Mozarts Werke: Kritisch durchgesehene Gesamtausgabe* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1876–1907), series 7, volume 2 (1877), ed. Gustav Nottebohm, continued this bowdlerizing with their own texts. For a discussion of the first edition see Michael Ochs, 'L. m. i. a.: Mozart's Suppressed Canon Texts', *Mozart-Jahrbuch* (1991), 254–261. Early biographers like Nissen (discussed below) also provided euphemistic replacements for these kinds of expressions.
- 8 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *Neue Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke* (NMA) III/10: *Kanons*, ed. Albert Dunning (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1974); *Kritischer Bericht*, ed. Holger M. Stüwe (2007). See Emanuel Winternitz, 'Gnagflow Trazom: An Essay on Mozart's Script, Pastimes, and Nonsense Letters', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 11/2–3 (1958), 200–216; Wolfgang Hildesheimer, *Mozart*, trans. Marion Faber (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1982), 52; and Schroeder, *Mozart in Revolt*, *passim*.
- 9 For example, L. M. Gunne, 'Hatte Mozart Tourettes Syndrom?', *Läkartidningen* 88 (1991), 4325–4326; Benjamin Simkin, *Medical and Musical Byways of Mozartiana* (Santa Barbara: Fithian Press, 1992); K. A. Aterman, 'Should Mozart Have Been Psychoanalyzed? Some Comments on Mozart's Language in his Letters', *Dalhousie Review* 73 (1993), 175–186; and Stefan Schaub, 'Mozart und das Tourette-Syndrom', *Acta Mozartiana* 41 (1994), 15–20. L[ucien] R. Karhausen, 'Letter to the Editor', *British Medical Journal* 306 (1993), 522, discusses problems with the Tourette's-syndrome hypothesis.
- 10 Alan Dundes, *Life is Like a Chicken Coop Ladder: Studies of German National Character through Folklore* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1984), shows that this type of language had been a part of German culture for centuries, as in the writings of Luther, Goethe and Heine, among others.
- 11 Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Musikabteilung [henceforth D-B], Mus. ms. Autograph J. B. Henneberg 2. The leaf, a partial sheet of paper, bears the stamp 'Ex Bibl. Regia Berolin', indicating that it belonged to the Royal Prussian Library in Berlin. A section of the watermark is visible: three crescent moons over the letters REAL, with thin braided chain lines. This is northern Italian paper of the type used by Viennese composers in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The leaf belonged to a manuscript collection owned by Fuchs (1799–1853) that the library acquired in 1879 as part of the Friedrich August Grasnack estate. For details see Richard Schaal, *Quellen und Forschungen zur Wiener Musiksammlung von Aloys Fuchs* (Graz and Vienna: Böhlau, 1966), and Schaal, 'Neues zur Biographie von Friedrich August Grasnack', *Im Dienst der Quellen zur Musik: Festschrift Gertraut Haberkamp zum 65. Geburtstag* (Tübing: Schneider, 2002), 521–526. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own.

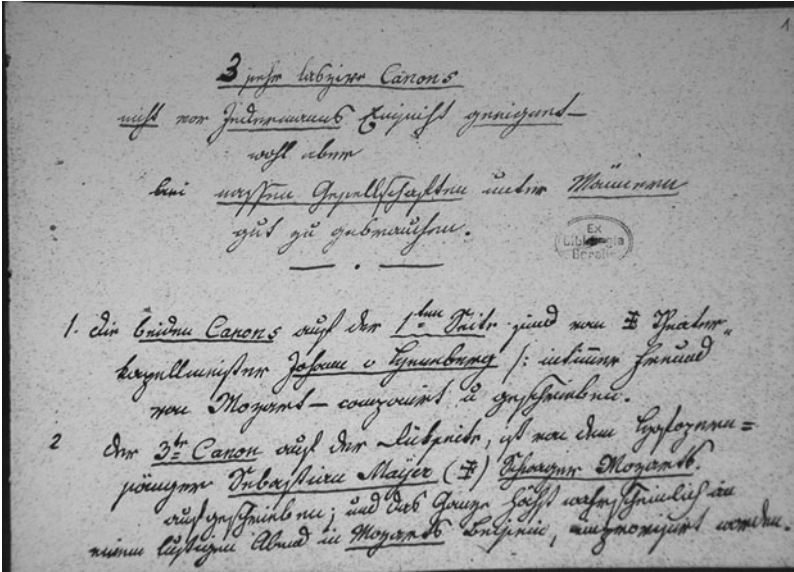


Figure 1 Aloys Fuchs, cover page to '3 sehr laszive Canons' by Johann Baptist Henneberg and Friedrich Sebastian Mayer, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Musikabteilung, Mus. ms. Autograph J. B. Henneberg 2, cover page. Used by permission



Figure 2 Canons 1–2 by Johann Baptist Henneberg, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Musikabteilung, Mus. ms. Autograph J. B. Henneberg 2, page [1]. Used by permission



Figure 3 Canon 3 by Friedrich Sebastian Mayer, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Musikabteilung, Mus. ms. Autograph J. B. Henneberg 2, page [2]. Used by permission

3 sehr laszive Canons [³ is written in black ink over the original ² in pink]
 nicht vor Jedermanns Einsicht geeignet –
 wohl aber
 bei nassen Gesellschaften unter Männern gut zu gebrauchen.

1. die beiden Canons auf der 1ten Seite sind vom Theater kapellmeister Johann v Henneberg /: intimmer Freund von Mozart – componirt u geschrieben.
2. der 3te Canon auf der Rückseite, ist von dem Hofopernsänger Sebastian Mayer (Schwager Mozarts. aufgeschrieben; und das Ganze höchst wahrscheinlich an einem lustigen Abend in Mozarts Beisein, improvisirt worden.

3 very lascivious canons
 not proper for everyone's perusal –
 but
 good for use in inebriated [literally 'wet'] company among men.

1. the two canons on the 1st page are composed and written out by the late theatre Kapellmeister Johann v Henneberg [born 5 December 1768 in Vienna; died 27 November 1822] /: intimate friend of Mozart.
2. der 3rd canon on the reverse side is written out by the late court opera singer [Friedrich] Sebastian Mayer [also spelled Mayer, Meier and Meyer, born 1773; died May 1835], brother-in-law of Mozart; and the whole was most probably improvised on a merry evening in Mozart's presence.

All three canons have lewd texts written from a male perspective, and as such Fuchs found them inappropriate for mixed company. Fuchs adapted Henneberg's own inscription over his two canons: 'gut in



nassen Gesellschaften zu gebrauchen' (good for use in inebriated company).¹² Fuchs's statement that these canons were 'most probably improvised on a merry evening in Mozart's presence' is likely to be a figment of his imagination. Although the works may date from Mozart's lifetime, there is no evidence that he ever met Friedrich Sebastian Mayer, who started working at the Wiednertheater almost two years after the composer's death in 1791 and did not marry Mozart's sister-in-law Josepha Hofer until 1797.¹³

Henneberg was the Kapellmeister or music director at the Theater auf der Wieden starting around 1789. He was a skilled organist, serving at Vienna's Schottenkirche, and a successful composer of both sacred and secular music. He collaborated with Mozart and others on the opera *Der Stein der Weisen* for the Wiednertheater in 1790, and rehearsed and later directed performances of *Die Zauberflöte*.¹⁴ The handwriting on the first page of the leaf containing the canons is clearly the same as that in Henneberg's other autograph manuscripts.¹⁵ Mayer's handwriting is more difficult to identify, since there are no readily available scores in his hand. But Mayer, who was Beethoven's first Pizarro in *Fidelio*, made an entry in one of Otto Hatwig's *Stammbücher* (personal albums) dated 12 February 1800 in Vienna, and the handwriting is very similar to that of the canon's text (Figure 4).¹⁶ Still, this identification cannot be considered definitive, for while Fuchs collected numerous autograph manuscripts and was considered an expert on Mozart in his lifetime and after, he occasionally made errors in identification, and his attributions should be independently verified.¹⁷ Moreover, Mayer is not otherwise known to have composed music. He sang, wrote and arranged librettos and later served as a stage manager, and in this instance may simply have been the copyist of the canon.

Here are the texts of the canons, in the original Viennese dialect and English translation. The music is realized in Examples 1–3.

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- 12 A vocal quartet with the text of a drinking song is attributed to Henneberg in a manuscript belonging to Brno's Moravian Music Museum, shelf mark A 16.031 (originally from Náměšt nad Oslavou): 'Trinklied in Quarttet v[on] Henneberg. Beym Gläserklang und Rundgesang laßt uns heut fröhlich seyn' (Drinking song quartet by Henneberg. With glasses clinking and a roundelay let us be cheerful today). 'Nass' (wet) could mean soured or inebriated. See *Deutsches Wörterbuch von Jacob und Wilhelm Grimm. 16 Bde. in 32 Teilbänden. Leipzig 1854–1961. Quellenverzeichnis Leipzig 1971.* <<http://woerterbuchnetz.de/DWB/?sigle=DWB&mode=Vernetzung&lemid=GN03103#XGN03103>> (31 March 2013).
- 13 A surviving theatre poster in the archive of Vienna's Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde indicates that Mayer first appeared at the Wiednertheater on 9 September 1793 as Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte*. See Michael Lorenz, 'Neue Forschungsergebnisse zum Theater auf der Wieden und Emanuel Schikaneder', *Wiener Geschichtsblätter* 4 (2008), 15–36.
- 14 Peter Branscombe and David J. Buch, 'Henneberg, Johann Baptist', *Grove Music Online* <www.oxfordmusiconline.com> (12 May 2013).
- 15 The motet *Tantum ergo* is preserved in D-B, Mus. ms. autograph J. B. Henneberg 1, along with *Notturmi* Nos 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12 (Mus. ms. autograph J. B. Henneberg 3). Autograph scores of the *Notturmi* Nos 1 and 3 are in the music department of the Bibliothèque de France, Ms. 6953, whereas *Notturmo* No. 9 is in the music department of the Wienbibliothek im Rathaus (henceforth A-WbR), M.H. 10682/c. An autograph fragment of the opera *Die Eisenkönigin* (1793) is in the music department of the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek [henceforth A-ÖNB], Mus. Hs. [S.m.] 3843, along with a duet 'Schau Mädlel, jetzt wär halt die hübscheste Zeit', Mus. Hs. 19145, and the '2. Benedictus von Henneberg, Part.' in Peter Winter's *Missa in D minor* for two choruses and orchestra, HK1584.
- 16 Otto Hatwig Stammbücher, A-WbR, Handschriften, 74841 JA, volume 1, folio 37: '495. I Freund! I Vereinfache deine Bedürfnisse – deine Lebensweise – deinen Glauben, so wirst du, was übrig bleibt mit Besonnenheit geniessen. I Wien I Den 12ten Februar 1800. Fried. Seb. Meier mp I Schauspieler am K. K. I priv. Wiedner=Theater.'
- 17 For example, the so-called 'Pa-pa-pa' letter from Schikaneder to Mozart in A-WbR, Handschriften, Ja N 8.355. See Mozart, *Briefe und Aufzeichnungen: Gesamtausgabe. Erweiterte Ausgabe*, ed. Wilhelm A. Bauer, Otto Erich Deutsch, Joseph Heinz Eibl and Ulrich Konrad (Kassel: Bärenreiter/Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 2005), volume 4, 532, volume 6, 676–677 and 728, and Peter Branscombe, 'Die Zauberflöte: Some Textual and Interpretive Problems', *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 92/1 (1965–1966), 47–51.

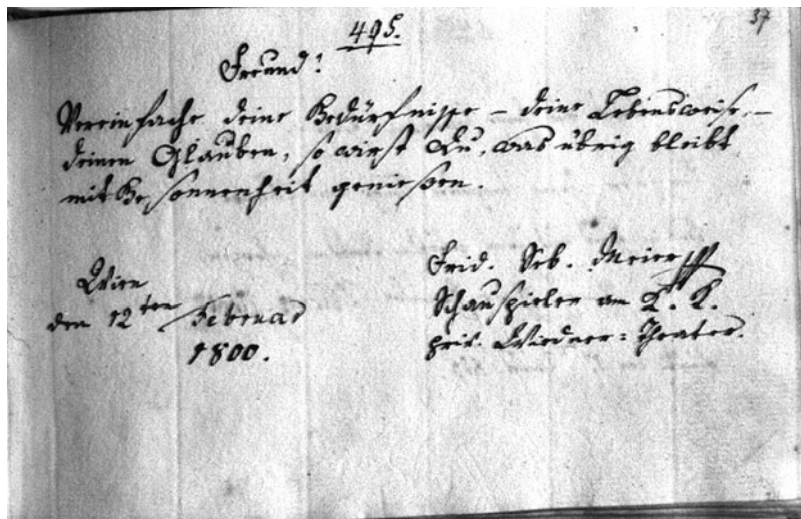


Figure 4 Friedrich Sebastian Mayer, entry of 12 February 1800 in Otto Hatwig's *Stammbuch*, Wienbibliothek im Rathaus, Handschriften, 74841 JA, volume 1, f. 37. Used by permission

gut in nassen Gesellschaften zu gebrauchen

di Henneberg a 3 Voci

Moderato

Jetzt kann i nim-mer hal - ten, jezt muß i aus - si
 Jezt kann i nim-mer hal - ten, jezt muß i aus - si prun - zen. ja fin - ster iß nur her a Licht i thu da
 8
 Jetzt kann i nim-mer hal - ten, jezt muß i aus - si prun - zen. ja fin - ster iß nur her a
 prun - zen. ja fin - ster iß nur her a Licht i thu da ne - ben. nur g'schwind
 ne - ben. nur g'schwind sonst geht's in d'Ho - sen.
 15
 Licht i thu da ne - ben. nur g'schwind sonst geht's in d'Ho - sen.
 sonst geht's in d'Ho - sen.

Example 1 Canon 1. di [Johann Baptist] Henneberg. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Musikabteilung, Mus. ms. Autograph J. B. Henneberg 2



di Henneberg a 3 Voci

Moderato

Brü - derl laß kein schlei - chen thu lie - ber'n rech - ten Schaß a Schlei - cher thut stic - ken a

7

Brü - derl laß kein schlei - chen thu lie - ber'n rech - ten Schaß a

lie - ber'n rech - ten Schaß a Schlei - cher thut stic - ken a Kra - cher macht an Spaß gr!

Kra - cher macht an Spaß gr! hohl dich der Teu - fel igt schmek i schon an Kaß, pfui!

13

Schlei - cher thut stic - ken a Kra - cher macht an Spaß gr! hohl dich der Teu - fel igt schmek i schon an Kaß, pfui!

hohl dich der Teu - fel igt schmek i schon an Kaß, pfui!

Example 2 Canon 2. di [Johann Baptist] Henneberg. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Musikabteilung, Mus. ms. Autograph J. B. Henneberg 2

Canon 1 (Henneberg):

Jezt kann i nimmer halten, [orig: Jezt muß i an halten]
 jezt muß i aussu prunzen
 ja finster iß nur her a Licht
 i thu da neben.
 nur g'schwind
 sonst geht's in d'Hosen.

I can't hold it now,
 I have to piss now.
 Yes, it's dark, get me a light.
 I missed the spot!
 But quickly,
 Or else I'll go in my trousers!

Canon 2 (Henneberg):

Brüderl laß kein schleichen thu
 Lieber'n rechten Schaß



Canon von dem Hofopernisten Sebastian Meier eigenhändig geschri[eben]

1
ich möcht gern Vö - - - geln hab a - ber 'n kran - ken Schwanz.

9
2
ich möcht gern Vö - - - geln find kei - nen Jung - fern Kranz.

1
ich möcht gern Vö - - - geln hab a - ber 'n kran - ken Schwanz.

17
3
Was hilfts pro bi ren, ich kann halt nim - mer - mehr.

2
ich möcht gern Vö - - - geln find kei - nen Jung - fern Kranz.

1
ich möcht gern Vö - - - geln hab a - ber 'n kran - ken Schwanz.

25
4
Mein Schatz hat d'Pau - ken, und ich das Keh rel gschwer.

3
Was hilfts pro bi ren, ich kann halt nim - mer - mehr.

2
ich möcht gern Vö - geln find kei - nen Jung - fern Kranz.

1
ich möcht gern Vö - geln hab a - ber 'n kran - ken Schwanz.

Example 3 Canon 3. Friedrich Sebastian Mayer. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Musikabteilung, Mus. ms. Autograph J. B. Henneberg 2

a Schleicher thut sticken
a Kracher macht an Spaß[?]gr!
hohl dich der Teufel izt
schmek i schon an Kaß, pfui!

Brother, don't let out a silent one,
It is better to make an honest fart.
The silent one is stinky.
To let a loud one rip is more fun.
Now go to the devil!
I can already smell that cheese, phooey!



Canon 3 (Canon / von dem Hofopernisten Sebastian Meier eigenhändig geschrie[ben]):
 ich möcht gern vögeln
 hab aber 'n kranken Schwanz.
 ich möcht gern vögeln
 find keinen Jungfern Kranz.
 Was hilfts probiren,
 ich kann halt nimmermehr.
 Mein Schatz hat d'Pauken,¹⁸
 Und ich das Kehrlgschwer.

I would really like to fuck,
 but I have a sick dick.
 I would really like to fuck,
 can't find young pussy.
 What does it help to try?
 I cannot stand it any longer.
 My sweetheart has the farts/pox [venereal warts?],
 and I [have] a sore on my rascal.

These three texts have a degree of vulgarity beyond anything attributed to Mozart. Moreover, the Mayer text is sexual, a topic not broached in Mozart's bawdy canons. Unlike Mozart's language, which mostly relies on trite expressions, the texts here seem not to be clichés but short, rhymed bawdy narratives, more puerile and perhaps intentionally shocking. This may be why Fuchs chose the adjective 'jocular' ('scherzhaft') to describe a late eighteenth-century copy of *O du eselhafter Martin*, K560b/560 (one of '2 Scherzhafte Canons'), rather than 'very lascivious'.¹⁹ Fuchs's suggestion that the Henneberg and Mayer canons were only for male company seems plausible, but we know that Mozart's mother, sister and cousin occasionally enjoyed scatological humour.²⁰ In a letter of 17 October 1777 from Augsburg to his father in Salzburg, Mozart described a small gathering with his mother during which he spontaneously added vulgar words to a canon directed at his cousin Maria Anna Thekla (Bäsele):

Ein gewisser P: Emilian ein hofärtiger Esel und ein einfältiger wizling seiner Profeßion war gar herzig. er wollte immer seinen spaß mit der bäsele haben, sie hatte aber ihren spaß mit ihm – endlich als er rauschig war (welches bald erfolgte) fieng er von der Musick an. er sang einen Canon, und sagte ich habe in meinem leben nichts schönens gehört. ich sagte, mir ist leid, ich kann nicht mitsingen, dann ich kann vonn Natur aus nicht intoniren. daß thut nichts, sagte er. er fing an. ich war der Dritte. ich machte aber einen ganz andern Text drauf, P: E: o du schwanz du, leck du mich im arsch. *sotto voce*: zu meiner base. dann lachten wir wieder eine halbe stunde.²¹

A certain Father Emilian, a conceited ass and a sorry wit of his profession, was very sweet on Bäsele and wanted to jest with her, but she made fun of him – finally when he was a bit tipsy, which soon

18 As *Pauken* means timpani, this might refer to a loud sound associated with flatulence. The word could also be an alternative spelling of *Pocken*, meaning pocks.

19 In 1799 Constanze Mozart referred to her husband's bawdy canons as having 'boisterous texts' ('ausgelassene Texte'). See Mozart, *Briefe und Aufzeichnungen*, volume 4, 229.

20 On Mozart's use of this type of humour see Emil Karl Blümml, *Aus Mozarts Freundes- und Familienkreis* (Vienna: Strache, 1923), 163–179; Winternitz, 'Gnagflow Trazom'; Dundes, *Life is like a Chicken Coop Ladder*; Simkin, *Medical and Musical Byways*; Schroeder, *Mozart in Revolt*; and Wolfgang Mieder, "'Now I Sit Like a Rabbit in the Pepper': Proverbial Language in the Letters of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart", *Journal of Folklore Research* 40/1 (2003), 33–70.

21 Mozart, *Briefe und Aufzeichnungen*, volume 2, 70–71.



happened, he began to talk about music and sang a canon, saying: 'In my life I have never heard anything more beautiful.' I said: 'I am sorry that I cannot join in, but nature has not bestowed on me the gift of intoning.' 'That does not matter,' he said. He began. I took the third voice, but I invented quite a different text, 'Father Emilian, oh you prick, lick me in the ass'; this, *sotto voce* to my cousin. Then we laughed for another half hour.

Mozart added his vulgar line to this canon only when the singer became tipsy. Henneberg's own commentary, 'good for use in inebriated company', is further evidence for the social context of these kinds of pieces, which might not be received well by sober companions.

As for the music, only Henneberg's pieces are strict canons, and the endings, with the third voice singing alone, may have enhanced the humorous effect (see Figure 2 and Examples 1–2). The music in Mayer's handwriting is not imitative; rather, the voices are coordinated in homorhythmic motion not unlike a chorale. Perhaps, then, the humour of this music resided in the music's ironically non-imitative texture (see Figure 3 and Example 3).

THE TEXTS OF MOZART'S VULGAR CANONS IN CONTEXT

As already mentioned, Mozart's texts are tame in comparison to those of Henneberg and Mayer. The text of K231/382^c has only one line, 'Leck mich im Arsch', a common expression that frequently occurs in Mozart's family circle. According to Georg Nissen's original manuscripts of his Mozart biography, the composer sang of Aloysia Weber 'Leck mich das Mensch im Arsch, das mich nicht will' (The one who doesn't want me can lick my ass) on the occasion of being romantically rejected by her.²² He was evidently singing an existing folk tune, not a song of his own invention.²³ *Grechelt's enk* (K556) uses only one mildly harsh expression, 'izt halt's Maul! I gib' d'ra Tetschen!' (now shut your trap, I'll give you a whack!). Likewise, *Gehn wir im Prater* (K558) has one crude line: 'Im Prater gibt's Gelsen und Haufen voll Dreck' (in the Prater there are gnats and heaps of muck).

Difficile lectu mihi Mars et jonicu difficile (K559) is somewhat exceptional in its cleverness; the text is disguised German in the form of pseudo-Latin. Jean-Victor Hocquard has pointed out that the words 'lectu mini Mars' resemble the Bavarian 'leck du mi im Arsch'.²⁴ Another oddity is found in the strange word 'jonicu'. Emanuel Winternitz explains that when this word is sung repeatedly and rapidly (as in the canon), the syllables are liable to be heard rearranged as the taboo Italian word *cujoni*, which means balls or testicles, akin to Spanish *cojones*.²⁵ Thus the sense of the entire line appears to be 'It is difficult to lick my ass and balls'. In 1824 Gottfried Weber published a facsimile of this canon and an account of its origin, claiming that Mozart wrote the piece during a social gathering to poke fun at a friend's poor Latin pronunciation. When that friend, a singer named Johann Nepomuk Peierl, sang the false Latin without understanding the joke, Mozart wrote another vulgar canon to ridicule his slow-witted reaction, *O du eselhafter Peierl* (Oh, you asinine Peierl), K560a/559a, which Mozart inscribed on the reverse side of the same sheet.²⁶ While Weber's

22 Rudolf Lewicki, 'Aus Nissens Kollektaneen', *Mozarteums Mitteilungen* 2/1 (1919), 28–30.

23 Blümmel, *Aus Mozarts Freundes- und Familienkreis*, 172.

24 Jean-Victor Hocquard, *Mozart ou la voix du comique* (Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose, 1999), 203.

25 Winternitz, 'Gnagflow Trazom', 208. Otto Jahn, *W. A. Mozart* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1858), volume 3, 337, points out that the word is heard as *cujoni* but does not explain its meaning.

26 Gottfried Weber, 'Originalhandschrift von Mozart', *Caecilia: Eine Zeitschrift für die musikalische Welt* 1/2 (Mainz, 1824), 179–182: 'Die Geschichte aber ist folgende. Der sonst treffliche Peierl hatte einige wunderliche Eigenheiten der Wortausprache, über welche Mozart in freundlichem Umgange mit ihm und anderen Freunden, oft schertzte. Am einem Abende solchen fröhlichen Beisammenseins kam Mozarten der Einfall, ein Paar lateinische Wörter "Difficile lectu mihi" u.s.w. bei deren Absingen Peierls Aussprache in komischem Lichte hervortreten musste, zu einem Canon zu verarbeiten; und, in der Erwartung, dass dieser die Absicht nicht merken und in die Falle gehen werde, schrieb er gleich auf der Rückseite desselben Blattes den Spottkanon: O! du eselhafter Peierl!. Der Scherz gelang, und kaum



account may be apocryphal, the surviving autograph of these two canons in the British Museum (shelf mark Zweig MS. 58) places the pieces on opposite sides of a single page. Indeed, K560a/559a mocks Peierl, and uses crude language in the last lines along with an apology:

O leck mich doch geschwind im Arsch!
 Ach lieber Freund, verzeihe mir,
 den Arsch, den Arsch petschier ich dir.
 Peierl! Nepomuck! Peierl! verzeihe mir!

Oh quickly lick my ass!
 Oh dear friend, forgive me,
 the ass, I'll seal your ass.
 Peierl! Nepomuck! Peierl! forgive me!

Mozart later recycled the canon by simply replacing Peierl's name with Martin, then with Jakob (K560b/560 of 1788).

The canon *Bona nox! bist a recht Ox*, K561 (1788), also uses two formulaic vulgar expressions:

Scheiß ins Bett, daß' kracht;
 gute Nacht, schaf sei g'sund gute Nacht,
 und reck' den Arsch zum Mund.

Shit in bed, so that it makes a cracking sound
 good night, sleep soundly, good night,
 and stretch your arse to your mouth.

These rhymed verses are also found in the letters of the Mozart family. Anna Maria wrote a postscript to her son's letter to Leopold of 26 September 1777, including these rhymed verses:

Adio ben mio, leb gesund
 Reck den arsch zum mund.
 Ich wunsch ein guete nacht
 Scheiss ins beth das Kracht.²⁷

God speed my dear, be healthy
 stretch your arse to your mouth.

waren jene wunderlichen lateinischen Worte aus Peierls Munde in der erwarteten komischen Weise zu allgemeinem Behagen gehört worden, so drehte Mozart das Blatt um, und liess nun die Gesellschaft, statt Applaus, den kanonischen Triumph- und Spottgesang anstimmen: O! du eselhafter Peierl! [The story is as follows. The otherwise excellent Peierl had some strange peculiarities in his pronunciation, at which Mozart often poked fun in friendly exchanges with him and other friends. On one evening in such cheerful company Mozart came up with the idea to prepare a canon with a few Latin words 'Difficile lectu mihi', etc., in which Peierl's pronunciation would, as the piece was sung, emerge in a comic light; and, in the expectation that Peierl would not notice his intent and instead fall into the trap, Mozart quickly wrote on the back of the same sheet the mocking canon: O! you ass-like Peierl! The joke succeeded, and hardly were those whimsical Latin words heard from Peierl's mouth in the expected comic way, to universal pleasure, when Mozart flipped over the sheet and the company, instead of applauding, broke into the canonic triumphal and mocking song: O! you ass-like Peierl!).

²⁷ Mozart, *Briefe und Aufzeichnungen*, volume 2, 14.



I wish you good night
shit in bed, so that it makes a cracking sound.

And in a letter of 5 November 1777 to his cousin Bäsle, Mozart also rhymed the same ideas:

Ietzt wünsch ich eine gute nacht
scheissen sie ins beet [Bett] dass es kracht
schlafens gesund
reckens den arsch zum mund²⁸

Now I wish you a good night
shit into your bed so that it cracks
sleep soundly,
stretch your arse to your mouth

The verb *krachen* has often been taken to refer to breaking the bed, but actually refers to the loud cracking sound associated with flatulence. This is clear in Mozart's letter of 31 January 1778 to his mother:

Ich bin bei Leuten auch
die tragen den Dreck im Bauch,
doch lassen sie ihn auch hinaus
So wohl vor, als nach dem Schmaus.
Gefurzt wird allzeit auf die Nacht
Und immer so, daß es brav kracht.
Doch gestern war der Fürze König,
deßen Fürze riechen wie Hönig.²⁹

I am also with people
who carry their muck inside their belly,
and let it out, if they are able,
both before and after the feast.
Farting all through the night
and always with a good crack.
The fart king came yesterday
whose farts smelt like honey.

The meaning of the verb is also confirmed by the noun 'Kracher' in Henneberg's second canon, *Brüderl* *laß kein schleichen thu* ('Kracher' here is like the English 'cracker' in the word 'firecracker'):

a Schleicher thut sticken
a Kracher macht an Spaß[?]gr!

a silent one is stinky
to let a loud one rip is more fun!

28 Mozart, *Briefe und Aufzeichnungen*, volume 2, 104.

29 Mozart, *Briefe und Aufzeichnungen*, volume 2, 246.



As for the social context of Mozart's bawdy canons, the evidence suggests that they were for private humour and buffoonery in a closed, inebriated social circle. It may seem strange that Mozart made fair copies, entered these items into his personal works catalogue (in which he tended to omit ephemeral works) and allowed them to be copied. The reason he favored these small and crude pieces in ways similar to his more serious and important works remains a mystery.

Whether or not Henneberg and Mayer's canons date from Mozart's lifetime, it is clear that other contemporary composers wrote raunchy canons. Several of these works were falsely attributed to Mozart, including the anonymous canon *Beim Arsch ists finster. Vivat Branntwein dich lieb ich allein* (It's dark near the arse. Long live brandy, I love only you), κ Anhang C 9.03, and Wenzel Müller's *Die verdammten Heuraten, wenn's nur alleweil grathen thaten* (The damned marriages, if only they would always turn out well), κ Anhang C 10.01.³⁰ The first Köchel catalogue (1862) claimed that Michael Haydn set the same text.³¹ One of his surviving canons employs more prominent scatological language:

Scheiß nieder, armer Sünder!
Armer Sünder scheiß nieder!
Zum letztenmal da scheiß nieder,
So scheiß, so scheiß, armer Sünder.
Scheiß zum letztenmal.³²

Shit low, poor sinner!
Poor sinner, shit low!
For the last time shit low here,
so shit, so shit poor sinner.
Shit for the last time.

Also probably by Michael Haydn, but attributed to both Mozart (κ Anhang C 10.12) and Müller, is *Hätt's nit 'dacht, daß Fischkraten dieß thaten, das thaten, daß sie an so stechen thaten, die verdammten Fischkraten* (I wouldn't have thought that fishbones would do this and that, that they would prick like this, those damned fishbones).³³ Since all these vulgar canons are occasional pieces, it would stand to reason that they constitute only a fraction of what once existed.

VULGARITY IN THE THEATER AUF DER WIEDEN

Although David Schroeder has linked Mozart's use of vulgar language to Viennese theatre and its roots in the *commedia dell'arte*, there is little direct evidence to support such an assertion.³⁴ Most surviving semi-improvised Italian and German comedies do not include dialogues, and thus one cannot know the degree

30 Ludwig Ritter von Köchel, *Chronologisch-thematisches Verzeichnis sämtlicher Tonwerke Wolfgang Amadé Mozarts*, eighth edition, ed. Franz Giegling, Gerd Sievers and Alexander Weinmann (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1964), appendix C 9 (Mehrstimmige Gesänge) and appendix C 10 (Kanons), 848–857.

31 Ludwig Ritter von Köchel, *Chronologisch-thematisches Verzeichnis sämtlicher Tonwerke Wolfgang Amade Mozart's: Nebst Angabe der verloren gegangenen, angefangenen, übertragenen, zweifelhaften und unterschobenen Compositionen desselben* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1862), 529.

32 See Charles H. Sherman and T. Donley Thomas, *Johann Michael Haydn (1737–1806): A Chronological Thematic Catalogue of His Works* (Stuyvesant: Pendragon, 1993), 223–227, Nos 700–726 (twenty-seven canons).

33 Sherman and Thomas, *Johann Michael Haydn*, 224 (No. 707).

34 Schroeder, *Mozart in Revolt*, 127–132.



of vulgarity in general.³⁵ Moreover, the nature of such plays allows for adjustments in language to fit the audience. None of the playbooks and librettos that I have examined has lewd language.³⁶ While bans on extemporized dialogue and action were often justified on moralistic grounds, the early Viennese censor Joseph von Sonnenfels was just as concerned with the potential for seditious expression that would undermine the authority of the state as he was with vulgarity. By the time Mozart moved to Vienna, improvised comedy no longer existed there, and theatrical sources from that time show no evidence of the kind of language found in his private letters or bawdy canons.

There is also no evidentiary basis for the idea that Emanuel Schikaneder's Viennese stage roles such as Papageno were latter-day versions of the vulgar Hanswurst comedian.³⁷ Schikaneder himself specifically refuted this claim in his Preface to the printed libretto of his opera *Der Spiegel von Arkadien* (1795, with music by Franz Xaver Süssmayr): 'Ich wollte wünschen, man spielte meinen Papageno als einen launichten Menschen, nicht als einen Hannswurst, wie es leider auf so vielen Bühnen geschieht' (I would wish one played my Papageno as a capricious person, not as a Hanswurst, as unfortunately happens upon so many stages).³⁸ However, the comic companion of a noble hero was a staple in musical and non-musical comedy during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. While such characters were often uneducated commoners, they generally did not use anal or sexual expletives.

As for sexual euphemism and mild sexual innuendo, these were apparently occasional elements until about 1800, when censorship of such expressions seems to have increased.³⁹ Among the few such passages I have found in Viennese musical comedies is one in Schikaneder's successful comic opera *Der dumme Gärtner aus dem Gebürge, oder Die verdeckten Sachen* (1789), where one finds the following two lines in the comic aria 'Au weh'l, au weh'l, der Drache ist mein', sung by the title character (played by Schikaneder) after discovering that his bride-to-be is a wizened hag:

Wo diese Hexe ist, mag ich nicht seÿn,
geh da ein andrer ins Brautbeth hinein.⁴⁰

Wherever this witch is, I don't want to be,
another man can go there into the bridal bed.

35 The sources of many seventeenth- and eighteenth-century musical comedies are listed and discussed in David J. Buch, *Magic Flutes and Enchanted Forests: The Supernatural in the Eighteenth-Century Musical Theatre* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

36 A wide variety of German comic texts from the eighteenth century is reproduced in Max Pirker, *Teutsche Arien, welche auf dem Kayserlich-privilegirten Wienerischen Theatro in unterschiedlich producirtten Comoedien, deren Titul hier jedesmahl beigeruket, gesungen worden: Cod. ms. 12706–12709 der Wiener Nationalbibliothek* (Vienna, Prague and Leipzig: Strache, 1927).

37 Schroeder, *Mozart in Revolt*, 35–36.

38 Emanuel Schikaneder, *Der Spiegel von Arkadien: Eine grosse heroisch-komische Oper in zwey Aufzügen* (Vienna: Ochß, 1795), v–vi.

39 The censor from 1770 to 1804 was Franz Karl Hägelin. On Viennese censorship in this period see Karl Glossy, 'Zur Geschichte der Wiener Theatencensur. I', *Jahrbuch der Grillparzer-Gesellschaft* 7 (1897), 238–340; Friedrich Wilhelm Schembor, *Meinungsbeeinflussung durch Zensur und Druckförderung in der Napoleonischen Zeit: Eine Dokumentation auf Grund der Akten der Obersten Polizei- und Zensurhofstelle* (Vienna: author and die Österreichische Gesellschaft zur Erforschung des 18. Jahrhunderts, 2010), 225–245; and Lisa de Alwis, 'Censorship and Magical Opera in Early Nineteenth-Century Vienna' (PhD dissertation, University of Southern California, 2012).

40 See David J. Buch, ed., *Two Operas from the Series 'Die zween Anton', Part 2: Die verdeckten Sachen* (Vienna, 1789), Recent Researches in the Classical Era 98 (Middleton, WI: A-R Editions, 2016), lvii and 225–228.



Infidelity and seduction are implied but never explicit in Schikaneder's libretto to *Der Stein der Weisen* (1790).⁴¹ A more provocative example is found in the dialogue of Schikaneder's successful fairy-tale comic opera *Der wohlthätige Derwisch* (1791). Once again it is Schikaneder's own leading comic character that speaks the lines. In Act 2 Scene 7 Prince Sofrano expresses his rapture after hearing the beautiful but evil fairy Zenomide sing an aria. His comic companion Mandolino replies with a sexual innuendo:

Sofrano: O, ich Glücklicher aller Sterblichen!
 Rührt dich das nicht, Mandolino?
 Mandolino: Bei mir rührt sich alles!

Sofrano: Oh I am the most fortunate of all mortals!
 Do these sounds not move you, Mandolino?
 Mandolino: Everything is moving within me!

This mildly risqué line is found in the Hamburg manuscript libretto, which is probably of Viennese origin, but was cancelled and replaced by a Hamburg reviser or censor along with other, less controversial, lines.⁴²

Charges of vulgarity in Schikaneder's librettos may have originated with Christian August Vulpius of Weimar, who arranged a number of them for north German audiences. In the Preface to his published arrangement of Schikaneder's *Der Spiegel von Arkadien* (1795), retitled as *Die neuen Arkadier*, Vulpius states that 'I'll leave Metallio's smutty jokes to the author of the original setting!' ('Metallios Zoten gebe ich dem Verfasser des Originals zurück!').⁴³ Schikaneder answered in a preface (entitled 'Pro memoria') to a subsequent opera, *Der Königssohn aus Ithaka* (1796): 'The local censor is as vigilant and rigorous in regard to good morals as anyone in Germany and allows no obscene jokes to occur; of course, to the impure everything is impure!' ('Die hiesige Censur ist so wachsam und strenge auf gute Sitten als irgend eine in Deutschland, und läßt keine Zoten statt finden, freylich dem Unreinen ist alles unrein!').⁴⁴ He goes on to accuse Vulpius of obscenity in his comedies *Glücksproben*, *Liebesproben* and *Ehestandsproben*. Clearly Schikaneder found the charge of vulgarity worrisome and worth refuting.

Vulpius was probably referring to a dialogue in Act 1 Scene 17 of *Der Spiegel von Arkadien* in which two small genies, disguised as farm boys, appear with magic gifts.⁴⁵ This arouses curiosity and suspicion in Prince Ballamo and his comic companion Metallio (Schikaneder), who intimates the possibility that one of them may have fathered these children:

Metallio: Du, lachen müßt ich doch, wenn die zwei Buben an einen von uns verwandt wären?
 Ballamo: Mein Herz ist rein.
 Metallio: Und das Meinige war's.

41 See David J. Buch, ed., *Der Stein der Weisen*, Recent Researches in the Classical Era 76 (Middleton, WI: A-R Editions, 2007).

42 Mandolino's line, along with many others, is missing in a Berlin manuscript libretto that reduces the dialogue overall. For details on the opera's sources see David J. Buch, ed., *Der wohlthätige Derwisch* (Vienna, 1791), Recent Researches in the Classical Era 81 (Middleton, WI: A-R Editions, 2010).

43 Christian August Vulpius, *Die neuen Arkadier: Eine heroisch-komische Oper in zwei Aufzügen. Nach dem Spiegel von Arkadien gearbeitet* (Weimar: Hoffmann, 1796), Preface (unpaginated).

44 Emanuel Schikaneder, *Der Königssohn aus Ithaka. Eine grosse heroisch-komische Oper in 2 Aufzügen. Verfasst von Hrn. Emanuel Schikaneder. In Musik gesetzt von Hrn. Franz Anton Hoffmeister* (Vienna: Hoffmeister, 1797), Preface (unpaginated).

45 Schikaneder, *Der Spiegel von Arkadien*, 25.



Metallio: Lad, I'd have to laugh if the two boys might be related to one of us.
 Ballamo: My heart is pure.
 Metallio: And so was mine.

A final example comes from Schikaneder's 1798 sequel to *Die Zauberflöte*, *Das Labyrinth*, with music by Peter Winter. In the finale of Act 2 (Scene 22), Papageno and Papagena sing the line: 'Ich zeige dem Schwarzen die Feigen' (I show the black one the fig) in reference to giving Monostatos an obscene gesture (in 'showing the fig', one's thumb is inserted between the second and third fingers).⁴⁶

The many opera librettos and plays I have read from the Leopoldstadt, Josephstadt, Landstrasse and Kärntertor theatres are fairly consistent with those of the Wiednertheater in their absence of vulgar speech and light use of sexual innuendo. In all instances, the degree of vulgarity is mild compared to that found in bawdy canons, and thus the Viennese popular theatre of Mozart's time cannot be considered a corollary to them. Opera was the most public musical genre of the time, subject to the constraints of morality and censorship and to the scrutiny of reviewers, sometimes in places far removed from the work's point of origin. By contrast, bawdy canons were perhaps the most private of musical genres, and as such were virtually free of such constraints and scrutiny.

What of the possibility that scatological humour was a regular feature in improvised speech and gesture at the theatre? Schikaneder was acknowledged as a comic actor capable of improvisation, and he often played weak-willed individuals given to earthly pleasures, such as Papageno. Yet of some thirteen eyewitness reports of productions at the Wiednertheater from 1788 to 1799, not one makes specific mention of scatological humour.⁴⁷ Neither do the various reports of productions given in contemporary journals.⁴⁸ One witness, John Owen, even states that the 'style of the composition, though perfectly unnatural, and even monstrous, was yet, by the ingenuity of the author [Schikaneder] neither uninteresting nor inelegant'.⁴⁹ Most criticism refers to confusing, inferior librettos and bad performances, not to foul language. Only a report by Ernst Moritz Arndt refers to Schikaneder's 'vulgar jokes [*Zoten*] and swinishness' in an unspecified late production (1798–1799).⁵⁰

46 Emanuel Schikaneder, *Der Zauberflöte zweyter Theil unter dem Titel: Das Labyrinth oder der Kampf mit den Elementen . . . Vollständiges Textbuch*, ed. Manuela Jahrmärker and Till Gerrit Waidelich (Tutzing: Schneider, 1992), 73.

47 Johann Pezzl, *Skizze von Wien*, volume 5 (Vienna and Leipzig: Kraus, 1788), 802–803. Friedrich Ludwig Wilhelm Meyer, *Friedrich Ludwig Schröder: Beitrag zur Kunde des Menschen und des Künstlers* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1819), 85–86. *Allgemeines Theaterjournal* 1/2 (Frankfurt am Main, 1792), 148–149. *Berlinische Musikalische Zeitung* 36 (12 October 1793), 141–142. John Owen, *Travels into Different Parts of Europe, in the Years 1791 and 1792 with Familiar Remarks on Places – Me – and Manners* (London: Cadell and Davies, 1796), volume 2, 430–431, quoted in Cliff Eisen, ed., *New Mozart Documents: A Supplement to O. E. Deutsch's Documentary Biography* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 76–77. Josef Richter, *Die Eipeldauer Briefe 1785–1797*, introduced and annotated by Eugen von Paunel, two volumes (Munich: Müller, 1917), volume 1, 48 and 248–249. Ignaz von Seyfried, *Skizze meines Lebens: Theilnehmenden Freunden zum Andenken gereicht*, undated manuscript of 1824–1841, Vienna, Hochschule für Musik und darstellende Künste, shelfmark I. N. 36561, 6–7. Jacob Neukäufler, *Aus dem Leben eines Wanderschauspielers*, ed. Konrad Schiffmann (Linz: Flechtigers Erben, 1930), 94–105. Robert Towson, *Travels in Hungary with a Short Account of Vienna in the Year 1793* (London: Robinson, 1797), 16. Adolf Bäuerle, *Bäuerle's Memoiren* (Vienna: author, 1858), volume 1, 29–36. Ernst Moritz Arndt, *Reisen durch einen Theil Teutschlands, Ungarns, Italiens und Frankreichs in den Jahren 1798 und 1799* (Leipzig: Gräff, 1804), part 1, 242–243. Carl Joseph Schikaneder, 'Emanuel Schikaneder'. Ignaz von Seyfried, 'Commentar zur Erzählung', *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 12/45–46 (1840), 179–180 and 183–184.

48 *Kritisches Theater Journal von Wien: Eine Wochenschrift* (Vienna: Ludwig, 1788–1789) and *Allgemeines europäisches Journal* (Brno: Trassler, 1794–1798).

49 Owen, *Travels into Different Parts of Europe*, 430.

50 Arndt, *Reisen durch einen Theil Teutschlands*, part 1, 242–243: 'Er fröhnt geradezu seinem Publikum, und haut durch allen Geschmack und alle Sitten durch . . . Es ist unglaublich, welche Zoten man für Witz und Albernheit verkauft' (He perfectly indulges his audience, and violates all taste and all good manners . . . It is incredible what vulgar jokes one



Several reports, including the biography by Schikaneder's own actor nephew Carl, mention his numerous love affairs. Ignaz von Seyfried, a rather priggish type, attacked his former director as an incompetent writer, an uneducated spendthrift and a womanizer, but never mentioned a tendency toward smutty speech on stage or in texts.⁵¹ Rather, he praises Schikaneder for his 'richtiger Tact' (proper tact). Thus it seems possible that later writers conflated Schikaneder's apparently well-known marital infidelities, and the roles he played on stage, with the moral character of librettos they had not read and performances they had not witnessed. Another possible reason for the association of Schikaneder's theatre with low humour and speech was the reputation of the Wieden, along with other Viennese suburbs. The traveller Robert Towson described the area as housing 'those kinds of resorts, which serve as places of relaxation and debauch to the inferior ranks of life'.⁵² But Towson specifically exempts the Wiednertheater from this state of debauchery in his narration. While the language of Schikaneder's texts in Vienna was not generally lewd, the modern notion of a debauched Wiednertheater company contributed to an impression that it was. This notion can be directly traced to nineteenth-century commentary.

MOZART'S SUPPOSED EXCESSES AND DEBAUCHERY AT THE WIEDNERTHEATER

The primary sources offer no evidence of debauchery or excessive revelry in Mozart's relations with Schikaneder and his theatrical company. Mozart's letters mention attending two performances at the theatre in May or June 1790 and in June 1791, along with two meals with Schikaneder in June and July 1791.⁵³ There is nothing more before the premiere of *Die Zauberflöte* on 30 September 1791, and while the absence of evidence is not evidence of absence, it is significant that no one who actually knew Mozart described him as man given to debauchery. The still frequently encountered picture of a dissolute Mozart was formed later from dubious secondary sources, integrated and elaborated upon by his first scholarly biographer, Otto Jahn.⁵⁴ Although troubled by the contradictory reports he examined, Jahn ultimately wove a dramatic account of Mozart's profligacy at the Wiednertheater based on the speculation and second-hand innuendo detailed below.

For his description of Mozart's sensual and self-indulgent character, Jahn seems to have relied mostly on earlier publications that derive from a passage in Friedrich Schlichtegroll's *Nekrolog* of 1793, itself an elaboration of material supplied by the composer's sister Anna Maria, Baroness von Berchtold zu Sonnenburg, and someone else, probably the consistorial councillor from Salzburg, Albert von Mölk.⁵⁵ Anna Maria wrote that Mozart's only fault was having a soft heart, so that he could not deal with money and was susceptible to flattery ('das er ein gutes Herz hatte, er das Geld nicht zu dirigiren wusste, wer ihm schmeichelte, der konnte alles von ihm erhalten'). She declined to comment on the last ten years of her brother's life. The other writer (von Mölk?) added to her letter that the prevailing aspect of his 'shady side' ('schattigen Seite') was that all his life he remained a child in need of supervision and married a woman not suited to him against the will

can peddle as wit and tomfoolery); 'Er spielt selbst zuweilen mit, mit seinem dicklichen und bäuchigen Körper, und macht Zoten und Schweinereyen, wofür er nur zu gewöhnlich beklatscht wird' (He acts himself sometimes, with his plump and big-bellied body, and makes vulgar jokes and swinishness, for which he is only too commonly applauded).

51 Ignaz von Seyfried, 'Commentar zur Erzählung,' *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 12/45 (2 June 1840), 180.

52 Towson, *Travels in Hungary*, 16.

53 Mozart, *Briefe und Aufzeichnungen*, volume 4, 110, 134–135 and 145.

54 Otto Jahn, *W. A. Mozart* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1859), volume 4, 564–565; Jahn, *W. A. Mozart*, second edition (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1867), volume 2, 466.

55 Friedrich Schlichtegroll, *Nekrolog auf das Jahr 1791* (Gotha: Perthes, 1793), volume 2, 82–112. Revised as *Mozarts Leben* (Graz: Hubeck, 1794; facsimile edition, ed. Joseph Heinz Eibl, Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1974), 30–31. My discussion of Schlichtegroll's sources is based on Bruce Cooper Clarke, 'Albert von Mölk: Mozart Myth-Maker? Study of an 18th-Century Correspondence,' *Mozart-Jahrbuch* (1995), 155–191.



of his father, causing domestic disorder when he died and afterwards.⁵⁶ From these statements Schlichtegroll embellished and exaggerated the account substantially, perhaps using other, unnamed sources:⁵⁷

Er lernte nie sich selbst regiren; für häusliche Ordnung, für gehörigen Gebrauch des Geldes, für Mäßigung und vernünftige Wahl im Genuß hatte er keinen Sinn. Immer bedurfte er eines Führers, eines Vormundes, der an seiner Statt die häuslichen Angelegenheiten besorgte, da sein eigener Geist beständig mit einer Menge ganz anderer Vorstellungen beschäftigt war, und dadurch überhaupt alle Empfänglichkeit für andere ernsthafte Überlegung verlor. . . . In Wien verheirathete er sich mit Constanza Weber, und fand in ihr eine gute Mutter von zwey mit ihr erzeugten Kindern, und eine würdige Gattinn, die ihn noch von manchen Thorheiten und Ausschweifungen abzuhalten suchte. So beträchtlich sein Einkommen war, so hinterließ er doch, bey seiner überwiegenden Sinnlichkeit und häuslichen Unordnung, den Seinigen weiter nichts als den Ruhm seines Namens, und die Aufmerksamkeit eines großen Publicums auf sie. . . . Aber dieser immer zerstreute, immer tändelnde Mensch schien ein ganz anderes, ein höheres Wesen zu werden, sobald er sich an das Klavier setzte.⁵⁸

He [Mozart] never learned self-control, and he had no sense of domestic order, the appropriate use of money, moderation and sensible choices in his pleasures. He always needed a leader, a guardian, who in his stead could take care of his domestic concerns because his own mind was constantly occupied with a mass of very different ideas, and thus was generally unresponsive to other serious matters. . . . In Vienna he married Constanze Weber, and found in her a good mother for their two children and a worthy spouse who tried to restrain him from many follies and excesses. As sizeable as his income was, he bequeathed to his family nothing but the glory of his name and the attention of a large public, owing to his overwhelming sensuality and domestic disorder. . . . But this always distracted, always trifling man seemed to be quite different, a higher being, as soon as he sat down at the piano.

Von Mölk and Mozart's sister had little or no direct contact with the composer in the last decade of his life, and their negative remarks seem to reflect the disapproval of Mozart's father and the Salzburg circle. Schlichtegroll too had no personal contact with Mozart or his Viennese circle. Thus these views should not be considered authoritative regarding the composer's later years in Vienna. Still, Jahn accepted them along with an unsubstantiated report of Friedrich Rochlitz in 1798, which recounts that during the composition of *Die Zauberflöte* 'day and night were the same to him [Mozart] when [he was] seized by inspiration, [and] he often fell into spells of exhaustion and blackouts lasting several minutes' ('dem Tag und Nacht gleich war,

56 See Anna Maria Mozart (and probably Albert von Mölk's) comments in letters of 1792 to Breitkopf & Härtel intended to help Schlichtegroll, in Mozart, *Briefe und Aufzeichnungen*, volume 4, 199–203: 'blieb er fast immer ein Kind; und dies ist ein Hauptzug seines Charakters auf der schattigten Seite; immer hätte er eines Vatters, einer Mutter, oder eines Aufsehers bedarfen; er konnte das Geld nicht regieren, heyrathete ein für ihn gar nicht passendes Mädchen gegen den Willen seines Vaters, und daher die große häusliche Unordnung bei und nach seinem Tod. . . . er das Geld nicht zu dirigiren wusste, wer ihm schmeichelte, der konnte alles von ihm erhalten' (He was almost always a child, and this is a main feature of his character on the shady side; he always needed a father's or a mother's or a supervisor's care; he could not manage money, married a girl not at all suited for him against his father's will and thus [created] the greatest domestic chaos during and after his death. . . . He did not know how to manage money; whoever flattered him could get anything they wanted from him).

57 Schlichtegroll had contacted the important official and writer Baron Joseph Friedrich von Retzer, who served as secretary to the court censor and was a member of the masonic lodge *Zur wahren Eintracht*. It does not appear that Retzer responded. For details on Retzer see Henry Hausner, 'Bemerkungen zu Schlichtegrolls Mozart-Biographie', *Mitteilungen der Internationalen Stiftung Mozarteum* 26 (1978), 21–24.

58 Schlichtegroll, *Mozarts Leben*, 30–31.



wenn ihn der Genius ergriff – in öftere Ermattung und minutenlange halbohnmächtige Bewußtlosigkeit’).⁵⁹ Rochlitz appears to be following Schlichtegroll when he writes that ‘Mozart was often condemned for his negligence, frivolity and recklessness in money matters. The matter is indeed as true as the fact that it cannot be separated from such a man’s individuality’ (‘Man hat Mozarten oft seine Nachlässigkeit, seine Flüchtigkeit, seinen Leichtsinn in Anwendung des Geldes vorgeworfen. Die Sache ist freylich eben so wahr, als das ist, dass sie von der Individualität eines solchen Mannes nicht getrennet gedacht werden kann’).⁶⁰ Schlichtegroll’s use of the locution ‘follies and excesses’ (‘Thorheiten und Ausschweifungen’) would have unintended consequences in the future. These terms in a necrology in 1793 do not necessarily mean debauchery of a self-destructive or sexual nature. Schlichtegroll almost certainly means extravagance or excessive exuberance and passion for entertainment and pastimes.

In his 1798 Mozart biography Franz Niemtschek defends the composer against charges attributed to his ‘numerous irreconcilable enemies’ who have disseminated ‘tales of his frivolity and excesses’. He states that Mozart’s faults were not excessive; his wife Constanze acted as a restraining influence (‘ihn oft von Übereilungen abzuhalten’) and forgave his ‘small sins’ (‘kleinen Sünden’).⁶¹ This more favourable account, probably originating with Constanze (she sent her son Carl to live with the Niemtschek family in Prague), is the first of several by various writers asserting that Mozart’s reputation for excess and folly was an unfair exaggeration.

We have examples of such exaggerations in early nineteenth-century biographies, most by authors with no direct connection to the Mozart circle or Vienna. Ignaz Arnold’s biography of 1803 gives credence to reports of Mozart’s *galanteries* with women, particularly lively actresses, which his wife tolerated (‘auch ausser der Ehe gab es manche Galanterie mit artigen Schauspielerinnen, und sonstigen feinen Mädchen und Weibern, was ihm seine gute Frau gern übersah’ (There were also many flirtations with skilled actresses outside of marriage, and also attractive girls and women, which his good wife readily overlooked)).⁶² Arnold was the first author to mention Mozart’s excessive drinking and revelling (‘Mozart betrank sich in Champagner und Tokayer, lebte locker’ (Mozart imbibed champagne and Tokaji wine, lived loosely)), particularly with Schikaneder (‘Man weiß, wie oft er in seine Gesundheit stürmte, wie manchen Morgen er mit Schikaneder verchampagnerte, wie manche Nacht er verpunschte’ (We know how often he abused his health, how many mornings he drank champagne with Schikaneder, how many nights he drank punch)). The Irish tenor Michael Kelly wrote of Mozart’s fondness for punch in 1826, the only mention of Mozart’s preference by

59 Friedrich Rochlitz, ‘Verbürgte Anekdoten aus Wolfgang Mozarts Leben, ein Beytrag zur richtigern Kenntnis dieses Mannes, als Mensch und Künstler’, *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* 10 (5 December 1798), columns 148–149, anecdote No. 19. In his biography, Georg Nissen repeats Rochlitz’s account almost literally. See Georg Nikolaus Nissen, *Biographie W. A. Mozarts: Nach Originalbriefen, Sammlungen alles über ihn Geschriebenen, mit vielen neuen Beylagen, Steindrücken, Musikblättern und einem Fac-simile* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1828; reprinted Hildesheim: Olms, 1964), 547–548. Other eighteenth-century sources do not mention excesses or debauchery. For example, the notorious handwritten gossip sheet *Der heimliche Botschafter* (13 December 1791) referred to Mozart’s ‘indifference to family circumstances’ (‘Sorglosigkeit für seine häuslichen Umstände’). See *Mozart: Die Dokumente seines Lebens*, ed. Otto Erich Deutsch, NMA X/34 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1961), 373.

60 Rochlitz, ‘Verbürgte Anekdoten’, *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* 6 (7 November 1798), column 81, anecdote 9.

61 Franz Niemtschek, *Leben des K. K. Kapellmeisters Wolfgang Gottlieb Mozart* (1798), 63: ‘Aber Mozart hatte auch Feinde, zahlreiche, unversöhnliche Feinde, die ihn auch nach seinem Tode noch verfolgten. Wie hätten ihm auch diese mangeln können, da er ein so großer Künstler und ein so gerader Mann war? Und diese sind die unlautere Quelle, aus welcher so viel häßliche Erzählungen von seinem Leichtsinne, seinen Ausschweifungen gefloßen sind’ (But Mozart also had enemies, numerous irreconcilable enemies, who attacked him even after his death. How could he be lacking in them, for he was such a great artist and upright man? And these are the dishonest sources from which flowed so many ugly tales of his levity, his debauchery).

62 Ignaz Ferdinand Cajetan Arnold, *Mozarts Geist: Seine kurze Biographie und ästhetische Darstellung seiner Werke. Ein Bildungsbuch für junge Tonkünstler* (Erfurt: Hennin, 1803), 65–66. Arnold was a lawyer, organist and writer of fantastic fiction.



someone who knew the composer.⁶³ In 1804 Jean-Baptiste-Antoine Suard in Paris reported an even more scandalous 'Anecdote' that *Die Zauberflöte* was composed for a 'woman of the theatre' with whom Mozart had fallen in love. Even Suard could not give credence to the rest of the tale in which Mozart died of a disease that he contracted from the same woman.⁶⁴

Two decades later, anonymous and vague reports of Mozart's aberrant behaviour began appearing in Germany. One anecdote attributed the composer's poor health to 'strenuous work and fast living in poorly chosen company' ('angestregtes Arbeiten und Geschwindleben in übelgewählter Gesellschaft').⁶⁵ In a 1827 obituary of the tenor Benedikt Schack (the first Tamino), the anonymous author states that Schack described the circumstances of Mozart's life during the years 1789–1791, when they worked together at the theatre, in the following way: 'One learned about which byways and wrong paths even the greatest talent wandered through the harsh reality of life' ('Man erfuhr, welche Wege und Irrwege auch das grösste Talent in der rauhen Wirklichkeit des Lebens zu durchwandern hat').⁶⁶ Another vague intimation of an ominous nature closes the obituary:

Noch gegen Ende von 1825 hatte sich der bekannte Herr v. Nyssen von Salzburg aus mit vielen Anfragen und dringendem Ersuchen an Schack gewendet, um von ihm Aufsätze, Erörterungen, die ihm zu seiner grossen Mozart'schen Biographie noch fehlten, zu erhalten. . . . Der Schreiber dieses Artikels, der ihm die Papiere zugestellt, konnte ihn vorerst nicht bewegen, in jene Vorzeit zurückzukehren. Er hätte so Vieles berühren müssen, was er schon erzählt und man nicht immer wieder aufwärmen sollte.⁶⁷

Toward the end of 1825 the well-known Herr von Nissen of Salzburg turned to Schack with many questions and urgent requests for essays and explanations that he lacked for his great Mozart biography. . . . The writer of this article, who delivered the documents to him, could not persuade him to turn back momentarily to that time in the past. He would have had to touch upon so many things that he already had narrated, things that one should never again rehash.

Like Mozart's 'wrong paths', the nature of these 'things that one should never again rehash' is left to the imagination of the reader.

63 In his autobiography, *Reminiscences of Michael Kelly: Of the King's Theatre, and Theatre Royal Drury Lane, Including a Period of Nearly Half a Century, with Original Anecdotes of Many Distinguished Persons, Political, Literary, and Musical* (London: Colburn, 1826), volume 1, 226, Kelly reported that Mozart was 'remarkably fond of punch' and he had seen him take 'copious draughts'. Kelly also remarks on his own enjoyment of punch in other parts of his book.

64 Jean-Baptiste-Antoine Suard, 'Anecdotes sur Mozart', *Mélanges de littérature* 10 (1804; reprinted Geneva: Slatkine, 1971), 339: 'J'ai entendu dire qu'il n'avait fait *La Flûte enchantée* que pour plaire à une femme de théâtre dont il était devenu amoureux, et qui avait mis ses faveurs à ce prix. On ajoute que son triomphe eut des suites bien cruelles, et qu'il en contracta une maladie incurable dont il mourut peu temp après. Ce fait me paraît peu vraisemblable: la "*Flûte Enchantée*" n'est pas le dernier de ses operas, et lorsque'il l'a composée sa santé était déjà fort altérée.' (I heard it said that he had only written *The Magic Flute* to please the woman of the theatre with whom he had fallen in love, and who offered him her favours at this price. It is added that his triumph had very cruel consequences, and that he contracted from her an incurable disease and died soon after. This fact seems a bit unlikely to me: the 'Magic Flute' is not the last of his operas, and when he composed it, his health was already very much impaired.)

65 *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 27 (25 May 1825), columns 349–350.

66 *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 30 (25 July 1827), column 519. Maximilian Keller probably wrote the obituary, although Anton Jähndl is also a possibility. Both were instrumental in transmitting Nissen's appeal to Schack, discussed below. See Robert Münster, 'Nissens "Biographie W. A. Mozarts": Zu ihrer Entstehungsgeschichte', *Acta Mozartiana* 9/1 (1962), 2–14, and Rudolph Angermüller, 'Aus dem Briefwechsel M. Kellers mit A. Jähndl: Neues zu Nissens Mozartbiographie', *Mitteilungen der Internationalen Stiftung Mozarteum* 31/1–2 (1971), 25–27.

67 *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 30 (25 July 1827), column 521.



Georg Nissen's biography of 1828 repeats Niemtschek's comments concerning Mozart's 'small sins' and forgiving wife.⁶⁸ He cites Constanze's younger sister Sophie to refute the charge of Mozart's excessive drinking and to affirm his naive character, which led to manipulation by false friends and parasites ('falsche Freunde und Blutsauger ohne sein Wissen, werthlose Menschen; die ihm zu Tischnarren dienten'). One oft-cited sentence attributed to Sophie in the biography has been used as evidence of debauchery: 'In order to keep him from awkward situations, she [Constanze] patiently attempted to do everything with him' ('Um ihn vom Umgange misslicher Art abzuhalten, versuchte seine Frau geduldig Alles mit ihm'). Yet the previous sentence makes clear this refers to his passion for hobbies like riding and billiards ('In seinen Unterhaltungen war er für eine jede neue sehr passionirt, wie für's Reiten und auch für Billard'). Nissen also repeats exact phrases from Arnold's 1803 biography, with its charges of *galanteries* with women, drinking and revelling with Schikaneder.⁶⁹ Jahn expressed dismay that Nissen did not comment on this account, as it was an obvious contradiction of Niemtschek and Sophie.⁷⁰ Similar problems in Nissen's biography are not uncommon, given that it was a patchwork of writings assembled by several editors after the death of the author, Constanze Mozart's second husband.

In 1831 Mozart's reputation was again defended, this time by his former student Johann Nepomuk Hummel: 'I declare it to be untrue that Mozart abandoned himself to excess, except on those rare occasions on which he was enticed by Schikaneder, which had chiefly to do with *Die Zauberflöte*' ('Daß Mozart sich Schwelgerei überlassen habe erkläre ich (außer den wenigen Gelegenheiten, zu denen Schikaneder ihn verlockte, dem es um die Zauberflöte zu thun war) als unwahr').⁷¹ With regard to Schikaneder, Hummel cannot be relying on his first-hand experience, since he left Vienna in late 1788 and would have had no direct knowledge of the creation of *Die Zauberflöte*. Schikaneder arrived in Vienna to assume the direction of the Wiednertheater in the summer of 1789.

A fragmentary letter of 1840–1841 from Ignaz von Seyfried to Georg Friedrich Treischke mentions Mozart's revelry with the Wiednertheater circle in yet another second-hand account, attributed to Karl Ludwig Giesecke, an actor and author in Schikaneder's company and a member of Mozart's masonic lodge. Seyfried (1776–1841) had been a music director and composer at the Wiednertheater (and later at the Theater an der Wien), starting some six years after Mozart's death. He writes that:

Schikaneders persönliche Bekanntschaft mit Mozart, so wie auch jene spätere mit Zitterbarth, – datirt sich aus einer FreymaurerLoge her, – freylich nicht jene hochberühmte Born'sche, welche Wien's erste Dignitäten, u: die Elite der damaligen literarischen Kaste unter ihre Mitglieder gezählt haben soll, – sondern schlechtweg eine sogenannte Winkel- oder Freiß=Loge, woselbst man sich in den wöchentlichen Abendzusammenkünften mit Spiel, Musik, u: den vielen Freuden einer wohlbesetzten Tafel beschäftigte, wie Gieseke mir oftmals erzählte. . . . Meistens schrieb er in Gerl's Wohnung, oder in Sch:s Garten, nur wenige Schritte am Theater; ich selbst war oft Gast an demselben Tische, u: hielt viele Proben im nehmlichen Salon, oder auf deutsch: Holzhütte.⁷²

Schikaneder's personal acquaintance with Mozart, and also later with Zitterbarth, came from a masonic lodge, certainly not the highly praised Born lodge, which numbered among its members Vienna's first dignitaries and the elite of the contemporary literary castes, but simply a so-called marginal or gorging lodge, where one occupied oneself in weekly evening gatherings with gambling,

68 Nissen, *Biographie W. A. Mozart's*, 672–673.

69 Nissen, *Biographie W. A. Mozart's*, 592.

70 Jahn, *W. A. Mozart* (1858), volume 3, 233–234.

71 Max Johann Seidel, *Biographische Notizen aus dem Leben des am 17.ten October 1837: Verstorbenen Großherzoglich-Sachsen-Weimarischen Kapellmeister und Ritter mehrer Orden Johann Nepomuk Hummel ersten Klavierspieler seiner Zeit*, manuscript in Weimar, Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek, shelf mark Q619, 38. Jahn cites Hummel's statement only in the second edition of *W. A. Mozart* (1867), volume 1, 710.

72 Bibliotheca Mozartiana der Internationalen Stiftung Mozarteum Salzburg, shelf mark A-Sm, Doc 1840c/1.



music and the many joys of a well-set table, as Giesecke often narrated to me. . . . He wrote most of [*Die Zauberflöte*] in Gerl's residence, or in Schikaneder's garden, just a few steps from the theatre; I myself was often a guest at this same table, and held many rehearsals in the same salon, or in German: wooden shack.

This report contradicts everything we know about Mozart and Schikaneder's association with Viennese masonic lodges.⁷³ Around the same time (a half-century after Mozart's death) another vague insinuation of Mozart's character flaws appeared in Caroline Pichler's autobiography, where the author wrote that Mozart led a 'frivolous life' ('ein leichtsinniges Leben').⁷⁴

An anonymous author recycled old assertions of carousing at the *Freihaus auf der Wieden* in an 1857 article on the origins of *Die Zauberflöte*, writing that the opera was composed in Mozart's house on Rauhensteingasse and in a half-ruined pavilion in the *Freihaus* garden: 'It was during lunch (it was high summer), which Mozart most often took there with Schikaneder, that he intrepidly worked, laughed and drank champagne. In these circumstances the great work *Die Zauberflöte* originated ('Während des Mittagmahls (es war hoher Sommer), das Mozart meistens mit Schikaneder daselbst einnahm, ward wacker gearbeitet, gelacht und Champagner getrunken. Unter diesen Umständen entstand das große Werk: "Die Zauberflöte").'⁷⁵ While this account adds just a few details to Seyfried's letter, the author goes on to add a new vignette of a more promiscuous nature, namely that Barbara Gerl, the first Papagena and wife of the leading bass singer and first Sarastro Franz Xaver Gerl, helped Schikaneder to induce Mozart to compose the opera:

Schikaneder . . . flog er von der Rauhensteingasse nach der Wieden in die Kapaunergasse zum sogenannten, damals bestandenen 'Kapäundl'. Da wohnte Mad. Gerl, welche sammt ihrem Gatten, dem Bassisten Gerl, bei Schikaneder engagirt war, und wie man sagte, großen Einfluß aus Mozart ausübte. Diese gewann der schlaue Schikaneder für sein Interesse. . . .⁷⁶

Schikaneder . . . flew from Rauhensteingasse to Kapaunergasse [now Schäffergasse] in the Wieden district, to the so-called 'Kapäundl' house. There resided Madame Gerl, who along with her husband, the bass singer Gerl, was engaged in Schikaneder's company, and as has been said, exerted great influence on Mozart. The sly Schikaneder won her over for his interest . . .

One wonders if this author was influenced by Arnold's and Suard's accounts of Mozart's involvement with actresses; perhaps Barbara Gerl's role as the first Papagena made her seem like a good candidate for a seductress. In reality she was an actress, singer, dancer and spouse of Mozart's friend Franz Gerl.⁷⁷

Jahn attempted to make sense of these intimations in devising a still more elaborate tale of Schikaneder seducing the vulnerable Mozart into his dissolute theatrical circle:

73 A number of studies have been devoted to Mozart's relations with Viennese Freemasons: for example, H. C. Robbins Landon, *Mozart and the Masons* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1991), and Hans-Josef Irmen, *Mozart: Mitglied geheimer Gesellschaften* (Zülpich: Prisca, 1988), trans. Ruth Ohm and Chantal Speake as *Mozart's Masonry and the Magic Flute* (Zülpich: Prisca, 1996).

74 Caroline Pichler, *Denkwürdigkeiten aus meinem Leben* (Vienna: author, 1844), ed. Emil Karl Blümml, two volumes (Munich: Georg Müller, 1914), volume 1 (1798–1813), 293–294.

75 Anonymous, 'Die Entstehung der "Zauberflöte"', *Monatsschrift für Theater und Musik* 2 (1857), 444–446. Reproduced in Ludwig Nohl, *Mozart nach den Schilderungen seiner Zeitgenossen* (Leipzig: Thiel, 1880), 374–379. Ignaz F. Castelli, *Memoiren meines Lebens: Gefundenes und Empfundenes, Erlebtes und Erstrebtes* (Vienna and Prague: Kober & Markgraf, 1861), volume 1, 51, recalls that in the *Freihaus* courtyard there was a *Gasthaus* or *Bierkneipe* with a small garden where people would meet, play cards, carouse and joke, and where he heard anecdotes of earlier times. This would have been several years after Mozart's death. Later (page 111) Castelli mentions two *Gasthäuser* visited by the Wiednertheater actors and musicians (probably in the years 1797–1801).

76 Anonymous, 'Die Entstehung der "Zauberflöte"', 445.

77 On the friendship of Mozart and Gerl see David J. Buch, 'Three Posthumous Reports Concerning Mozart in His Late Viennese Years', *Eighteenth-Century Music* 2/1 (2005), 125–126.



Schikaneder war auch dafür besorgt seinen Componisten bei guter Laune zu erhalten. Nicht allein zu Mittag, wo gut gegessen und getrunken wurde, mußte er häufig sein Gast sein, er zog ihn überhaupt in das Genußleben der lockeren und leichten Gesellschaft, in welcher er verkehrte, . . . der sich Mozarts Nähe zu drängen wußte und seine Gutmüthigkeit auf so schmähliche Weise mißbrauchte. Man kann sich wohl erklären, wie der Druck der äußeren Verhältnisse, die wachsende Noth im Hause, die bittere Stimmung über die Erfolglosigkeit aller seiner Bestrebung den leicht erregbaren und für gesellige heitere Unterhaltung an sich empfänglichen Mozart für den Augenblick noch geneigter machen konnte sich in den Strudel des genußsüchtigen Lebens hineinziehen zu lassen, welchem die Gesellschaft, mit der er durch seine Oper näher zusammengeführt wurde, ergeben war, selbst die Abwesenheit seiner Frau, welche auch diesen Sommer in Baden zubrachte . . . mochte dazu beitragen. Und doch sind es diese Monate des Verkehrs mit Schikaneder, welche zu den übertriebenen Schilderungen von Mozarts lockerem Leben die Veranlassung gegeben und seinem Namen einen unverdienten Makel angehängt haben.⁷⁸

Schikaneder took care to keep his composer in good spirits. Not only by having him as a frequent supper guest, where fine eating and drinking were the rule, but also by drawing him into the pleasure-seeking life of the seductive and free-living society in which he himself moved . . . he knew how to take advantage of Mozart's proclivities and good nature in an ignominious manner. This can well explain how the pressure of external circumstances, of growing domestic troubles, and the bitter feeling of failure in all his aspirations, combined with his easily excitable nature, caused the susceptible Mozart to seek convivial and jovial diversion in the vortex of the pleasure-seeking life to which the company was addicted, and to which he, through his opera, would be drawn closer; even the absence of his wife who spent that summer in Baden . . . might have contributed to it. And yet these are the months of association with Schikaneder that gave inducement to the exaggerated accounts of Mozart's life of enticements and have attached an undeserved blemish to his name.

Jahn revised part of this passage for the 1867 second edition of his biography, adding even more vivid (and almost certainly imagined) details to the narrative, and using Schlichtegroll's locution 'follies and excesses' ('Thorheiten und Ausschweifungen') to suggest debauchery:

Der Druck der äußeren Verhältnisse, die wachsende Noth im Hause, die bittere Stimmung über die Erfolglosigkeit aller seiner Bestrebungen wirkten mit, daß der leicht erregbare und für heitere Unterhaltung empfängliche Mozart sich in den Strudel dieses genußsüchtigen Lebens hineinziehen ließ. Seine Frau war in Baden, wo am 26. Juli der jüngste Sohn Wolfgang geboren wurde; ihre Abwesenheit machte seine häusliche Existenz sehr unbehaglich und ließ ihn um so lieber die lustige Theatercompagnie aufsuchen. Thorheiten und Ausschweifungen, wie sie in diesem Verkehr nicht ausblieben konnten, drangen ins Publicum und übertriebene Schilderungen von dem lockeren Leben mit Schikaneder während einiger Monate haben Mozarts Namen einen so nicht verdienten Makel angehängt.⁷⁹

The pressure of external circumstances, the growing indigence in the household, the bitter mood about the failure of all his strivings converged so that Mozart, easily excitable and susceptible to lively diversions, was drawn into the vortex of this pleasure-seeking life. His wife was in Baden, where on July 26 their youngest son Wolfgang was born. Her absence made his domestic existence very unhappy and allowed him to seek out the frolicsome theatre company. Follies and excesses, which could not fail to materialize in this circle, became public, and exaggerated accounts of the

⁷⁸ Jahn, *W. A. Mozart* (1859), volume 4, 564–565.

⁷⁹ Jahn, *W. A. Mozart* (1867), volume 2, 466.



loose life with Schikaneder over several months attached an underserved blemish to Mozart's name.

Jahn does not cite the sources of this public scandal, but he certainly drew this inference from earlier reports.⁸⁰ In any event, more specific sources have not emerged. Jahn went on to recount the dubious tale of Barbara Gerl as Mozart's muse or temptress:

der berühmte Contrabaßspieler Pischlberger war im Orchester Schikaneders angestellt, auf dessem Theater Gerl Sänger und seine sehr artige und liebenswürdige Frau, früher Dem. Reisinger Sängerin war; man behauptet, daß Mozart dieselbe sehr gern gesehn und ihr den Hof gemacht habe.⁸¹

The celebrated double-bass player Pischlberger was employed in Schikaneder's orchestra, and at the same theatre Gerl was a singer, along with his very agreeable and charming wife, formerly Mlle Reisinger. It has been asserted that Mozart very willingly saw her and paid court to her.

A few pages later he repeats the deprecatory innuendo: 'Mozarts unwiderstehliche Neigung für die dramatische Musik kam seine natürliche Gutmüthigkeit und Bereitwilligkeit zu helfen und wie man sagt auch der Einfluß der Mad. Gerl zu Hülfe, er erklärte sich bereit den Versuch zu machen' (Mozart's irresistible inclination for dramatic music, his inherent good nature and willingness to help, and, as it was said, the influence of Madame Gerl, all combined to induce him to make the effort).⁸²

Despite accepting that jealous and malicious contemporaries exaggerated Mozart's faults, in the end Jahn finds the composer to have been an unfaithful husband and debauchee in the summer of 1791. He accompanies this conclusion by a long discussion of the distinction between weakness and vice, and a justification of Mozart's failings by his circumstances and upbringing. However, his mysterious final source of evidence for infidelity was 'reliable Salzburg friends who orally confirmed the intimations of Niemtschek and Nissen' ('Ich bin mündlichen Mittheilungen bewährter Salzburger Freunde gefolgt, welche durch die Andeutung bei Niemtschek S. 64 (Nissen, S. 690) bestätigt werden').⁸³ What rigorous historian would accept and publish anonymous, spoken hearsay about a person some sixty-five years after his death? Jahn's description of Schikaneder completes the picture of a companion who would exert the worst influence on the defenceless composer: 'Er war dem sinnlichen Genuß sehr ergeben, ein Schwelger und Mädchenfreund, je nach Umständen ein Parasit und ein leichtsinniger Verschwender' ('He was addicted to sensual gratification, a reveller and womanizer, and according to circumstances, a parasite and an irresponsible spendthrift').⁸⁴

The connection of Mozart's putative physical decline (as reported by Rochlitz) to an imagined moral decay in the summer of 1791 seems to have had an appeal to the romantic imagination of Jahn's time. But Jahn assembled his vivid narrative of a dissolute, corrupted Mozart from sources with little or no first-hand

80 In the first English translation of Jahn's biography, Pauline Townsend rendered the term *Ausschweifungen* in this passage as 'dissipation', making it clear that she understood it as debauchery. See Otto Jahn, *Life of Mozart*, trans. Pauline Townsend, three volumes (London: Novello, Ewer & Co., 1882), volume 3, 281.

81 Jahn, *W. A. Mozart* (1859), volume 4, 560. William Stafford, *The Mozart Myths: A Critical Reassessment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 121 and 124, briefly mentions Jahn's reference to the Barbara Gerl story, but does not appear to be aware of its origins.

82 Jahn, *W. A. Mozart* (1859), volume 4, 563.

83 Jahn, *W. A. Mozart* (1858), volume 3, 72–73, note 19.

84 Jahn, *W. A. Mozart* (1859), volume 4, 562. This description was possibly derived from Seyfried, 'Commentar zur Erzählung', 180, who describes Schikaneder as a 'playboy, reveller, womanizer, parasite, frivolous spendthrift, and was often cornered by his debtors' ('Lebemann, Schwelger, Mädchenfreund, Parasit, leichtsinniger Verschwender, und oftmals arg von Schuldner in die Enge getrieben'). It is important to note that one cannot find contemporary terms like *dissoluto* (as in Mozart's opera *Il dissoluto punito ossia Il Don Giovanni*), *Schwelger* (reveller), *zügello* (wanton or without moral restraint) or *unzüchtig* (licentious) applied to Mozart during his lifetime or by anyone who knew him.



authority, and it is not particularly fair to Mozart, Schikaneder or Barbara Gerl.⁸⁵ It was Jahn's account that provided a model for later depictions of debauchery at the theatre and of Mozart's libertine indulgence in the revelry, depictions that have retained a place in modern film, music literature and the popular imagination.⁸⁶

CONCLUSIONS

Every member of Mozart's family engaged in formulaic scatological humour. Even the relatively straight-laced Leopold used the expression to 'shit bitter oranges', meaning 'to get upset', which he wrote to Lorenz Hagenauer on 13 September 1768 and to his wife on 3 November 1770.⁸⁷ Wolfgang certainly took this family propensity further in his letters, combining scatology with wordplay.⁸⁸ There is no evidence that such intimate epistolary writing was abnormal or even unusual.

Mozart's bawdy canons stand at the periphery of the composer's output, but are highlighted by those who want to emphasize Mozart's humanity and marginalized by those who are perhaps also embarrassed by them. But viewing these canons as indicative of Mozart's personality seems unwarranted in light of the evidence. Contemporaries composed canons with more vulgar texts, one of them, Johann Baptist Henneberg, a respected and established Viennese church musician and organist. Understanding the social function of such canons requires knowledge of their role in eighteenth-century society as a private form of musical recreation, as ribald songs in like company, as drinking songs to be sung when intoxicated. In comparison to other genres, their music is relatively primitive; they may even have been composed on the spot. The canons' use as a participatory, recreational kind of vocal music helps us understand the meaning of more elevated examples, such as those found in some opera scenes.⁸⁹

While no evidence exists of scatological humour in Wiednertheater performances, light sexual innuendo was present to a small degree in the dialogues of some comic characters, particularly before about 1800. Explicitly bawdy musical expression in Vienna was restricted mainly to certain private spheres in which lewd canons amused musicians, theatre people and their friends. Finally, there is no compelling evidence that Mozart engaged in any behaviour in his last year that one could consider dissolute or self-destructive. This idea appears to be an embellishment developed from vague assertions of missteps and character flaws made years after the composer's death, and at the same time that his bawdy canons were being provided with bowdlerized texts. The notion of a dissolute Mozart whose bawdy canons needed to be cleansed of their vulgar texts is not contradictory. In making Mozart a Byronic hero who produced elevated and pure art, his devotees had a more romantic view of the man than is apparent from the historical record.

85 Schikaneder's character has been the subject of highly exaggerated claims as well. Schroeder, *Mozart in Revolt*, 180, states: 'It appears that he [Schikaneder] left a trail of illegitimate children across Germany and Austria to women of various social ranks from actresses to the highest nobility.' There are in fact only two documented illegitimate children, one with an actress and another with his maid. See Henry Price, 'Emanuel Schikaneder and Jakob Neukäufel: Family Affairs', *Mozart Studien* 17 (2008), 347–358, and Lorenz, 'Neue Forschungsergebnisse'.

86 For example, Maynard Solomon, *Mozart: A Life* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995), 479–481, accepts infidelity stories and refers to 'Mozart's driving sexuality [and his] apparent inability to remain faithful to Constanze'.

87 Mozart, *Briefe und Aufzeichnungen*, volume 1, 275: 'Ich möchte vor Pomeranschen sch: - - -', and 400: 'das man Pomeranzen scheißen möchte'.

88 Although examples of such word play are found in Mozart's intimate sexual references in letters to his wife (see, for example, Mozart, *Briefe und Aufzeichnungen*, volume 4, 80–81), these should not be considered in the same category as his bawdy remarks and canons.

89 For example, the canon in the Act 2 finale of Mozart's *Così fan tutte*, 'E nel tuo, mio bicchiere', which may represent diegetic rather than non-diegetic music. Fiordiligi, Dorabella and Ferrando may actually sing a canon for their wedding toast as an appropriate stage action in the scene.