

consciousness of the proper articulations of the rhythmic gestures in Mozart's music makes the difference between lifelessness and liveliness in performance. Furthermore, knowledge of the affective limits of each gesture ensures a clearer notion of what Mozart was about when he employed them in the operas. Since the social dances constitute a considerable portion of Mozart's expressive vocabulary, the next chapter is devoted to their consideration.

## CHAPTER TWO

### *The Gestures of Social Dance*

#### *Habits in the Dance Hall*

Most of the dances whose characteristic patterns form part of Mozart's vocabulary of rhythmic gestures were already old-fashioned in his own time. New tastes prevailed among the bourgeoisie who frequented the new and modish dance halls; except for the minuet, the French court dances were rarely performed in public. Most of the dancing manuals written in the latter half of the century contained instructions only for the minuet and contredanse, and this pair of contrasting dances, the one reserved and the other exuberant, constituted the evening's exercises. The reason for the selection, as one dancing master explained it, was the preference of the new class of amateur dancers for dances requiring little skill and involving the greatest pleasure for the greatest number:

In earlier times, before taste in the true beauties of dancing was refined, because of an excessive emulation of the French, no man was considered a skilled dancer who could not dance an *aimable Vainqueur*, *charmant Vainqueur*, *Passepied*, *dance d'Anjou*, *Princesse bourée* [*sic*], *Courante*, *Rigaudon*, *Cavotte* [*sic*], *Sarabande*, or *Gigue* [*sic*]. People realized later that such dances were too theatrical for society, and hindered the common pleasure. Therefore they danced *Menuets* and English dances, which gave the kind of pleasure in which an entire group could participate.<sup>1</sup>

In fact, Classic composers of symphonies and chamber music were faithfully reflecting the activities of the dance hall when they coupled in the last two movements of their works the rhythms of the minuet and

contredanse, dignified *Tanz* and gay *Nachttanz*; thus also had an earlier counterpart, the Baroque dance suite, flowered from contemporary tastes in social dance. This trend toward choreographic simplicity was to continue: by the end of the century the waltz, in its unfettered movements the polar opposite of the refined sarabande and courante, had gained the ascendancy in German dance halls and was on its way to France and England.

Mozart did not shun the new habits; he loved to dance. If we are to believe Michael Kelly, an Irish tenor whose memoirs are a chronicle of his acquaintance with important musical and theatrical figures of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Kelly had been told by Constanza Mozart that "great as his [Mozart's] genius was, he was an enthusiast in dancing, and often said that his taste lay in that art, rather than in music."<sup>2</sup> Mozart wrote many sets of minuets and contredanses for the dance halls, and they were at the least good moneymakers. His knowledge of dance patterns was not, however, circumscribed by the new narrowness of taste. Educated by his father in the true *Kapellmeister* tradition, he knew the repertoire of French court dances thoroughly; he could write a chaconne with the best of them, as the ballet music for *Idomeneo* testifies. He was, on the other hand, more selective than composers in the earlier part of the century in choosing dances to use as musical raw material, and the principle which governed his selection seems to have been in harmony with the new tastes in the dance halls, albeit more refined in its operation: only the simplest and most natural rhythms should prevail. The dance rhythms Mozart used most frequently as *topoi* in his operas are the following:

<i>Triple Meter</i>		<i>Duple Meter</i>	<i>Either Triple or Duple</i>
minuet	gigue	march	musette
sarabande	siciliano	bourrée	contredanse (waltz)
passepié	pastorale	gavotte	

A brief account of the essential rhythmic configurations and affective connections of each dance type follows.

It is my aim here to describe the aggregate effect which the allusion in a Classic sonata or aria to the rhythmic pattern of a particular social dance might have had on a late eighteenth-century audience. I have tried to take into account the conventional associations each dance type might have—historical, social, and emotional—and to consider the kind of motion each dance pattern naturally projects, given the type of measure in question and the distribution of accents across that measure. It must be stressed that most of the examples I will be concerned with are stylized, abstracted from the ballroom, and were thus not written with an actual choreography in mind. Of the dances listed above, only

the minuet and contredanse were actually danced at social gatherings at the end of the century, and so their traditional French court choreographies had not the immediate relevance they would have had for earlier audiences. There is, however, an obvious connection between these artful, historical choreographies and what could be called the "natural" choreography suggested by each rhythmic pattern—that which, when caught in words, might be termed its "affect"—and so I will make allusion to the historical choreographies whenever they seem helpful.

### *Dances in Simple Triple Meter*

#### *The Minuet*

The dance is universally well known, and deserves preference over the other social dances on account of its noble and charming nature. . . . It appears to have been invented by the Graces themselves, and is more suited than any other dance for assemblages of persons who distinguish themselves by a fine manner of living.<sup>3</sup>

It is well known over half the world, and in all classes, and although the greater part of men still considers it the easiest part of dancing, yet in the judgment of connoisseurs it takes the prize from all the others. And who can deny the minuet this honor? No one except the man who finds good taste only in the dancing of a boisterous peasant, and blindly admires the impetuous over the decorous in all movements of the body. *The minuet is the queen of all dances*; the test of every dancer who wants to acquire a reputation; . . . and . . . the best occasion for displaying everything beautiful and charming in nature which a body is capable of employing.<sup>4</sup>

The minuet alone of all the social dances won such encomiums; for the late eighteenth century it was the epitome of choreographic elegance and refinement. To support its reputation it had had to gain somewhat in gravity. Earlier in the century the minuet had been a rather quick dance, moving predominantly in quarter notes. By 1770 it had split into two distinguishable types, both used by Mozart. The first retained the look and tempo of the original; the second had slowed down considerably, admitting eighth notes to its figuration in a prominent role. A prototypical quick minuet is "Se vuol ballare" from *Le nozze di Figaro* (ex. 2-1).<sup>5</sup> The famous minuet from *Don Giovanni* (I, 13, 220ff.) is an example of the slower type (ex. 2-2). The versions share many characteristics: they both use a time signature of 3/4 (sometimes 3/8), and habitually begin on the downbeat. A moderate tempo with a regular movement, a bass moving in quarter notes to support the dancers, and a modest execution with few ornaments are among their other salient features. In either version the dance has an affect of a "noble and

## Example 2-1



## Example 2-2



pleasing propriety, but joined with simplicity."<sup>6</sup> Its restrained elegance arises from the even rhythmic attack given the three beats of its measure: /-33/-33/<sup>7</sup> The actual dance step, the *pas de menuet*, in most of its forms acts as a counterpoint to the barline; it is two measures long, and rarely stresses the first beat of the second measure.<sup>8</sup> This check administered to a prominent downbeat probably contributes to the control and level contours which characterize the minuet measure. While discussing the training of singers, one English writer likened the firm and even delivery of a vocal line to the evenhanded progress of the minuet:

The singer, having learnt as it were to walk with the voice *in plano et firmo cantu* ascending, descending, and striking the distances neatly, like the steps of the foot in the movement of the minuet, is next to be taught the ornaments and graces.<sup>9</sup>

Even the name of the dance, sometimes taken to derive from the French word *menu* ("small"), at others assumed to originate in the Latin *minuere* ("to slacken or diminish"),<sup>10</sup> suggests the climate of restraint and refinement projected by the dance in both of its versions.

Confusion shrouds the provenance and associations of the second type of minuet. Its differences from the quick quarter-note minuet type result from an exaggeration of the dance's steady, even pulse: the introduction of a motto rhythm consisting of a quarter note and four eighths, ♩ ♪♪♪♪ (often on a repeated note or chord), slows the tempo somewhat. The motto seems to be a deliberate attempt to signal "minuet." Its percussive repeated notes in thick chordal texture intensify the dance's traditional even movement and restraint, in addition to protecting the dance against the distortion of a rapid and light execution. The motto found a widespread use. For example, a collection of popular minuets published in Edinburgh in 1770 used the motive in approximately sixty percent of its pieces, in varying guises (ex. 2-3),<sup>11</sup> and many people

today wholly identify the minuet with it, perhaps because of the fame of the *Don Giovanni* version (ex. 2-2). The new figure probably emerged as a consequence of the minuet's recently assumed role as primary representative of the *ancien régime*. It was a dramatization of the essential gesture of the dance, and may have originated on the stage. In 1770 Mozart wrote to his sister about the tempo of a stage minuet which he had seen performed in Milan:

I shall soon send you a minuet which Mr. Pick danced in the theatre and which everyone danced to afterwards at the *festa di ballo* in Milan, solely in order that you may see how slowly people dance here. The minuet itself is very beautiful. It comes, of course, from Vienna. . . . It has plenty of notes. Why? Because it is a stage minuet which is danced slowly.<sup>12</sup>

The quick French court version of the minuet needed no distinctive rhythmic mottoes for protection or identification, having evolved in a milieu where professionals carefully cherished every dance gesture. On the stage, however, it is often necessary to intensify the outlines of a given gesture in order to make it project beyond the proscenium arch.

The minuet can admit of almost any figuration which does not disguise its essential movement. Mozart's minuets for orchestra, pieces written to be danced, contain triplets, groups of running sixteenth notes, thirty-second-note flourishes, Scotch snaps and other skipped rhythms, and syncopations. The fundamental minuet can also tolerate the overlay of another style or topical reference. Favorites are horn calls of the court (the fanfares of ex. 2-3a), military (ex. 2-4a), and the hunt (ex. 2-4b),<sup>13</sup> essays in learned style (the imitative passage from the first movement of K. 332, ex. i-2, p. 7, is set *à la menuet*), and pas-

## Example 2-3



Example 2-4

a) Hessian Minuet

b) Hunter's Minuet

toral with drone bass. Mozart gives some of his orchestral minuets affective titles: a *Menuetto galante* (K. 250, the "Haffner" Serenade) moves in quarter notes with clipped dotted rhythms, and in a *Menuetto cantabile* (K. 463), running eighth notes and occasional measures of Alberti bass soften the crispness of the usual quarter-note beats.

The quick even three of the first minuet type, distinctive without being excessively *caractéristique*, won a special place in Classic symphonies and chamber pieces as a "laboratory movement," a ground for the play of permutation and combination. In Mozart's and Haydn's calculated and often mechanistic experiments with rhythm and topic, which have won the dance its greatest renown in the twentieth century, it was joyfully least itself. Numerous examples of Mozart's playful ways with the minuet gesture could be cited: in the string quartets, the minuet of K. 387 in G major, reminiscent, in its clockwork hemiola, of the minuet experiments of Haydn, or of K. 421 in D minor, a minuet with motetlike polyrhythms and a chaconne bass, or of K. 499 in D Major, a minuet become a German dance played on the hurdy-gurdy, notable for its wheezy charm. The actual nature of the minuet might be said to be the subject of the central movements of the C Major Quintet, K. 515. Mozart reverses the usual order of slow movement and minuet, putting the minuet movement first. It begins with a tuneless and sinuous version of the quarter-note minuet (ex. 2-5). For a cadential gesture in the trio, it breaks out into an exuberant waltzlike tune, the movement's only expansive gesture (ex. 2-6). Then, as though to apologize for the arch disguise of the minuet in its proper movement, Mozart makes the third movement an "Urminuet," an example of the slow stage version, for a moving tribute to the "queen of dances" (ex. 2-7).

Example 2-5

Example 2-6

Example 2-7

### The Sarabande

The sarabande is perhaps best known today from Bach's stylized instrumental versions of the dance, stirring and passionate, often in a minor key, with heavily dotted rhythms and lavish ornamentation; for example, the sarabande of the Partita in E Minor. The actual dance was one of the most elevated of the French court dances, although its affect was hardly as lofty as many of these stylized versions might seem to suggest.<sup>14</sup> Its supposed Spanish origins were kept in mind, and at times dancers probably performed it with castanets.<sup>15</sup> Mattheson characterized the sarabande as a dance of "ambition . . . a haughty disposition . . . grandezza."<sup>16</sup>

By the latter half of the century, as the sarabande began to appear more frequently in 3/4 than in 3/2, it lost some of this special quality of expression. It drew closer to the minuet, and was often characterized as a slow minuet.<sup>17</sup> It still enjoyed the reputation of a noble and haughty dance—the castanets are frequently mentioned in sources—but its stylizations were rarely as grand and full-blown as they had been in the earlier part of the century. The sarabande was distinguished from the minuet by its slower tempo and by the characteristic rhythmic pattern

which it might use in any but the ultimate measure of a phrase: ♩ ♩ ♩ Now that the dance was no longer performed, this rhythmic motto became all the more necessary as an identifying characteristic. The profile of the characteristic sarabande pattern, /-˘u/, is considerably more complex than that of the minuet measure. The whole measure hangs on the lengthened second beat: the first beat is preparation for, the shortened third release from, a moment of controlled tension. Duration counterpoints stress here; the tension would not exist if the first and strong beat were coincident with the dotted note: ♩ ♩ This accent of a weak beat by means of duration prevents the dance from being taken at too rapid a tempo,<sup>18</sup> but it also cannot slow down past a certain limit, for "only a bent knee must sometimes support the whole body."<sup>19</sup> The degree of physical control which the sarabande requires of the dancer is characteristic of a noble and dignified posture.

The sarabande became a favorite style for a slow movement in triple meter. The slow movement of Mozart's "Dissonant" Quartet, K. 465, is a stylized sarabande with an ornamented repeat (ex. 2-8). In moments where the dotted pattern is not evident, Mozart still retains the emphasis on the second beat in a free and elegant play on the sarabande pattern.<sup>20</sup> He sometimes carries the sarabande rhythm into the minuet: in K. 585, no. 5, a minuet for orchestra, the sarabandelike dottings slow the tempo somewhat, since they cannot be executed both gracefully and rapidly at the same time (ex. 2-9). This sarabande-minuet bears witness to the taming of the haughty dance, in part eventuated by the process whereby the differing habits of duple and triple meters were sharpened into polarity.

Example 2-8



Example 2-9



Example 2-10



The Passepié

The passepied is universally described as a very fast or very gay minuet; its steps are the various *pas de menuet* taken at a quicker tempo. The dance is notated in 3/8, with or without an upbeat, and usually moves in a mixture of eighth and sixteenth notes, requiring a quick tempo and light execution. The passepied measure has a rhythmic profile midway between the minuet's even three beats and the waltz's strong first beat:

minuet	passepied	waltz
/-˘u/	/-uu/	/˘uu/

In this passepied from Mozart's ballet music for *Idomeneo*, K. 367, the quick tempo indicated by the time signature is reinforced by the smoothness of the rhythmic action and the slow harmonic rhythm (one change per measure, except in the penultimate measure of each phrase); measures are regularly grouped in twos, reflecting the two-measure minuet step (ex. 2-10).

The affect of the passepied is naturally more sprightly than that of a minuet, and is, according to Koch, one of "charming and noble gaiety."<sup>21</sup> Because of the quick tempo of the dance, it is no longer the individual steps with their balance and restraint which are at the forefront, but the floor patterns that the dancers describe in their course about the room. In fact the passepied, usually a dance for one couple like the elegant minuet, was sometimes performed by several couples as a contredanse, a quick dance in which attention to individual steps is all but overwhelmed by a preoccupation with the geometry of the intertwining pairs of dancers.<sup>22</sup> This shift in attention from the well-crafted step to

## Example 2-11



## Example 2-12



the intricate floor pattern is a general tendency among the quicker dances to the right of the spectrum, and one which recommended them highly to the new amateur class of dancers.<sup>23</sup>

Actual passepied dance tunes have two frequent rhythmic habits worthy of note, both of which tend to retard rhythmic action near a cadence. The first is a cadence figure which produces a ritard by throwing the stress onto the second beat of the penultimate measure of the phrase (ex. 2-11<sup>24</sup>). The *Idomeneo* passepied (ex. 2-10) achieves the same effect by the change of harmonic rhythm in the penultimate measure. The other rhythmic peculiarity of the dance is the frequent hemiola, which also serves as a cadence announcer, but on the level of the phrase. This hemiola is sometimes specially notated, using a 3/4 measure in place of two 3/8 measure units (ex. 2-12<sup>25</sup>). The hemiola occurs just prior to a cadence.

### Dances in Compound Duple Meters

#### A Note on the Term "Compound Duple"

In modern metrical terminology it is generally assumed that the division of the primary beat will be a duple one; for instance, although 3/4 is certainly susceptible of a triple division of the quarter note — — we assume a duple division unless otherwise advised, and usually require a special sign, , for the advisement. A special category is reserved for meters in which the primary beat ordinarily has a triple division instead of a duple one, for this is thought to be the more remarkable case. Thus although the word "triple" is not found in the label of 6/8 meter, "tripleness" is central to the definition of 6/8 and of the other compound duple meters, and makes a decisive contribution to

its movement and affect. Marches are occasionally written in 6/8, but they are the only gestures in which steps taken regularly coincide only with the duple level of the beat — in 6/8 the dotted quarter. Otherwise steps are usually distributed over the measure on beats 1, 3, 4, and 6,<sup>26</sup> marking the inequality of strong and weak parts of the pulse which is central to the nature of a triple unit. In music written for the dance, this binding of two relatively quick triple units together to form a duple unit on a higher level gives 6/8 dances a buoyancy and lightness which is appreciable even at the moderate tempo of the siciliano. For this reason the dances written in 6/8 meter — the gigue, pastorale, and siciliano — are classed with the meters in triple time at the right of the metrical spectrum.

#### The Gigue

By the late eighteenth century the French court gigue was no longer a social dance of any account; its 6/8 meter had been subsumed into the music of the contredanse. But the dance type was a tremendously popular one for sonata and symphony movements, especially in finales, where its buoyant rhythms projected the "mirth and cheerfulness"<sup>27</sup> which were thought to be appropriate to the closing movement of such a work.

In its earlier history the dance had had many variants; Mattheson lists four:

The ordinary one, the *Loure*, the *Canarie*, and the *Giga*. The ordinary or English *giges* have as their particular affect a *fiery* and *volatile ardor*, a *rage* which quickly evanescens. The *loures*, slow and dotted, exhibit a *proud* and *inflated* nature, on account of which they are very popular with the Spanish. *Canaries* must possess great *eagerness* and *swiftness*, or else they are a little *plain*. Finally the Italian *gigas*, which are not used for dancing but for fiddling (from which their name may have arisen [suggested by the German *Geigen*]), are constrained to the utmost *speed* or *volatility*, but usually in a flowing and not violent manner.<sup>28</sup>

In practice the "ordinary" gigue tended to an irregular phrase structure<sup>29</sup> and frequently to a contrapuntal treatment. Kirnberger quotes a danceable gigue in thoroughgoing imitative style in his *Recueil d'airs de*

## Example 2-13



*danse caractéristiques*<sup>30</sup> (ex. 2-13) and the type reached its ultimate development in the elaborate and exuberant contrapuntal giges of J. S. Bach.<sup>31</sup> The Italian *giga* was quicker and lighter, with rapid passage-work: Prelude 11, book 1, of *The Well-Tempered Clavier* is cast in *giga* style. Later the *loure* ceased to be a recognizable type, and the other three variants were conflated into the one described at the head of this section.

In tempo and execution the late eighteenth-century stereotype of the gigue follows the example of the imitative type, but in its regular phrase structure it resembles rather the *giga*, or, that is, the usual two-plus-two phrases of most simple dance music. A survival of the contrapuntal type might be discerned in the gigue with imitation of Mozart's B-flat Major Quartet, K. 589, last movement, or of the canarie motif in the G Minor Quintet, K. 516, last movement (the music for the canarie, more rapid in tempo than the gigue, frequently began on the half-bar), but there is no firm guarantee that knowledge of the earlier refinements in gigue classification shaped these particular pieces; this "canarie" may in fact borrow its liveliness from the type of the 6/8 contredanse.

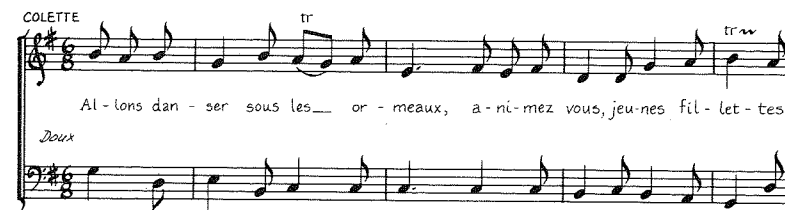
The movement of the gigue is moderate enough for it to tolerate changes of harmony on beats 3 and 6; Kirnberger lists this characteristic as one of the things which distinguishes the music of a gigue from mere triplets in 2/4, since four harmonic changes per measure would be too clumsy to negotiate in a quick and light style of execution.<sup>32</sup> The resulting rhythmic scheme for the gigue is ♩♩-♩♩/. Other characteristic features of the dance are frequent dotted eighth notes on the first and fourth beats and large melodic leaps (resulting in the expression *in saltarella*, from *saltare*, "to leap," for the movement of the gigue<sup>33</sup>). The first movement of Mozart's B-flat Major Quartet, K. 458, is a good example of a stylized gigue in an instrumental work (ex. 2-14).

The gigue was originally a folk dance, of rather vulgar origin, and when refined into a *danse noble* it still retained those country associations. It was often combined with the characteristic harmonies of hunting horns to become a *chasse*, or *Jagdstück* ("hunting piece"); the gigue just quoted is an example of this *galant* character piece, with its orna-

Example 2-14



Example 2-15



Example 2-16



mented horn fifths in measures 2 and 4 (from which it earned the sobriquet *Die Jagd*). Two other Mozartian examples of *chasse* style are the first movements of the Quintet in E-flat Major, K. 614, and of the Piano Sonata in D Major, K. 576. As a result of its bucolic associations, the gigue is frequently used in operas to set the rustic scene. Rousseau in his opera *Le Devin du Village*, a work enshrining the simple virtues of country living, has his village peasants dance a gigue (or perhaps, more precisely, a canarie) (ex. 2-15). The conventional association is also a natural one: the gigue, with the lilt of its double-leveled meter, is a happy projection of simple rustic revels.

### The Pastorale

The pastorale may well never have been a dance, although it is usually classed as one in the lexicons and method books of the late eighteenth century. A few writers, Koch among them, explain that it is rather a song meant to express the idealized world of shepherds.<sup>34</sup> Questions of medium aside, it is persistently recognized as a musical *topos* distinct from the gigue and siciliano — in fact, as a mean between these two pastoral dances.

The pastorale is characterized by a moderately slow tempo, frequent slurs, and the absence of the dotted figures of the gigue and siciliano. Its affect is "natural, sweet . . . , tender,"<sup>35</sup> expressing "rural innocence."<sup>36</sup> An example of the pastorale at its simplest comes from a collection by Pleyel at the turn of the century (ex. 2-16).<sup>37</sup> The telling catchword *innocente* and the musette-style tonic pedal<sup>38</sup> catch the idealization of the shepherd world which is the hallmark of the dance called pastorale, and of the pastoral genre itself. The last movement of Mozart's F Major

## Example 2-17



Piano Sonata, K. 332—a quicksilver mixture of 6/8 topics including virtuoso tarantella style and brilliant gigue—ends coyly *calando* with four measures in pastoral style (ex. 2-17).

*The Siciliano*

Little is known about how the siciliano was actually danced, but it remained an identifiable and important *topos* nonetheless. The siciliano is the slowest of the three dance types in compound duple meter. Koch describes it at length:

A piece of rustic, simple, but charming character which imitates the melodies customarily danced by the people of Sicily. It is set in a slow 6/8 meter, and differs from the pastorale generally in its slower tempo, and in particular because (1) usually the first of the three first eighth notes in the first half of the measure is lengthened by a dot and the following shortened note is slurred with the longer, and (2) in the second half of the measure there rarely appear eighth notes, but more often quarter notes with two following sixteenths. Through this ordering the siciliano receives a special character and meter which markedly distinguish it from all other kinds of pieces.<sup>39</sup>

Quantz suggests for the dance a simple ornamentation, with “no shakes or graces, but a few slurred semiquavers and appoggiaturas.”<sup>40</sup> It is often set in a minor key.

The siciliano is closely identified with the pastoral genre; Sicily is, after all, the Italian Arcadia. On this account it was often used to set scenes of the Nativity, for instance in Handel’s *Messiah* and Corelli’s *Christmas Concerto*. In another vein it often bears an affect of nostalgia and resignation, passions naturally attendant on memories of a better world. A piece quoted by Busby, composed by the English church musician Battishill, combines the two in a hymn *alla siciliana* (in 12/8 meter) sung by the Christian in *extremis* (ex. 2-18).<sup>41</sup> This hymn, it must be said, also demonstrates the tendency to a dragging and tedious melancholy which Koch warned that the dance could display in the hands of a less gifted composer.<sup>42</sup>

Mozart wrote lovely sicilianos, for instance the second movement of the Piano Sonata K. 280. The dance has received no more haunting

## Example 2-18



## Example 2-19



treatment than in the slow movement of the Piano Concerto in A Major, K. 488 (ex. 2-19).

*Dances in Duple Meter**The March*

A *march* is certainly not a special dance; and when it appears in plays, the characters just stride along very slowly and nobly to the beat, without dancing, skipping, or leaping; but together they cut a figure which is pleasant to look at, especially with armed men or the military.<sup>43</sup>

Under a narrow definition of the term “dance,” the march should properly be excluded from the category “dances in duple meter.” In previous pages I have put marching in opposition to dancing, distin-



guishing between the artful motion of dance and the simple marching stride: the bourrée and gavotte move in successive degrees away from the stride toward the dance to the extent that their manipulations of the paradigmatic march measure, /2-0-0/, make possible some choreographic variation in the march's relentless "two-step."<sup>44</sup> But if the term "choreographic" is extended to include any activity conducted to the accompaniment of music, the march asserts a prior claim: it is the original *Gebrauchsmusik* (music written for a practical purpose, or "occasional music"). Writers in the latter half of the eighteenth century would often in discussions of the march include a pseudoanthropological excursus on the potency of the relation between music and human movement. Consider, for example, Sulzer's words on the subject:

It was noticed probably before the invention of music that tones put together even just to make noise have great power to support the capabilities of the body in difficult work and to end fatigue. We find frequently in all histories that great tasks men wanted to accomplish quickly were accomplished to the sound of trumpets and other instruments. . . . Chardin says in his *Trip to Persia* that Eastern peoples could not lift a heavy load unless a noise was made for it. . . . Today we can still watch sailors pulling heavily laden barges against the current of the river lighten their tiring work by singing, so that the steps coincide with the measure. . . . We can see from these considerations why almost all peoples accompany the processions of soldiers and other more difficult undertakings with music.<sup>45</sup>

This preoccupation with music's power to control and direct the human body is clearly the product of a music aesthetic which interpreted musical numbers as a rational hierarchy of signs ordering bodily movement (regarding this movement in turn as the measurable manifestation of human passions). The march, the bare reshaping of ordinary human locomotion into artful measured movement, stands on the threshold of dance, and thus is an example of the bond between gesture and expression in its most rudimentary form. Eighteenth-century aestheticians examined the march because they desired to demonstrate that that bond existed by nature: in the march they found a primitive specimen from which to trace the evolution of comparative artifices like the social dances.

The figures admitted to the march must satisfy one requirement: they must support the activity of the marchers.

[The march] should serve to ease the fatigue of war and to excite the spirit, or, in other solemn processions, to incline the feelings to a certain higher, more noble joy. . . . To begin with an upbeat is at all events not advisable in a true march, since the unmusical soldiers are induced by it to raise their foot immediately with the first note and thus to disturb the measure.<sup>46</sup>

The march must have a meter with a duple beat, preferably a slow two or a quick four (2/4, 4/4, or *alla breve*; a 6/8 meter with steps on beats 1 and 4 is permissible, but less usual). Phrases must be organized in two-measure units. Dotted rhythms, called by Charles Burney the "old-fashioned 'dot-and-go-one,'"<sup>47</sup> are the most felicitous impetus for stepping in time, since a short, snappy upbeat emphasizes the note which follows it. Winds and brass are characteristic military instruments, and should be employed in major tonalities — B-flat, C, D, or E-flat when trumpets are used.<sup>48</sup> Marches should be ceremonial in affect, "serious, but at the same time rousing."<sup>49</sup>

Marches of the period often imitate the characteristic sound of instruments associated with the military: dotted rhythms, parallel thirds and sixths suggesting wind-instrument figuration, drum tattoos, trumpet calls, and fanfares. In his late eighteenth-century keyboard-method book, D. G. Türk includes a prototypical march, *Maestoso*, with dotted rhythms, horn fifths, and a fanfare motive in the opening notes of the bass (ex. 2-20a). Introducing in the eleventh measure a sixteenth-note triplet (for the first and only time), he appends a playful footnote: "for connoisseurs of the trumpet" (ex. 2-20b).<sup>50</sup> The march suitable for the ceremonial procession of a solemn, nonmilitary occasion is slower in tempo and *alla breve*, but uses many of the figures characteristic of the military march. Mozart's march of the priests from *Ido-*

Example 2-20



Example 2-21



*meneo* is a good example of the type (ex. 2-21). The "exalted march"<sup>51</sup> is a more fiery and passionate version of this ecclesiastical *entrée*.

### The Bourrée

The bourrée, like the minuet, sarabande, and passepied part of the heritage of the French court dance, is a danceable shading of the march. Written in duple meter, 4/4 or *alla breve*, with a moderate and lively tempo, it has two prominent rhythmic peculiarities: it begins with a quarter-note upbeat, ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩, and often uses the syncopated figure: ♩ ♩ ♩ The dance melody has the rhythmic profile

U/-U-, U/-U-,  
4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3

or, when syncopated

U/-- U/--  
4 1 2 3, 4 1 2 3,

The rhythmic pattern of the march measure falls into two nearly equal halves, while that of the bourrée is more of a piece, with a quick rhythmic crest and slower fall. The *pas de bourrée* is a unit consisting of a rise followed by two plain steps, the three performed to the first three beats of the measure (and preceded by a *plié* on the upbeat).<sup>52</sup> Phrasing with an upbeat strengthens the first and strong beat considerably in relation to beat 3, the "weak strong beat" of the march, both because the upbeat specially prepares beat 1 and because the breath articulating the next upbeat must cut beat 3 short. The syncopated pattern sharpens the differences between bourrée and march, eliding the "weak strong beat" altogether (ex. 2-22<sup>53</sup>).

### Example 2-22



### Example 2-23



With its more or less ornamented "gliding stride,"<sup>54</sup> the bourrée belongs to a class of gestures which might be termed *di mezzo carattere* ("of the middle rank").<sup>55</sup> Its affect is usually expressed as a "moderate joy,"<sup>56</sup> and a light execution is specified. According to Sulzer, it was used in ballets "for serious as well as playful and humble affects."<sup>57</sup> Haydn, in the finale of the String Quartet opus 76, no. 4, shades the bourrée scansion into a more antic contredanse style, introducing eccentric accents on weak beats (ex. 2-23). To Mattheson the particular property of the bourrée was "*contentment and a pleasing manner, . . . a nonchalance*";<sup>58</sup> refined but not distinctive to the extreme, it survived the vicissitudes of fashion in social dance almost as successfully as did that ultimate survivor, the minuet.

### The Gavotte

In rhythmic pattern the gavotte is one step further removed from the march than is the bourrée: one more slight alteration in the 4/4 paradigm achieves in the gavotte measure the most radical manipulation of duple meter possible. The bourrée worked its changes on the march pattern by disturbing the symmetry of the two halves of the measure. The gavotte retains the symmetry of the 4/4 measure, only to turn it inside out: beat 3, the "weak strong beat" of the march, becomes the first beat of the gavotte pattern without, however, usurping the proper position and accentuation of the "true" beat 1. This transposition creates a situation which is anomalous in duple meter: it leaves only one actual weak beat among the four:

-- /' U, -- /' U  
3 4 1 2, 3 4 1 2,

The downbeat and the pattern-beginning, two elements of the measure which are usually united in a single entity, are split apart in the gavotte, and act as counterweights to one another. A delicate rhythmic equilibrium results: each of the three strong beats is held in suspension, neatly "beaten" as a distinct entity, until the curve of the measure peaks on the third and strongest beat of the three. With this transposition of the two halves of the least dancelike of meters, the gavotte becomes one of the most distinctive of all the *danses caractéristiques*.<sup>59</sup>

Late eighteenth-century descriptions of the music of the gavotte re-

flect its measured beating in their frequent use of the words "precise," or "distinctly accented."<sup>60</sup> Like the bourrée, the gavotte is a dance *di mezzo carattere*. While not open to extremes of tempo, its moderately quick pace can be varied somewhat in either direction, and its affect will vary to the same degree:

The measure can be formed in various ways, with quarter or eighth notes predominant, or mixed. Here and there one can make use of the dot and other variations, the choice of them . . . depending on the tempo and character one desires to give to the gavotte. For the gavotte can be used for various types of expression, happy and sad in various degrees, and can thus be performed in tempos which are more or less quick and more or less slow.<sup>61</sup>

Charles Compan in his *Dictionnaire de danse* speaks of the gavotte as "often gay, and also sometimes tender and slow,"<sup>62</sup> and these two affective types are represented in two dances taken from a French violin treatise — a *gavotte tendre* (ex. 2-24a) with its dotted slurs, and a *gavotte vive* (ex. 2-24b) with a simpler melody and running eighth-note accompaniment.<sup>63</sup> Alberti basses like the one in example 2-24b are a frequent accompaniment to the dance because their regular tick-tock rhythms help to accentuate the separate strokes of the three strong beats.

The gavotte displays neither the simple gravity of the minuet nor the exuberance of the gigue, but has instead, by way of the almost artificial control of its special rhythmic ticking, an air of teasing primness, which suggests the pastoral pastels of French *bergeries*. It was historically a courtship dance, and also had from its origin persistent associations

Example 2-24

a) Gavotte tendre



b) Gavotte vive



Example 2-25



Example 2-26



with the pastoral,<sup>64</sup> which were still very much alive in the late eighteenth century. One collection of characteristic national songs includes as the typically French example a tune barred as a gavotte, with a daintily amorous text (ex. 2-25):

Young girls, you who teach the trouble  
Lovers can cause,  
Resist the first speeches  
With which they wish to divert you.  
If you are slow, your danger redoubles.  
Love dazzles you with its torch.  
When the eye is dimmed, all is lost.<sup>65</sup>

The figure opening this *bergerie* is a characteristic one in the gavotte — a stepwise descent from one note of the tonic chord to another. Mozart uses it as the opening of the gavotte in the ballet music for *Idomeneo* (ex. 2-26). This melodic fall to the downbeat matches the shape of the pattern's rhythmic arch, and when dotted, as Mozart's opening is, the figure adds a flirtatious note, its rubatolike effect momentarily retarding the expected climax of the gavotte measure. It is a frequent and effective opening figure for gavotte melodies.

The association of gavotte with pastoral was not merely a Parisian habit, but universally part of the dance's affective gamut. Antonio Salieri, in his opera *La grotta di Trofonio* (Vienna, 1785), also connects the

## Example 2-27



gavotte with the classico-pastoral world. To a young man wandering in the woods and musing on the possibilities of amorous conquest of a nymph or dryad, Salieri gives an aria cast as a gavotte tune in 2/4 (ex. 2-27).<sup>66</sup> The text of the French gavotte tune cited above (ex. 2-25) is a coyly mock-moral warning about the gentle dangers of love—an oxymoron about the pleasures of peril. The affect of the gavotte is itself an oxymoron—a coy reserve, a teasing primness. This captured contradiction is plainly what made the gavotte a successful gesture for another world of oxymoron—the artificially natural garden of courtly shepherds and rustic nobles.

## Dances Admitting of Duple or Triple Meter

## The Musette

The musette is first off an instrument—the French version of the bagpipe—and second a *pièce caractéristique* which imitates the instrument's characteristic turns—the drone and skirl, or pedal point bass and melodic treble. The instrument was highly popular in the French court, a real country instrument “pastoralized” along with the real country. Elegant versions of the instrument were manufactured, and performing manuals were written for it, one by as distinguished a composer as Jacques Hotteterre (*Méthode pour la musette*, Paris, 1737). A dance called musette also appeared in the French ballet, as an accompaniment for music written for the instrument. It could be composed in any meter, duple or triple, and had a “languid, fragile character.”<sup>67</sup>

The musette is an important musical *topos* in Classic music: it is the most directly suggestive expression of the rustic scene, for its evocative part-writing—drone and skirl—transports the listener immediately into a country context. Compan, in his *Dictionnaire de danse*, after describing the pastoral festivals of ancient times in which shepherds danced the musette, gives a nostalgic sigh for the mythical simple life of old: “One regrets not living in a country where people knew no other ambition than to please, and no other occupation than that of loving and being happy.”<sup>68</sup> The affect of the musette is usually described in words like Sulzer's—“naive simplicity, with a gentle, coaxing song.”<sup>69</sup>

Generally in Classic uses of the *topos*, the characteristic musette sound is combined with the rhythmic pattern of a particular dance,

either duple or triple. As Sulzer explains, the musette “can be used for noble shepherd characters as well as for low peasant types; but in both cases music must conform precisely with character.”<sup>70</sup> The musette can, for example, take on contredanse figures (ex. 2-28<sup>71</sup>). The most common musette meters are 6/8 and *alla breve*. The 6/8 frequently characterizes “low peasant types”; since it is already a peasant meter, the addition of a pedal bass to a gigue only compounds the rustic affect. Mozart in his pastoral opera *Bastien und Bastienne* (its libretto based on Rousseau's *Le Devin du village*) announces the approach of the village sorcerer with a musette in 6/8 in the rhythms of the gigue, (or, speaking rigorously, the canarie). He adds to the drone and skirl the inflection of the raised fourth degree, a characteristic bagpipe sound (ex. 2-29). To express a “noble shepherd character,” the musette requires more sophisticated rhythms: the pastorale often has a musette-type pedal bass (see exs. 2-16 and 2-17, pp. 43, 44), and indeed any distinction between the two types is almost superfluous.

The musette-gavotte is the most common combination of a musette with dance rhythms; it is perhaps the most distinctive of all musettes. It can be traced through early French opera, and is found in the English Suites of Bach (nos. 3 and 6). Mozart's gavotte from the ballet music for

## Example 2-28



## Example 2-29



*Idomeneo* (ex. 2-26, p. 51) is another notable example of the type. Gavotte rhythms are an appropriate gesture for a courtly pastoral musette because they themselves evoke the Arcadian world. Hiller published an example of the musette-gavotte which deserves quotation with text in full, because it catches the naive idealization of an artificial countryside which the musette-gavotte was considered to reflect:

- A. In love we must take our lessons  
From the village.  
The shepherd is never fickle;  
He loves in all seasons.  
When, at the feet of his shepherdess,  
Coridon describes his torment,  
Lisa, never severe,  
Responds to him only with love.
- B. Simple art paints nature  
With a seductive luster.  
Its mirror is the clear billow,  
Its ornament a flower.  
If we're in love we should say so.  
Everything in these peaceful places  
Speaks the language of the heart,  
And is figured in two lovely eyes.
- C. I who live in the village  
Have all its candor.  
My habit and my speech  
Are the image of my heart.  
If by chance my eyes  
Have power over yours,  
I owe it to nature,  
And I please without knowing it.

The poet-sophisticate-lover of these lines stands at a double remove from nature: admiring the artless simplicity of life in the village, he fancies that it confers on him qualities possessed by the noble shepherd Coridon, who is in turn a literary image of the real thing. The poem is set to the tune of a gavotte, with the characteristic dotted descending figure at the opening.<sup>72</sup> For the third couplet of each stanza there is added a musette, with drone and skirl (ex. 2-30).<sup>73</sup> This combination of the prim, beating rhythms of the gavotte with the musette's characteristic "country" sound constitutes a complex *topos*, many-layered in reference, which is fully the musical equivalent of that nostalgic world of *amour* and artifice, the literary pastoral.

### Example 2-30

Musette allegro

1 En a - mour c'est au vil la - ge qu'il faut pren - dre ses le -  
2 Le Ber - ger n'est point vo la - ge; il aime en tou - tes sai -  
4 Lise au lieu d'êt - re se ve - re ne lui re - pond qu'en au -

sons. 3 Quand au pied de sa ber - ge - re Cor - i - don peint son - tour - ment.  
sons.  
mant.

### The Contredanse (Allemande, Waltz)

The contredanse is also "ambimetric," but for different reasons than is the musette. The musette simply joins its country sound to the characteristic rhythms of a particular dance tune, while the music of the contredanse, on the other hand, has no fixed rhythmic pattern, tolerating any meter, duple or triple, which admits of being scanned in two light beats (6/8, two measures of 3/8, 2/4, or *alla breve*). The contredanse subverted the established choreographic habits of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, causing an irreversible revolution in social dance — the conquest of the French court choreographies by a phenomenon I shall call the "danceless dance." Its indifference to the characteristic shapes of meters is rhythmic evidence of the contredanse's revolutionary nature.

Originally native to England, the contredanse was first imported to the continent just before the end of the seventeenth century. There it split into two versions, the "contredanse angloise" and the "contredanse française," distinguished from one another more by the number of dancers and their positions than by the music which accompanied them. The English preferred a columnar figure called a "longways," similar to our Virginia reel, in which a large number of people could participate, while the French adopted a "square set" for eight, resembling the usual figure of our modern square dance.<sup>74</sup> By the 1760s an import called "allemande," a slightly cruder and more energetic dance, had joined the contredanse in France. Although some writers attribute other dif-



## a) La Chaumière



## b) La Petite Agathe



## c) La Parisienne



## d) La Résolue



## e) Allemande



## f) Allemande



## Example 2-35



sion, uniting "diversion and civility" in a "pleasant joke."<sup>88</sup> Mozart and Haydn exploit the dance's air of civilized comedy frequently in their spirited and witty contredanse finales.

The allemande in triple meter (3/4, 3/8) is even more simplified and streamlined than is its 2/4 version. Sometimes called the "true German allemande" (if one considers the 2/4 version as a transformation worked by the French on a borrowing from the German),<sup>89</sup> the dance appears under a profusion of labels, all signifying essentially the same dance: allemande, boiteuse, Schwäbische Tanz (Souabe), Deutsche Tanz (Teitsch), Schleifer, ländler, waltz (Walzer). The last two titles, ländler and waltz, are modern generic terms for these quick triple dances, more commonly in use today than they were in the eighteenth century. The 3/4 allemandes are, however, the immediate ancestors of the waltz, and the dances most distant from the French court tradition; Bacquoy-Guédon's manual includes some good examples (ex. 2-35).<sup>90</sup> They share with the 2/4 allemande an exceedingly simple and repetitious figuration and a strong emphasis on the downbeat: /-000/. They also feature a very simple harmony, which clings close to the tonic (often moving over a tonic pedal), and usually changes harmony only once per measure.

The proliferation of names for the triple allemande can be easily explained; they are all either geographic, choreographic, or rhythmic in origin. "Boiteuse" means "limping," and refers to the triple meter of the "true German allemande": the German from Bacquoy-Guédon's manual (ex. 2-35 above) is entitled "Contre-danse Allemande ou boiteuse." "Schwäbische" simply names a German province, and "Deutsche Tanz" is the name given by Mozart to the orchestral allemandes he wrote for the dance halls in 1787 and after,<sup>91</sup> for example the opening measures of K. 509, no. 1 (ex. 2-36). He calls the crude peasant dance in the famous three-orchestra ballroom scene of *Don Giovanni* (I, 13, 454ff.) a



Example 2-56



Example 2-57



"Teitsch" (ex. 2-37).<sup>92</sup> Both "Deutsche Tanz" and "Teitsch" are clearly originals of the French translation "allemande," and of the English translation "german" in use even today. "Schleifer," "slider," describes the motion of the allemande, and "ländler" is the equivalent of "country-dance." All these titles describe a German dance in a quick triple meter with a rhythmic pattern which resembles that of the modern waltz.

#### *The Revolution of the "Danceless Dance"*

The contredanse in its several versions was the leading dance of the late eighteenth century, and it entered the repertoire while a new democratization of social life was taking place in Europe. Dance was no longer the hierarchic display it had been in the French courts. Dance halls were springing up in all European capitals, centers of social life where members of the bourgeoisie and aristocracy might meet one another and perhaps even dance a figure together. Dance, once considered a craft, and a character-building discipline, was turning into a purely amateur amusement, and the amateurs were impatient of the long training periods which the older dances required if one were to acquit oneself properly in their performance. Turning away from rigorous training in the expression of the passions to the luxury of self-expression, they also turned from the principle of variety to that of efficiency:

These dances . . . are of many types, and can be danced by four, six, eight, and still more persons at once. Therefore usually at balls, after minuets have been danced for a while, most of the remaining time is passed with contredanses, because they can occupy more people at once and because they can be varied endlessly; for there are many contredanses.<sup>93</sup>

The contredanse was welcomed with such enthusiasm because of its infinite expandability: it facilitated the happy social exercise of as many dancers as the ballroom could accommodate. In the face of this versatility the older dances all fell by the wayside, except for the minuet, which was retained, one supposes, as a nod to older habits of restraint and decorum. Assemblies moved on to the contredanse as soon as decently possible, after perfunctorily performing a few minuets as a solemn prelude to the evening's more enthusiastic exercises.

The contredanse's democracy of meters is a sign of its democracy of spirit. Like the march, it admits of duple or triple meter, because it is essentially a walk or alternation of steps, and not a true dance, at least in the tradition of the French court dances. Their essence could never be simple alternation; for a dance to catch a particular passion it had to cleave to one meter or another. Explanations of the contredanse's variety of meters reveal an opposing, and "progressive," notion of dance:

In the Music of the Contredanse one can use duple or triple time. In the first case the meter is 2/4, and serves for the greater part of the Contredanses; in the second the meter is 3/8, which in some circumstances is more suitable for the movement of this Dance, whose action can be rather varied.<sup>94</sup>

It is not meter which determines the choreographic action of the contredanse, but rather the reverse, and its expressive content is not limited to one particular affect. For the first time we meet with a democratic attitude toward the relation between meter and expression, and, consequently, the term "meter" moves closer toward the modern concept of it as a mere organizer of pulses.

The choreography of the contredanse was made to order for the new generation of amateur dancers. In the minuet a step takes two measures, and every motion to every beat, each attitude of the body and limbs, is part of the expressive content of the dance. The contredanse, on the other hand, since it is a group dance, emphasizes not steps and gestures — that is, the delineation of a particular affect — but figures, the aim of which is to uncouple pairs of partners, regroup them, and through a series of cleverly mapped manipulations to bring them back to the original ordering. All the interest in the contredanse is concentrated on the level of the measure-group rather than on that of the measure. One figure takes eight to sixteen measures to perform,<sup>95</sup> and the dancers take steps only in the aid of forming a figure. A. B. Marx describes the figure, writing early in the nineteenth century:

In the anglaise . . . one pair after the other moves up and down the row of the remaining dancers *with a dancelike movement* and, having reached a specified place, performs some dance figure along with another couple.<sup>96</sup>



The notion of a "dancelike movement" would be incomprehensible in the older court dances; one never aped "dancing" while in fact merely walking or running in order to traverse a given space. The figures of the contredanse are just complicated paths for the dancers to walk, devoid of expressive content. The *noms caractéristiques* often affixed to the French contredanses<sup>97</sup> bear only superficial connections to the pieces; they may at the most refer to some atypical turn of the tune in question, and were probably added for novelty's sake, as a means of impressing some of the innumerable tunes on the memory.<sup>98</sup> The audience in the court of Louis XIV watched individual performers each straining to the utmost to perform the correct expressive gestures of their dance. The audience in a dance hall (most not in actuality spectators, but participants restively waiting their turn) witnessed a mass of gay but obedient dancers following the leader about the room, points in an abstract human geometry.<sup>99</sup> The contredanse is, so to speak, a "danceless" dance.

An interesting contrast in attitudes toward the relation of dance and expression is reflected in comments made on the contredanse by two writers separated by a period of twenty years. Sulzer, in his article on the 3/4 allemande, describes watching peasants at their dancing:

Very often . . . one sees untutored dancers who dance their allemandes with a charm containing something very captivating; they give the spectator great pleasure. The allemande is a true dance of happiness.<sup>100</sup>

In 1791 Framéry, commenting in the *Encyclopédie Méthodique* on J. J. Rousseau's simple definition of the contredanse,<sup>101</sup> sees the same experience from a different point of view. His words demonstrate a growing indifference to the commonality of human experience, accompanied by a new consciousness of the self:

There are *contre-danses* for sixteen people, and even for indeterminate numbers. The word seems to come from the English *country-dance*, dance of the country; indeed it is in the village above all that people love to gather, and prefer shared pleasures. The slow minuet, which employs only two people and does not allow the spectators any occupation except admiring the dancers, could only be born in the cities, where people dance for the sake of *amour-propre*. In the village people dance for the sole pleasure of dancing, to move limbs accustomed to violent exercise; they dance to breathe out a feeling of joy which grows constantly in proportion to the number of dancers, and has no need for spectators.<sup>102</sup>

In the first quotation the experience of watching country dancers, although perhaps idealized, is still viewed from a remove: country people dance in a certain manner, expressive of the way in which they live their

lives. Unstated but implied is the other half of the comparison: city people dance in some other fashion, manifesting their own particular customs and habits. Implicit in Sulzer's account is the assumption that studying both sets of habits is part of the study of the nature of men. To Framéry, country and city are no longer of equal interest to a reporter; a certain disdain for city ways creeps into his tone. In the country the impulse to dance is primarily a social one, he claims in praising it; its source is the individual's desire to "express himself" in a gathering of his fellows.

The distance between expressing oneself and expressing passions common to all men is a considerable one. The French court dances could not be danced by a mob; they demanded instruction, skill, control, and refinement. The solo character of the minuet may have satisfied one's *amour-propre*, but first it required the opposite — the willingness to submit to an arduous discipline, external to oneself, in order to move other men by one's fluency in a universal expressive language. Even the most rustic court dances, the gigue and the pastorale, are only secondhand rustic; they have been refined from mere rustic dances into vehicles for expressing qualities of character which are considered to accompany the rustic way of life. The dancer does not dance them to express himself, but to catch the naively frank and free manners of country people. If this first attitude appears condescending, the position of the second writer toward the country is no less so, and at the same time he chooses to abandon his status as an observer of human character to join the communal melee and express himself along with everyone else. In idealizing self-expression and locating it in the country, he has "invented" the waltz and turned the corner into the nineteenth century.

The waltz is both an emblem and a natural end of the tumultuous social changes which took place at the turn of the century; a child of the 3/4 allemande or Deutsche Tanz, it follows in the general spirit of the contredanse explosion. Dance melodies with lighthearted affects provide less rhythmic differentiation on the level of the measure than do the more noble, serious gestures: rhythmic action in the minuet and sarabande moves from beat to beat, while in the passepied the focus of the action is on the first beat of every measure. The affect of the contredanse is the most lighthearted of all, especially in its 3/4 German version; a common phrase used to express the triple allemande's distinctive gaiety is "skipping joy," or *hüpfende Freude* (*gajezza saltellante* in the Italian).<sup>103</sup> The beat tends to be perceived on the measure level, and supporting harmonies rarely change more than once a measure, producing the cliché of the "oom-pah-pah" accompaniment, a salient feature both of the Deutsche Tanz and of the modern waltz. A gesture with a phrase

consisting actually of four beats rather than four measures is much more open and exuberant than, for example, the gesture of the minuet, with its close and careful small steps and restrained gestures. As the affects of the eighteenth-century dances grow gayer and more rustic, the gestures involved in them become broader, more expansive, and less refined, their rhythmic patterns less complex and more sweeping. Next to the fulsome exuberance of the waltz, the tense control and delicate affective portraiture of the eighteenth-century court dances may seem less subtle than effete; the big gesture, on the other hand, allows for few nuances of expressive content. Dances called "waltz" or "Walzer" in the late eighteenth century carry the "doodling" quality of contredanse figuration to extremes; they often resemble accompaniments without melodies (ex. 2-38<sup>104</sup>). A. B. Marx's explanation of the relation of conventional waltz figuration to the waltz "step" is helpful and revealing:

The waltz has two movements: first each pair of dancers turns itself in a circle around its own center; second the pair progresses with these continuous turns in a greater circumference until it reaches its starting place and the circle is closed. Each little circle is performed in two-times-three steps and is, as it were, the motif of the dance. It corresponds . . . to the single measure, which must conform to the three steps. . . . But since two such measures belong together, within them the three-part dance motif is performed twice and the little circle is complete.

At the very least the waltz must bring into prominence this basic motif of movement. Each measure, or, better, each phrase of two measures, must answer to the dance motif, marking the first step firmly, and also the swinging turn of the dance. Where the measures do not point it out they must still favor it, by a melody which spiritedly turns away from the first note. This well-known waltz from Weber's *Freischütz* [ex. 2-39] . . . shows us a genuine waltz motif. . . . But this rustic

Example 2-38



Example 2-39



dance satisfies itself with the first, still "raw material," the motif of three steps, without forming clearer phrases for the completed movement of twice three steps which befits a more complete and nobler conception of the dance. . . . We see in the above piece auxiliary tones placed before the pure chord tones in the melody in order to set the first step in relief; every other melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic sharpening . . . serves the same purpose. To this fundamental content is joined as simple an accompaniment as possible, which marks the beat.<sup>105</sup>

Marx's phrases "the swinging turn of the dance" and "a melody which spiritedly turns away from the first note" describe the essential waltz movement; the word *walz* in German means "swinging" or "turning." These words characterize both the original waltz and more sophisticated versions of it. Von Weber's waltz resembles the simple eighteenth-century waltz quoted above (ex. 2-38, p. 64); its repetitive and unmelodic figures string out one after another with no attention to period structure, to a sculptured arch for the phrase. Although Marx was plainly used to more tuneful waltzes with some hint of periodicity, he praises von Weber's exploitation of the affective potential of the cruder waltz:

The division into antecedent and consequent phrases does not seem essential [in the waltz in general], and thus may be less prominent, although a slight hint of this order of progress generally adorns and ennobles the music. Certainly because it is not perceptible in the haste of the waltz from *Der Freischütz*, the piece appears common, as was the composer's intent. For he wanted to portray an uncultivated group giving itself to *pure pleasure in waltzing*, recklessly; thus he had nothing sound out except the pure waltz figure.<sup>106</sup>

Marx's expression "die blosse Walzlust" (ineffectively rendered above as "pure pleasure in waltzing")<sup>107</sup> conjures up images of couples eternally turning in dizzying circles along a wider circumferential path, self-contained and oblivious planets. The intoxicating and exuberant "self-expression" of the waltz brought it to extraordinary popularity by the end of the century, obliterating all the fine distinctions of the social dances which had choreographed human passions. Instead the activity

of dancing became at the least a healthy social exercise, and at its highest an ecstatic circling through a blurred landscape toward the sublime.

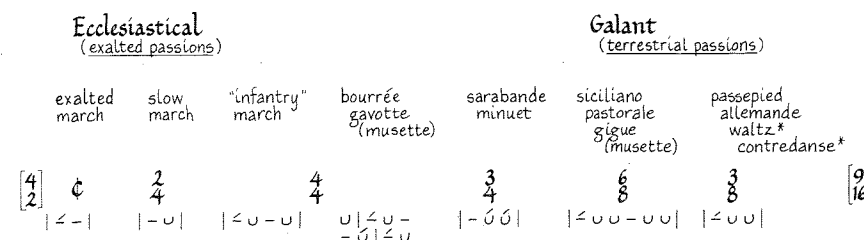
Thus the 2/4 contredanse and the waltz are both anomalies in the metrical spectrum. The contredanse is a dance which is not properly danced, or a quick walk notated in an improperly slow meter; its duple time signature and quarter-note beat class it with the slow march, while as a quick dance it should belong, according to long-standing metrical proprieties, with 3/8 meter. The contredanse explosion began the subversion of the metrical and affective spectrum. The waltz is an anomaly to the spectrum because as it becomes the principal dance movement in triple meter, it also begins to appear more frequently in an "improper" meter—in 3/4 rather than in the quicker and more lighthearted 3/8. It was possible to notate two quick-tempoed gay dances in quarter notes only because those dances, having eclipsed all other choreographic gestures, no longer needed to be distinguished from companion dances in an expressive hierarchy. Notation was gradually becoming a matter of convenience rather than an indicator of expressive values; the quarter note turned from *tempo giusto* into *scrittura giusta*.

The contredanse and waltz fail to register properly on the metrical spectrum because they are infiltrators engaged in subverting it. Yet the metrical hierarchy and two nonhierarchical rhythmic gestures could and did exist side by side in Mozart's music; he neither shunned the old nor exalted the new, looking on them both dispassionately as material for composition. He treated the waltz as just another dance, capable of expressing a peasant, rustic affect in the most direct, "unprocessed" manner (unlike the pastorale and gavotte, for example, where the rustic is viewed from the remove of the aristocrat). In the second movement of the C Major Quintet the waltz's exuberance serves as a foil for the serpentine minuet,<sup>108</sup> and its peasant associations characterize Leporello's flat-footed Teitsch with Masetto in the ballroom scene of *Don Giovanni*.<sup>109</sup> By setting the undisciplined verve of the contredanse against the rigor of the earlier dances Mozart caught a picture of his world in transition; *Don Giovanni* is the locus of that confrontation.<sup>110</sup> Both duple and triple "danceless dances" were working radical changes on contemporary mores, but at the same time they did not yet fail to take a subordinate place in Mozart's lexicon of expressive references.

### *The Metrical Spectrum Reviewed*

The social dances and marches fall into an order according to the way accents are distributed across a typical measure of each gesture; I have sketched out this order roughly in figure 1. The stronger the downbeat section of the measure, the more apt is the gesture to make two levels of

Figure 1 The Metrical Spectrum



\*Anomalies:  $\frac{2}{4}$  contredanse,  $\frac{3}{4}$  waltz.

organization palpable—groupings of beats and groupings of measures. In the waltz the dancer's feet move to the pulse of three which is perceptible on its lower level, but the four-beat "phrase" shaped of measures is the more insistent line of action; sometimes in quick waltzes it operates as a "measure," and the terms "phrase" and "measure" begin to merge. In the case of compound meters, groupings of the duple beat, the higher level of action (the dotted quarter note in 6/8, for example), substitute for groupings of measures. Toward the left of the spectrum double levels begin to open up again, although less apparently, since both levels are always duple. In a duple measure one may perceive as the beat all four pulses, only pulses 1 and 3, or only pulse 1 (in an extremely fast tempo). In the humbler marches the beat may easily pass from one level to the other: in a simple 4/4 measure either quarter-note or half-note action can establish the predominant line. The *alla breve* gesture of the exalted march, however, is to the duple side of the spectrum what the passepied and waltz are to the triple: its upper level (half-note) asserts the definitive metrical contour, while action on the lower (quarter-note) level is strictly subordinated. Thus the most passionately serious and the most lighthearted gestures share the same patterns of accentuation—a firm, simple line with a secondary and more rapid action underneath—the only difference being that the secondary action is duple in the one case and triple in the other. In dances closer to the middle of the spectrum the upper level drops into the background, to be sensed distinctly as the level of the phrase. For example, the slow-tempoed sarabande's emphasis on beat 2 diminishes the usual force of the downbeat, directing one's primary attention to the unit of the measure and the patterns formed by its three pulses. The beat patterns are then grouped together to take their place in an organization of a higher power—the phrase. Since perception of the sarabande's phrase struc-

ture comes through beat patterns and not above them, no ambiguity arises about the terms "measure" and "phrase."

The metrical hierarchy clearly corresponds to an affective one; accentuation, style of execution, and tempo taken together prescribe types of movement ranging from the most stately to the most spirited. The sarabande and minuet are the most dignified dance gestures, *alla breve* the most imposing march posture. The gavotte and bourrée, both danceable compromises of the march, manifest the duple patterns which are closest in the spectrum to those of the stately triple dances, but since their compromise nature — they are altered marches or dances made up out of strides — prevents them from approaching the dignity of either the exalted march or the minuet, they should be classed as gestures *di mezzo carattere*.

Alongside the affective hierarchy there runs another means of ordering, which has been suggested in earlier pages but not fully articulated — a class or social hierarchy. The words "noble" and "base" do not carry double meanings by accident: "noble" can be used to characterize both good birth and good actions, and "base" connotes both "low" and "lower-class."<sup>111</sup> The rhythmic gestures of Mozart's affective vocabulary all have historical or physical connections with idealized conceptions of particular classes. The triple dances with double metrical levels have essentially peasant associations, and their combination of quick steps with the lilt and lyricism of the upper level's long-breathed phrases projects a gesture appropriate to the bucolic stereotype of happiness in simplicity. The minuet was persistently a courtly dance, and its evenly accented, moderately tempoed motion suggests the refinement and dignity at least expected of the wellborn. We have seen how *alla breve* with its ecclesiastical associations and manly tread choreographs the kind of fierce human nobility which is often characterized as "daemonic" — deriving its majestic intensity seemingly from powers beyond the human.<sup>112</sup>

Sulzer uses this threefold distinction of motion, affect, and class, to categorize types of theatrical dance:

The first or lowest class is called *grotesque*; its character is riotousness or the fantastic. The dances essentially portray nothing but unusual leaps and strange, crazy gestures, amusements and adventures of the lowest class of men. Good taste gets little consideration, and there is little care to make the cadences of the dancer agree precisely with those of the music. Above all, these dances require strength.

The second class consists of the *comic dances*. Their content is a little less unrestrained; they portray customs, amusements, and love intrigues of the common people. Movements and leaps are a little less abandoned, but still lively, rather mischievous, and very striking. They must always be amusing and merry. The main thing in them is agility, a quick, artful movement, and a mischievous affect.

The third class includes the dances called in technical language "*halbe Charaktere*" (*demicaractères*). Their content is an everyday action in the character of the comic stage — a love affair, or any intrigue in which people from a not completely ordinary kind of life are involved. The dances require elegance, pleasant manners, and fine taste.

The fourth class includes the dances of serious, noble character, the requirement of the tragic stage. They consist either of solo dances which depict only noble and serious characters or of whole actions with specific content. Here all the gestures and movements which the art can provide for the expression of the nobler passions must be united.<sup>113</sup>

The clumsiest foot-thumping Deutsche Tänze would support a choreography of the grotesque, although usually the allemande, gigue, and passepied would fall into the class of comic dances ("comic" in Sulzer's extended sense). *Halber Charakter* (*mezzo carattere*), the class of the elegant-ordinary and a mean between utter gestural restraint and utter abandon, is best portrayed musically by the compromise patterns of gavotte and bourrée, by a tone of the refined bucolic. (The middle class as we think of it today, the bourgeoisie, does not have its own expression until the advent of the contredanse, and then ultimately at the expense of the entire social hierarchy, since the careless freedom of the dance swallows up all social and affective distinctions.) To the fourth class belong the noblest triple and duple gestures — the minuet, sarabande, and exalted march.

This union of the affective with the social hierarchy may be offensive to liberal sentiments, but in a world where knowledge of a man's class was the indispensable ground for one's apprehension of him, it seemed only natural. Bearing reflected class, and thus, by extension, character. An interesting indirect testimony to this statement was the role dancing was thought to play in the moral education of the young. Dancing school was considered an ethical training ground, and the noble dances better teachers than their plebeian counterparts:

I would only wish that we would not permit young people to indulge themselves in it [the contredanse] until long practice in the minuet has developed all the graces with which they can be provided. Perhaps it would also be desirable that our wish to imitate foreigners did not carry us solely toward German and English contredanses, which are only composed of skippings and stampings suited for making the body take up bad habits; that in them we would preserve the bows and all decorum; that at least for the young, whose souls we wish to form, we would not let there be included situations of an excessive lewdness, which we would never suffer at another time.<sup>114</sup>

Comportment was for the eighteenth century as well as for the ancients<sup>115</sup> no thin veneer of society manners, but an expression of charac-

ter and the key to a man's worth. Mozart's use of dance in his operas serves a different purpose from that of the dancing masters', one which befits a maker of imitations rather than a trainer of men: he uses the rhythms of social dance to reveal to the audience the virtues and vices of the characters he has set in motion on the stage. Once the social orders have lent their clarity to the more ambiguous subject of the nature of human character, the resultant words or gestures may be detached from class and used freely to pertain to all men. In an aesthetic which exalts neither the celestial nor the subterranean, taking as its point of departure instead the humble human givens of gesture and breath-length, terms of ethical praise and disapprobation naturally have their roots in another given human circumstance — the nature of the soil from which each man has sprung.

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## PART TWO

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### *LE NOZZE DI FIGARO*

— There is in all women a peculiar circle of inward interests, which remain always the same, and from which nothing in the world can divorce them. In outward social intercourse, on the other hand, they will gladly and easily allow themselves to take their tone from the person with whom at the moment they are occupied; and thus by a mixture of impassiveness and susceptibility, by persisting and by yielding, they continue to keep the government to themselves, and no man in the cultivated world can ever take it from them.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Elective Affinities*, part 2, chapter 7.