GIOVANNI PAISIELLO'S \textit{IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA} 
AT THE 
COURT OF CATHERINE THE GREAT IN RUSSIA 

by 

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ABSTRACT

Giovanni Paisiello's Barber of Seville, although no longer an opera that is frequently performed, was very popular in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Based on a play by Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais, Le barbier de Séville (1775), was translated into many different languages, and performed by companies all over Europe and America. Paisiello's work was so successful that Mozart, inspired by the idea, wrote a sequel in 1786, The Marriage of Figaro in collaboration with Da Ponte. When Rossini presented his own version of Barber of Seville in Rome in 1816, the public hissed with indignation and outrage to demonstrate a predilection for Paisiello.

Giovanni Paisiello (1740 - 1816) was a Neapolitan composer who worked at St. Petersburg, Russia from 1776 - 1784 in the court of Catherine II where he was appointed Kapelmeister of Italian opera. The composer chose the French play by Beaumarchais as his point of departure, having it adjusted and rewritten in Italian verse in order to please his patroness. Due to the restrictions set upon the duration of the spectacle and the subject matter, the comedy was shortened and its socio-political critique eliminated. Thus Le barbier de Séville, which the Empress essentially considered democratizing and harmful to the absolute monarchy, was transformed into an opera buffa, Il barbiere di Siviglia, that involved harmless clowning.

Il barbiere is significant because its creation demonstrates how Italian opera buffa became a vehicle to distract the public from considering the issues that were in the air prior to the French Revolution. This thesis examines the many contradictory factors involved in allowing this sort of entertainment at the Imperial Court. The study explores Catherine the Great and her character, as well as her clever ability to maintain a successful image as an Enlightened Despot. The differences and similarities between the French play and the Italian libretto are surveyed in order to demonstrate the
simplifications that had to be made. A discussion treating the shift of focus that resulted by moving attention away from Figaro toward Dr. Bartholo, will indicate how the play was transformed into a libretto which proved to be emasculated and irregular.

The music and how the composer dealt with the text will be discussed. Paisiello's buffo characterization of the old miserly doctor will be considered through use of musical examples. Additionally, the composer's setting of ensembles will be examined given their particular prominence in this work. The use of unifying elements will also be surveyed.

The ideas of the era of Enlightenment affected both the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy. However, each group interpreted education and rationalism in its own way. While the members of the middle class attempted to change the structure of society (ancien régime), the authorities needed to maintain it. Through Italian opera buffa, however, both seemed to find the middle ground for compromise. It was acceptable because it was musical theatre that was made to appear harmless.
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I. BACKGROUND.

When in 1789, the French Revolution shocked the entire establishment, Catherine the Great of Russia who reigned from 1762-1796, called on the European rulers to free France from the murderers and restore the monarchy. The czarina spoke of the harm and danger of the French *philosophes* and the *opéra comique*. She is recorded as saying that France perished because of the *comédies* that disrupted society with their democratizing.¹

Prior to the Revolution she advertised herself as an enlightened monarch, but was cautious always to survey and control all the cultural institutions and activities herself. In 1781, she allowed Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais' fashionable and provocative *Le barbier de Séville ou La précaution inutile* to be performed in Russia. Whereas, the author -- adventurer, diplomat, and watchmaker -- had had trouble a decade before with the French censors, Catherine the Great appeared to praise the political and revolutionary comedy. In 1782, Giovanni Paisiello adapted the play as an Italian *opera buffa*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia ovvero la Precauzione inutile*. After its premiere in 1782 in St.Petersburg, the opera proved to be a success not only with the European monarchs, but also with the public all over Europe and America.

By 1782 Catherine the Great had gained power and experience. When she arrived in Russia in 1744, she was only a fourteen year-old princess from the small German State of Anhalt-Zerbst. Her father was an impoverished prince who was resigned to serving Friedrich II of Prussia.² She came to St. Petersburg on Empress Elizabeth's invitation to
become the wife of the Grand Duke Peter, heir to the throne, a political marriage indirectly manipulated by Friedrich II.³

As future empress, Catherine faced enormous pressures. Before her marriage she converted to the Russian Orthodox faith and adopted a new name. She learned Russian and conscientiously assimilated the culture. She studied the people and the history of the vast country she was not only to reside in, but also to rule. Catherine's remarkable strength of character, passionate nature, and sharp intelligence helped her to survive despite the many dangers and disappointments that she had to endure. Czar Peter III despised his wife as well as the entire empire which he was supposed to rule. Because he was brought up at the Prussian court he remained fascinated by Friedrich II and his army throughout his adult life. Thus the Czar proved to be a destructive force to Russian political interests. In 1762, supported by her long-time favourite Grigory Orlov and his brothers, Catherine deposed her husband. He was subsequently arrested and executed.

The empress was exceptionally well-read and educated. In her early years in Russia Catherine spent time reading and studying the French *philosophes* and *encyclopédistes*. She openly displayed their influence on her. She corresponded with Voltaire and Diderot offering friendship and patronage. The *philosophes*, together with Rousseau were persecuted in their homeland, France, but in Russia they were given opportunity to publish and work, promoting their revolutionary ideas. The empress even had many of the articles of the *Encyclopédie* translated into Russian. Buying Diderot's entire library, she invited him to St. Petersburg to publish the *Encyclopédie* which was banned in Paris.⁴ By organizing performances and publications of works forbidden in France, she demonstrated her love of freedom. When Rousseau's *Emile* was banned in his homeland because it was considered harmful, Catherine had it published in Russia.⁵ Marmontel's *Belisarius* was performed in Russian at her court.⁶ When Westerners were invited to visit, the Imperial Court was shown as liberal, rich, and enlightened under the influence of the French *philosophes* and the Italian artists, whose works were opulently
displayed at the Imperial Court of Russia. The Russian ruler seemed to want their ideas spread among the intellectual circles of Moscow and St. Petersburg. Her literary flirtation with the philosophical celebrities of Europe was so successful that Voltaire referred to her as "the northern Minerva" and "Semiramis". Catherine's correspondence with Voltaire demonstrated her ability to camouflage her moods, despite her troubles as head of state. The *philosophes* praised her as a magnanimous benefactress, hyperbolizing her image as an enlightened ruler throughout Europe.

At the same time, the thirty-four years of the "Age of Catherine" is known as one of the most repressive epochs in the history of Imperial Russia. The Empress and her Government were condemned by the Russian enlightenment thinkers as brutal and tyrannical. Revolutionary ideas were completely alien to the Empress. The new reforms espoused for improvement of the miserable conditions under which the majority of the population lived were not carried out. She was a tyrant of the old order, holding her vast empire together with an iron fist. Catherine's true interest lay in a feudal state. She established slavery by granting the Russian aristocrats the right to own the eight-hundred thousand peasants or "souls" as they were called, who were formerly government property. Her imperial order, ironically called "On the Freedom of the Aristocracy" freed the upper class from obligations such as work and service in the army. This allowed the nobility to live idly, exploiting their slaves. Servants were mistreated, sold or sent to Siberia as punishment, traded for hunting dogs, and ruthlessly separated from their families. Peasant uprisings, such as the popular revolt lead by Pugachov in the 1770s, were brutally overthrown. According to Catherine, slaves and servants existed since creation. Threats to the *ancien régime* were suppressed with violence and censorship.

She did not listen to criticism of the establishment, even dismissing her friend Diderot, by saying that philosophers can theorize in the clouds, but "the monarchs must write laws on human skin." After Diderot and Voltaire died, her true feelings about the French enlightenment were revealed:
I talked with him [Diderot] often and for long periods, but more out of curiosity than with any benefit. If I had listened to him, everything would have been turned upside down in my empire: I would have had to destroy everything -- the laws, the administration, finances, and diplomacy -- and to replace it all with fantastic theories.  

Following Voltaire's death she noted in a letter, "...who has the strength to read fifty-two volumes of Voltaire's works?" This was just after she had caused to be published a work of his that would, supposedly in her own words; "nourish the souls;... produce citizens, geniuses, heroes, and authors; [who] will call forth a hundred thousand talents who without them would be lost in the gloom of ignorance." 

Catherine's own literary output did not end with correspondence. As her intellectual taste developed and grew, so did her knowledge of politics and culture. The Russian Empress recognized the power of letters, herself becoming a literary figure: she wrote plays, libretti, essays, and comedies in both Russian and French in an attempt to influence Russian thinkers. She doctored the writings of the philosophes to suit her own political purposes. In order to influence her subjects, she wrote feuilletons and plays, and banned journals that criticized her government.

Moreover, Catherine understood that theatre was a powerful tool that spoke to a large public through the lips of fictional characters. Thus the Empress both adapted foreign comedies, and wrote her own. She was skilful at adjusting to fit the fashion of the eighteenth century, her writing style very much influenced the and irony of Marivaux, La Chaussé, Diderot, Mercier, and Beaumarchais. On the other hand, she emphasized an entirely foreign morality, as well as displaying her absence of talent, lack of humour, complete emptiness, ideological backwardness, and general weakness in subject and characterization. Her endeavours to keep up with the newest trends of the times had failed precisely because she deliberately misinterpreted the true political purpose of the theatre of the Age of Enlightenment.
Through her plays and libretti, the Empress of Russia addressed her subjects, reprimanding some for their behaviour. She deliberately took the focus away from social problems, praising those who supported and served government policy. Her plays condemned all those dissatisfied with her regime as bigots, gossips, cowards, and slanderers. She steered away from reality in an attempt to set an example for other writers. In her play *Oh, the Times*, she denounces those who constantly complain and blame the government for their own problems. In the same work, the Empress praised those who defended the order of the state as heroes. She was a staunch believer in authority, yet at the same time hypocritically exploited the names of the *philosophes* in order to keep up her liberal facade.

During her reign, she built up a rich artistic patrimony. All the arts, including music, were obligatory elements in creating a civilized nation and state. Catherine invited the best and most expensive of the European painters, sculptors, engravers, and architects. She also summoned the most expert chefs, musicians, actors, singers, and composers to her court. The Empress Catherine's influence was decisive upon the development of art, literature, and even music in eighteenth-century Russia.

The new concepts of enlightenment expressed through theatrical entertainment were very potent. Although soberly aware of the revolutionary connotations of satire, the empress permitted the controversial French comedies to be read and performed at her theatres in the palace, catering to her subjects by presenting them with the latest entertainments from Europe. This was partly because the czarina anxiously needed to be viewed as a magnanimous, liberal ruler and in order to give Russian audiences an impression of openness and freedom in their Empire. She proudly flaunted the modernity of her enlightened reasoning and political conduct to her subjects and to all of the European continent. The Imperial Court of Russia was saturated with the ideals of the French *encyclopédistes*, reflecting the brilliance of the Age of Enlightenment.
It was Peter the Great (r. 1689-1725) who previously had initiated the push toward westernization in an attempt to bring his country closer to its European neighbours. In addition to the many reforms which involved industry, education, and administration; he was the first to invite foreign architects, artists, and engineers. He built the capital on the Neva river, turning St. Petersburg into one of the richest and most beautiful centres of culture. Peter the Great made himself absolute monarch by dissolving the parliament. The formerly powerful Russian Orthodox Church was forced to obey the rules set by the new government.

Eventually, only European trends were considered worthy at the Russian court. French was spoken among the aristocrats who dressed, ate, and imitated the behaviour of Westerners, moving farther away from their native language and culture. Subsequently in 1735, during the reign of Anna Ivanovna, the first Italian opera company under the direction of Giuseppe Araja (1709-1767) was invited to Russia. Soon Russian high society became addicted to Italian opera. It has been said that Empress Elizabeth I, who ruled from 1741-1762, went as far as to fine her guests fifty rubles if they were unable to attend a court performance. In addition, the imperial court was paying musicians extremely high salaries. The best Italian composers and performers were employed, making the calibre of the presentation very high.

Catherine the Great who subsequently ascended the Russian throne, was not a musical person. In her correspondence with her confidant and artistic adviser Friedrich von Grimm, she revealed her cynical view of the world as well as her hypocrisy. Unlike the highly idealistic philosophizing to Voltaire, the Empress was not shy to confess to her fellow Teuton her dislike of music, admitting that she heard harmony as noise. She wrote about music in a mocking tone, as she did about doctors for whom she also had an aversion.

Everything depends on one's nature, isn't it true? Mine is faulty; I am dying of desire to hear and to love music, but
in vain. It is noise and that is all. I want to send a prize to
the one in your new society of doctors who will invent an
effective remedy for insensitivity to the sounds of
harmony.23

Nevertheless, she took pleasure in Italian opera buffa. She saw the comic opera as
harmless clowning (in Russian, shutovstvo) where there was no particular substance.
However, while it described the ways of ordinary people, it ridiculed many aspects of
contemporary society.24 Through opera, the popular theatre that publicly denounced the
injustice of the ancien régime in France, was reduced to a farce full of intrigue and
slapstick. In this way, the Empress believed she could blunt the arms of the bourgeois
class that called for change.

The Neapolitan composer Giovanni Paisiello's talent for creating buffo effects
fascinated and entertained Catherine and her court. She expressed her thoughts to
Friedrich von Grimm in a letter of August 24, 1774:

You are a man of development; develop for me the
following question: why does the music of this bouffon
[Paisiello] make me laugh, while the music of the French
comic operas inspire me with displeasure and scorn...?25

Because Catherine preferred opera buffa, and therefore cultivated it more
assiduously, many buffo singers were engaged at court. Even though the composer
considered this genre inferior to opera seria, which was more noble, as well as more
suitable for the Imperial court, Paisiello had little choice in the matter, having to re-
consider his opinion and conceive works that were preferred by the Empress. He was to
compose "in his best genre, opera buffa."26 Catherine the Great wrote to von Grimm:

I have to speak to you of Paisiello; Monday, ...he
entertained us with his opera Les Astrologues ou les
Philosophes for the second time, and I went to see it a third
time today. The more I see it the more I am astonished by
his unique use of tones and sounds: and everything
becomes harmonious, and full of sublime distractions. You
don't know how this magician knows how to make the least
sensible ears... pay attention to the music, and those ears are mine. I emerge from his music, and my head filled with it; I recognize and almost sing his composition: Oh, the singular mind of Paisiello! I have ordered a copy of this music for you, and you will perceive very many sublime things...27

The contract for Giovanni Paisiello's sojourn in Russia at the Court of Catherine the Great in St. Petersburg was arranged following a recommendation by the Neapolitan Counsellor, Ferdinando Galiani in June, 1776.28 The agreement of the appointed maestro di cappella listed his duties at court which included composition of all the operas, cantatas, and theatrical feasts. He was also to conduct the orchestra, not only in the theatre, but also in Her Majesty's chamber concerts.29

Throughout his long career, Giovanni Paisiello (b. Taranto, 1740 - d. Naples, 1816), an influential composer of his time, worked under many different political circumstances appealing to all of his powerful patrons.30 After Paisiello's brief visit in Vienna with the great Italian poet Metastasio, the composer and his wife arrived at St. Petersburg in late September of 1776.31 Paisiello immediately became a favourite of the court. Friedrich von Grimm, the Empress' artistic adviser described the composer's first appearance in a letter to the counsellor of Commerce in Naples, Don Ferdinando Galiani:

... He had the most brilliant and complete success possible. The day of his presentation, there was a group of musicians assembled in court; and he directed their performance of some of his music. The Empress, who doesn't enjoy music very much, was singularly impressed with the vigour of his style and the novelty of his ideas. The grand duke, the grand duchess, the whole court was enchanted and applauded in the hall of the throne as if they were at a public performance.

The Empress, after she heard the first composition and Paisiello had kissed her hand, turned to her work; but she sent her noble squire and other messengers of this sort to pay him her highest compliments, and since she prohibited me from approaching his table for fear of distracting from
the music, she sent me also as an ambassador to 
compliment him on his universal and complete success.\textsuperscript{32}

There are no accounts of Paisiello's first impressions of Russia, for his early letters to 
friends have all been lost, but the \textit{Gazzetta universale} of Naples proudly reported that he 
was very well received.\textsuperscript{33}

Gradually Paisiello became the Empress' favourite and she showered him with 
special attention and kindness. One of the evenings at court is described by Prince Orlov:

\begin{quote}
It was an evening of enthusiasm. All eyes were fixed on 
[Paisiello], a handsome, forty-year-old man, of noble 
stature, robust, dark, with two large black eyes, sweet and 
shining. Invited to sit at the \textit{cembalo}, he started to sing his 
opera with an amazing smoothness and verve. At a certain 
moment, the Empress, who had noticed a sudden paleness 
on the maestro's face, took the fur coat from her shoulders 
and was pleased to place it on the fortunate shoulders of 
him who enchanted her so much.\textsuperscript{34}
\end{quote}

There is much evidence in the correspondence of the courtiers regarding Catherine's 
admiration of the Neapolitan composer. In addition, the empress herself frequently 
praised Paisiello in her letters to her friends and subjects abroad. She wrote to von 
Grimm in 1777, telling him of how delighted she was:

\begin{quote}
Are you aware that the opera of Paisiello was charming? I 
forgot to tell you of it. I was all ears for this opera, despite 
the natural insensitivity of my eardrums for music....\textsuperscript{35}
\end{quote}

Paisiello took full advantage of the empress' favouritism. He was to receive four 
thousand rubles annually. Added to the sum of nine hundred rubles for teaching the 
Empress Catherine and the grand Duchess and to the magnificent gifts he received after 
every successful opera, his total income came to seven thousand rubles annually.\textsuperscript{36} He 
spent half a year in the country at Czarskoe Selo with all his living expenses covered by 
the court. This allowed the composer and his wife to enjoy a very secure and highly 
esteemed position.\textsuperscript{37}
The empress granted his request to choose his own librettos, despite protestations from Yelaguine who complained about Paisiello. However, the renewed three-year contract stated that the director of theatres was not to criticize, interfere, impose, or restrict the composer's choice of libretto.

Paisiello chose to transcribe Beaumarchais' comedy for a number of reasons: as mentioned earlier, *Le barbier* was liked by the Empress. Secondly, there was no fresh subject matter available in Russia, forcing the composer to recycle old texts and to request Galiani to send him librettos from Italy. In September 1781 he described the lamentable situation to his countryman:

Not having any poets or texts available to me here, I was compelled to set *La Serva padrona* to music, which Pergolesi has done many years ago, as you know; it was performed on the thirtieth day of last year, with a remarkable success, for which Her Imperial Majesty the Empress has given presents to the two actors...\(^{38}\)

The decision to adapt Beaumarchais' *Le barbier* was also wise because by translating it into Italian and setting it to music, he dissolved all the problematic issues raised by the original French play.

The following dedication attests that the selection of *Le barbier* for adaptation was the composer's idea:

*The Barber of Seville* (by Beaumarchais) having been approved by Your Imperial Majesty, I thought that this same play as an Italian opera could not displease You; in consequence I have had it made as an extract which I have attempted to render as brief as possible, conserving (as much as the genius of Italian poetry could allow) the expressions of the original play without making any additions.\(^{39}\)

The Italian operatic adaptation served the empress' needs for court entertainment which the composer joyously described to Galiani as "a pleasant intrigue full of piquant situations that are suitable to the necessities of 'opera buffa'".\(^{40}\)
Politically it was prudent to select *Le barbier* as opposed to *Le mariage de Figaro* which was read before the Grand Duke of Russia in May of 1782. Although Beaumarchais was well-liked, the performance of the sequel was not encouraged to say the least. The second play of the Figaro trilogy later drawn on by W.A. Mozart and L. Da Ponte, was forbidden in Russia by the czarina who considered it corrupt, impertinent, and completely unsuitable for entertainment. In addition, it was too long, vicious, and full of nasty political implications which were morally and politically dangerous. The composer expressed an opinion of *Le mariage* that evidently reflected the Empress' judgement:

> If I write comedies, *The Marriage of Figaro* will certainly not serve as my model. Molière's phrases were free and flowed from a natural wit, however his thoughts were never vicious; while, in this comedy, so corrupt, the underlying theme is meaningless; and yet it still goes on for three and a half hours. I have not laughed even once, reading it.\(^1\)

*Le barbier*, on the other hand, combines aspects of Italian *commedia dell'arte* and the comedies of Molière. Beaumarchais criticised French society and alluded to the dubious morality of the old order. This was considered radical and riotous. The attitude reflected the eighteenth-century pre-revolutionary dissatisfaction with authority, social injustice, and censorship. Through the use of typical characters of Italian traditional comedy, Beaumarchais cleverly communicated the wit of the middle class and the aristocrats' dependence upon it. His play comments on the ease with which money can manipulate people. With his allegorical play, Beaumarchais went farther than his contemporaries in his radicalizing of modern dramaturgy. Although innocently set far away from France, harmlessly arranged as a love story, and including many comical aspects taken from Italian comedy, *Le barbier de Séville ou La précaution inutile* is a pungent representation that in the 1770s definitely foreshadowed the upcoming tempest.

The drama is set in far away, exotic Seville. The story and characters are seemingly typical of the themes of the *commedia dell'arte*, adhering to the formula of
intrigue, dressing up, pretending to be drunk, or hiding from persecutors. A lot of the scenes drew inspiration from the comedies of Molière and Marivaux.

Unfortunately, once Paisiello selected the Beaumarchais play, it was difficult to find a librettist who could prepare an adaptation of it. Originally this task would have fallen to Giovanbattista Casti, but he had left Russia soon after Paisiello's arrival. Another court poet, Marco Coltellini had died in 1777. Galiani, through correspondence, considered the question and suggested possible librettists. Paisiello responded, writing that whoever undertook the task would be well-paid. He drew up his requirements for a libretto, describing the particular singers, as well as the court taste:

...you could make him write a text, and his work will be well-paid, so that he will be content, and the money will be delivered by Count Razamowsky, to whom he will send the text. He is recommended to keep it short because it must not last longer than one hour and a half, and if it will be shorter, it will be even better. It must not be but in one act, or in two, only with five, or four characters, and those I will describe here below, and they are currently in service of this imperial court. There is a buffo who is exceptional at portraying the old man, a father, a jealous guardian, a philosopher. A second buffo employed here, can be compared to our Luzio. The tenor can be compared to Grimaldi, but he still recites the big comic roles and sings well. We also have a buffa, who excels as any character she portrays. We also have another woman, who plays a half comic character, and she is otherwise as good as the other actress. I also advise you so that the poet can distribute the musical pieces among them, so that one will not say that she has less than the other. And so I have described our company employed here and the characters that the poet must develop. I also stress: very few recitative, because they do not know the language, and as many musical numbers as possible, in arias, cavatinas, duets, trios and finales as we are used to in Naples...

The 19th century tradition suggests that after a long search, Paisiello was obliged to resort to Abbot Giuseppe Petrosellini whom he had collaborated with on *Le due contesse* in 1776. Petrosellini was commissioned from Rome to translate the comedy of
Beaumarchais from the French prose into Italian verse to create a *dramma giocoso*. Incidentally, Galiani had nothing to do with this collaboration, for he did not find out about the unfortunate libretto of *Il barbiere* till later.

Petrosellini (1727-1797) was a member of the Arcadian Academy. He collaborated successfully with Piccinni, Galuppi, Anfossi, Guglielmi, Salieri, and Cimarosa exclusively on *opera buffa*. The abbot was experimenting in expanding the Goldonian plot by reducing the number of arias and increasing the number of ensembles. The two-act libretto was common practice of this post-Goldonian.\(^43\)

In the preface to the publication of the libretto of *Il barbiere di Siviglia ovvero l'inutile precauzione*, the author states that he worked on the Italian version because he liked the play which was popular everywhere and was easily adaptable into various guises. He did not translate it for the "lady", described by Beaumarchais in his *Lettre Modérée*, who complained about owning a seat at the Italian theatre, and not at the French, and therefore was not able to see the popular play:

> That which has induced me to translate the comedy of *Barber of Seville* from French prose into Italian verse, and to create a *Dramma giocoso*, was not due to having read the preface, or the author's *Lettre modérée's* paragraph that follows: *About the Song, says the Lady: You are certainly impartial by having given your play to the French! me who only has a little box at the Italians'! Why have you not made a comic opera out of it? that was, they say, your initial idea. This play is perfect for setting to music. But rather I have resolved to do that which after having been introduced to the above named comedy, which with preference and applause is often performed at this Imperial Theatre in various guises.*\(^44\)

Unfortunately, the *opera buffa* version of *Le Barbier* proved to be mediocre. The play was shamelessly cut and the text organized to suit the empress' directions. The librettist excused himself for the poor job he did in the following manner:
...if then in my translation I have abbreviated [the play], I have done so only in order to adapt to the genius of this Imperial Court, hoping that the music will replenish the beauty of those scenes that I was forced to cut in order to render the presentation as brief as possible.\textsuperscript{45} Catherine the Great who as mentioned, did not like music, and could not sit through more than two hours of an opera, also imposed time limitations hoping to suppress political controversy. Thus, the libretto had to be as brief as possible, certainly with no additions of nuance, but rather with as many reductions and cuts to the text as possible. The librettist therefore, relied on the composer to make the condensed text clear through the art of music.

This libretto became a watered down version of the comedy. Bent on retaining the exact structure of the Beaumarchais original, the librettist copied it without reference to operatic tradition and conventions. Judging by 1782 standards, the end result was peculiar in its form. Instead of the more usual two or three acts, this adaptation consisted of four.\textsuperscript{46} It is unbalanced because the number of musical items per act varies, making the first two acts much longer. The large finales which normally should have appeared at the ends of the first two acts appear here quite uncustomarily at the ends of the last two. The distribution of solo items per character is slightly odd; for example, the leading tenor only has two short solos (Nos. 2, and 8) and no proper aria. The "Storm Interlude" (Tempesta) at the opening of the last act is an additional singularity. This item is somewhat of an innovation for Italian comic opera of the 1780s.

The original play was cut up, with very little monologue/recitative material remaining. Apart from the empress's time restrictions, one other possible reason could have been that \textit{Le barbier} had already been presented as a play at court, and most aristocrats were familiar with it. Abridgment was necessary also because Russians, as mentioned, did not understand Italian, despite the fact that for years, they had been addicted to Italian opera.\textsuperscript{47} However, most importantly, emphasizing politics before the
Imperial Court was utterly undesirable. The result was a lack of characterization and of any sense behind the incidents: "the richness of the character, and then the overall meaning of the events is lost beyond repair". The critique contained in the play had been diluted in an Italian farce that was no longer menacing. This naturally rendered the entertainment palatable to the autocratic government. In order to be a successful at court, the composer had to be astute, making the changes and simplifications to the original drama by emphasizing the "buffo" effects of the Italian commedia dell'arte. This diminished and trivialized the underlying themes and critiques by focusing on the lively action and intrigue. This deterioration made the comedy simply charming.

Whereas Beaumarchais originally applied stock characters of the commedia dell'arte and its traditional methods in order to convey an actual social and political message, the libretto ultimately reverted to trivial burlesque where the standard stereotypical characters and mannerisms ruled the events. All the traditional devices, such as language, characterization, disguise, practical jokes, remained, and yet the true spirit of the work, was lost. An attempt to reproduce a typical Italian comic opera with its banal parameters was what remained.

At the same time, it is interesting to note that the libretto closely follows the original play. Not only its subject, situations, and structure, but most importantly its language, were translated directly into Italian respecting Beaumarchais' original wording and expressions. The major change was the versifying of passages to serve as aria texts.

Generally, the libretto misses the entire point, sounding rather bland and insipid. The focus has shifted away from the issues that Beaumarchais communicates. From the very start, it is obvious that Figaro's character is played down. Whereas the author intended the protagonist to demonstrate temperament and fresh originality, the librettist erases the wit, the persona, and the mockery.
As a result, the composer was not too enthusiastic about the adaptation. He wrote to Galiani on February 11, 1783, stating that the poetry and the distribution of musical items disturbed him:

I hope that you will be pleased with the distribution of the musical pieces done by me. However, you will not be happy with the Poetry, for I had to cling to necessity due to the lack of Poets in this country.\(^{51}\)

It is simple to conclude that Beaumarchais' *esprit* was only used as a point of departure. The libretto itself only emphasized the comical aspects of the action. It also focused all satire and criticism on the old doctor. The opposition between the quick-witted, young, and poor apothecary from the ranks of the commoners, and the Latin-educated, wealthy, old doctor of the *ancien régime* no longer presented itself as an issue. This convergence on ridiculing Dr. Bartolo, who was intolerant of the *encyclopédistes* and new methods of curing people, pleased the empress while it avoided any deeper, incisive issues raised by Beaumarchais' *comédie*.

From a musical point of view, the fact that the Russians did not understand the texts was important. In order to make the action eloquent, Paisiello had to resort to the language of music, making the melodies attractive and the instrumentation colourful. This is important, for many of the sources discuss the development of the composer's expressive style at the Russian Court. In fact, Paisiello succeeds in characterizing through the music in *Il barbiere*.

While in Russia, [Paisiello] principally wrote opera buffa. St. Petersburg audiences knew little Italian, which encouraged him to lend his music real character, expressive melodies and colourful orchestration, so that the text should not be vital to an understanding of what was going on on the stage. It was during his Russian period that the most typical features of his style developed.\(^{52}\)
Not only could, Paisiello not rely on the Italian language to explain the events and situations, he could not even assume that everyone knew the original play.

In *Il barbiere*, the buffo aspect is brought out through the music itself. It is heard in the melodies that characterize the protagonists, and in the instruments that support them. Additionally, Paisiello uses ensemble numbers to bring out comical effects and propel the action. The composer relies on the unifying of recurring elements to suggest wit which adds colour to his characters. Despite *Il barbiere*'s primitively assembled and awkward libretto, Paisiello adds interest to the drama, enhancing it musically. The analysis which follows demonstrates the composer's accomplishment in dealing with a badly adapted drama which at times still encumbers the motion of the music and the dramatic action. Further, an examination of his musical style clarifies Paisiello's reflection of contemporary society.
II. ANALYSIS.

It has been stated above that in the adaptation, the Beaumarchais original play lost its dramatic flavour and that its socio-political critique was deliberately softened by the unsuccessful libretto. Nevertheless the drama regains its vitality by communicating many of its lost elements through Paisiello's music. The composer transcended the social satire which directly pointed fingers and accused society of injustice, censorship, and inequality, by characterizing on a more personal and humane level. Whereas the theatre spoke to the crowds, the opera touched each individual. The following analysis incorporates a comparison between the two texts and the composer's own interpretation in depicting the protagonists and the action of the drama through music.

Particularly interesting is Paisiello's use of a thematic cell in Act One which pervades from the very beginning of the one-movement ouverture. The music of this untraditional piece is modern, light, and fresh. It not only creates excitement, but also suggests the "giocoso" climate of the opera by introducing a cell consisting of four notes:

This is expanded later and reused throughout Act I as a unifying element which characterizes both Figaro and Bartolo. 53

The drama satirises medicine, making fun of Old Doctor Bartolo, as Pantalone the old miser from the Italian commedia dell'arte tradition. Throughout the play, Beaumarchais seems to question whether Bartolo is a good doctor. This suspicious, jealous, stubborn, and conceited tutor/guardian to Rosina appears ridiculous in comparison with the energetic and inventive Figaro. The doctor grumbles and frets throughout as his plan to marry his beloved protégée Rosina gradually crumbles. The young girl is in love with Lindoro, not knowing that he is Count Almaviva in disguise.

The opening scene shows young Count Almaviva, an infamous libertine with a reputation that precedes him, pretending to be poor Lindoro with no inheritance or title.
He is a young lover of the *commedia dell'arte*, a type used by Marivaux. He has left the court of Madrid to pursue the young Rosina. At the very start of the play, the count is waiting by Rosina's window at the hour when she usually opens her blinds. As he lingers, his monologue reveals him as an enlightened aristocrat who wants to be loved for his person and not for his station. Although he can have any woman he wants, he waits by Rosina's window, believing that she is married to the elderly Doctor Bartolo.

At the very start of Act I, Scene I, the count's monologue reveals expectation and excitement:

> It is earlier than I thought. Every day she comes and stands at her window, but her usual time is still some way off. Never mind. Better to arrive too early than miss the chance of seeing her. 54

In the libretto this is reduced to the following:

> The time draws nigh
> when I shall see my Rosina;
> now is the usual time she comes. 55

The libretto cuts Almaviva's monologue, implying expectation without mentioning the stranger's early arrival. Beaumarchais' text which depicts the anxiety of the man in disguise is completely gone. Instead, Paisiello has the count enter immediately with a sentimental and elegant song. His melody contains some refined, gentle ornaments; he is accompanied by flutes, suggesting his high social rank. The song is built on an eight-measure phrase first introduced by the orchestra and then repeated fully and in segments. There follows in *Le barbier* Almaviva's musing to himself regarding his noble status and his ridiculous image as a hopeless lover of the chivalrous romantic past:

> If any of the dashing gentlemen at court imagined they'd ever find me here, hundreds of miles from Madrid, hanging around each morning under the windows of a woman I've never spoken to, they'd take me for a Spaniard from the good old days of Queen Isabelle... Why not? Every man chases happiness. For me it lies in the heart of Rosine... 56
The libretto simplifies this as follows:

I should not like anyone
to see me in these clothes...\textsuperscript{57}

stating the bare fact, ignoring Beaumarchais' hint at the count's cynical view of
chivalrous past. In the play Almaviva sees himself as a ridiculous character from the
times gone by, certainly not wanting anyone at the Court of Madrid to find out about this
excursion. Throughout the monologue Beaumarchais' count then carries on revealing his
"Don Juan" side as a courtier who has had countless women. He states that he wants a
challenge:

All the same, pursuing a woman to Seville when Madrid
and the court offer such easy pleasures everywhere you
look?... And that's exactly what I'm running away from.
Self-interest, vanity, convention supply us with an endless
series of conquests, and I'm tired of them. It is so good to
be loved as a real person! And if this disguise could help
me find out for certain...\textsuperscript{58}

At the same time, the count's thoughts progress to assert more than a need for adventure,
but rather a yearning to be loved for his real self. The reader of the play senses a lonely
character who is searching for a deeper, less superficial affection, not found among the
ladies of the court. The libretto does not go into Almaviva's reasoning to that extent.
When suddenly the character's thoughts are interrupted by the sight of someone
approaching, the count shows aggravation and swears: "Damn, who's this, getting in my
way?" ("Au diable l'importun!") The libretto's Almaviva merely states: "But hark, here's
someone / to disturb my joy." ("Ma s'appressa un importuno / Che impedisce il mio
gioir!") It is important to note that Petrosellini frequently takes the original French words,
simply replacing them with the equivalent in Italian. Here, a good example is the use of
the word "importun", which simply becomes "importuno". Contrary to the somewhat
angrier French text, the music remains elegant. Paisiello does however, interpret the
Italian libretto by insinuating a certain annoyance. He characterizes the count's
aggravation by having his melody leap in octaves, fifths, and sixths until he hides. This aria is interrupted, ending without a *da capo* restatement. It is in A/B form, which is a departure from the expected ABA structure.

Whereas the above section demonstrates how the monologue is cut and set in the form of an aria, in the second scene where Figaro makes his first appearance, the action is propelled by a duet, recitative, and finally an aria which sums up Figaro's role. He is a barber and apothecary -- a bit of a vagabond, an exile of sorts -- a poet and a free spirit of the people, the protagonist of the drama. His character is entirely a Beaumarchais creation. Perhaps he is similar in liveliness to Brighella of Bergamo who is crafty and is fond of money, serving those who pay. Figaro has had experience in life, he has dealt with critics, has been to prison, and served in the military. He is wise, his knowledge of humanity is deep. At the same time, he is a barber/chemist -- a profession that throughout Western history was under some suspicion. It was always the barber whom the angry mob suspected of the spread of the plague, of poisoning, of other misfortunes. Beaumarchais chose deliberately to give Figaro such an occupation. For while doctors were mocked for speaking incomprehensible Latin, giving astrological explanations for cause of disease, barbers were citizens who were entrusted with such dangerous tools as razors.

Figaro is independent and free, he lacks servility, and he does not have a slave mentality. Beaumarchais drew inspiration not only from Brighella of the Italian *commedia dell'arte*, but as well from the French tradition of Scapin, Frontin, and other resourceful servants. However, Figaro's like had never been seen on stage. After all, here he is no longer a young man: his character is rich because he has been marked by life. He chooses whom he serves -- a master of his own destiny. He is similar to Beaumarchais himself, an adventurer and poet. Figaro's name, in fact, is a rough *calembour* made up of two words: *fils Caron*. In other words, Figaro is Caron Beaumarchais' son. Just like his father, he is a rebel who expresses himself with good humour and lightness, beneath
which lies a lot of depth, common sense, and good solid reasoning. The author speaks through his creation. Although Figaro serves the count, he articulates his thoughts as an independent thinker. Throughout the comedy, Figaro's critique is powerful, biting, and right on the nose.

From the start, through his protagonist, Beaumarchais takes the opportunity to criticize the opera librettists of the day. The barber appears as he composes a song. When he states that the lyrics sound bad, he consoles himself by saying that this is only a song anyway; and this is how everyone composes fashionable entertainment. Beaumarchais tells his audience that opera cannot be anything but an amusement. Figaro also adds that when words are sung, they are taken less seriously, because in musical form, they do not offend the listeners, they become sugar-coated and mild:

FIGARO: ...Ah, for God's sake, come on! You don't get writers of musicals worrying about that sort of detail. Anything not worth saying, musicals is exactly where it belongs, nowadays. (Sings) ...Ha, ha, when that's got a backing underneath it, then we'll see, you gossip column critics, whether I know what I'm about...

Beaumarchais' Figaro obviously is bitter about the events in his past. Of course, this is the author speaking through the character by making reference to his own life. In Paris, everyone who saw the play, obviously understood the barber's remarks. In Russia, certainly, no-one cared about Beaumarchais' problems, thus the libretto could conveniently cut out these bits of monologue, leaving only a fleeting reference: "What won't suit verse / we'll put into music; thus farce is born." (Quel che va male in versi, / in musica si mette; / e cosi compongon le burlette.) Utilizing the librettist's suggestions, Paisiello turns a rather flat dialogue into an entertaining scene, at the same time as communicating Beaumarchais' witty sarcastic exchange between the two characters. As Figaro enters, singing a primitive-sounding popular tune, his social rank is revealed. Paisiello keeps interrupting the naive melody with recitatives. This is a mask in itself, for
Figaro is not a simpleton; he is not "singing" a song that characterizes him, again, he is composing it. There is much wit implied through changes of rhythm and suspended instrumentation. There are sudden explosions and many dramatic interjections. It is amusing to hear how Paisiello's use of repetition depicts Figaro searching for the right rhyme to end his song.

The meeting between the two men is entertaining as each wonders to himself about the familiar silhouette which approaches. The music which was in G-Major continues on to a brief recitative in the same key. The Moderato that introduces the duetto is in D-Major, with a typically Paisiellian theme which is insistent, and questioning at the same time. The motive which is derived from the Sinfonia is repeated using static harmony which shifts back and forth from I - V and V - I, depicting both men as wary of this encounter. This suspended motionlessness creates a certain sense of excitement regarding the unexpected meeting. Figaro rises as he seems to recognize the man in the distance, "Quell'abbate l'ho visto altrove" (I've seen that priest somewhere before). The two men come closer. The count refers to Figaro as "grottesco comico" (that grotesque turnout) and Figaro "quell'aria nobile" (that lofty, noble air) continuing the theme with exaggerated insistence. When the harmony suddenly shifts from a D-Major to E-Major, on Figaro's words "No, non m'inganno" (I'm not wrong), one knows that he is aware of the figure dressed incognito standing before him. The shift to A-Major and then a hint of E-Major suggests tension as the two men gradually recognize one another. They sing together in thirds until the accompaniment changes to the more dramatic repeated notes of the dominant seventh chord of A-Major, as the tension is unresolved and the contrasting dynamics shift from forte to piano ending in fortissimo. As they approach one another, everything resolves back to A-Major, sottovoce, and both Figaro and Almaviva confront each other with broken little motives. The composer's use of ABA form, again returning to the music of the beginning to demonstrate the false air of politeness during the unexpected encounter, is comical. As the two men exchange timid
greetings, Figaro's "Son io, signore... descends a minor second from A to G# which is repeated intermittently. The count is a little threatening in his tone, for he fears that the barber will expose him: "Briccon, se parli..." (You scoundrel! If you say a word...) is a leap down from D to dotted G# which rises to A. Figaro appears to bow down to the count's wishes with a descending line while staccato strings accentuate the counter beats. This slow rhythm drags as Figaro states that he will leave. The audience knows very well that Figaro taking on this servile tone in unison with the orchestra, tediously repeating "s'ella comanda, vo'via di qua," (if you order me, I'll leave) is pretence. The count also knows that he needs the clever barber if he wants to succeed, commanding him to stay. As they sing at the same time in thirds, one insisting that the other stay to talk, it is obvious that Figaro is playing with the nobleman stating that he will leave, to accentuate that Almaviva is dependent on him. As the count continues "resta qua" command of a rising G# to A, Figaro also takes the same turn, but stating "vo' via di qua", ending on an A major. In the Allegro that follows resolving in D, the two sing in sixths, the count, "Costui è destro, e nel mio caso mi gioverà" (He's a clever chap and can be of use to me), Figaro, "Certo un intrigo, certo un arcano qui ci sarà" (There's some ruse, some secret behind this). Each wants to use the other for his own benefit. This is expressed through this buffo parlando section which is very simple melodically and harmonically. Recitative "secco" follows at a fast pace as the audience discovers that the two old acquaintances catch up on recent events. In his asides, Figaro suspects an intrigue and this excites him. As he tells the count of his work which he lost, he slips into a brief accompanied recitative on the word "invidia" (jealousy) in g-minor, which takes on a pathetic tone. The tempo Allegro and the dotted rhythm leaping melody create a grotesque image of the opera seria-like melodramatic pathos. This is humorous because it is deliberately utterly ridiculous and illsuited to the situation. The count asks in recitative secco in C-Major if Figaro is still the great poet that he was, Figaro responds that it was precisely his sonnets, madrigals, idyls, and odes that caused his dismissal.
Poetry led him to tragedy. The libretto skips the section where Figaro recounts how he tried his hand at writing plays, but was booed by the critics. Petrosellini also cut out a large chunk of the famous monologue found in Act I, Scene 2 which Beaumarchais uses to lead in to describe the adventures that followed:

...Seeing in Madrid that the republic of letters is a republic of wolves, always up in arms against each other, and seeing how this ludicrous harassing of everybody just leaves the whole lot of them buzzing with contempt, all the insects, the mosquitos, the cousins, the critics, the blood-suckers, the envious, the gossip columnists, the booksellers, the censors, and everything that attaches itself to hide the unfortunate man of letters and sucks out what little substance they have left; weary of writing, bored with myself, disgusted by the others, crushed by debts and hard up for cash; eventually convinced that the useful income from wielding the razor is preferable to the empty honour of wielding the pen, I left Madrid. And with my baggage on my back I trod a philosopher's path through the two provinces of Castille, through La Mancha, Estramadura, Sierra-Morena, Andalusia. Welcomed in one town, thrown in gaol in another, and everywhere rising above such events; praised by these men, condemned by those; giving help in good times, bearing up in bad; scorning fools, braving villains; laughing at my poverty and giving a close shave to anyone I met; here you find me finally settled in Seville, and ready to serve Your Excellence once more in any and every task he might desire of me. 60

I passed through many places: first I appeared in Madrid. I wrote an opera that failed: and with a swag on my back I ran as fast as my feet could take me to Castille, to La Mancha, to Asturia, to Catalonia; then I went across to Andalusia, I wandered all over Estremadura, and also over the Sierra Morena, and finally even Galicia. In one place living in clover, in another clapped in irons, but always in good spirits, kept up my chin up in all my troubles. With a single razor and no money, I made my living as a barber; and now I live here in Seville, ready to serve Your Grace if I prove worthy of such an honour. 61
Obviously Beaumarchais paints a distinct portrait of a protagonist who has been forced into exile by his persecutors. In the opera the following section is set into an aria through which the composer musically characterizes aspects missed out by the librettist.

Trills in the rising introductory line usher in the declamatory opening. The instruments from the very start persist with the initial unifying motive, repeating it each time a semitone higher.

Figaro's melody is proud, with its long half-notes and wide intervals. However it alternates with the rising buffo motive of the Sinfonia in the strings, giving the aria a light comic character. The adventurer recounts in C-Major that after a failed opera in Madrid (in repeating eighth notes that are followed by leaps in quarter notes) he packed up and left to roam through many countries. He quickly lists the places. The laughter, danger, satisfaction, and irony are implied through buffo parlando style. The end of the section sounds military as the dotted rhythm is repeated, with Figaro singing of his survival and superiority of his good humour. The score shows a sensitive relationship between text and music. There are quick motives in the strings, wide intervals in the voice part, unison passages, striking cadences, contrasts, effective pauses, and exciting intensifications. In the second section, marked Andantino, there is a switch from 4/4 meter to 3/8, where Figaro, in a dance-like melody, describes how, armed only with his scissors and razor, and without money, he made a living as a barber and apothecary. The melody of the "With a single razor" segment is very similar to "Se vuol ballare" from Mozart's Le nozze di Figaro.
The phrase "faire la barbe" or "fare la barba" in Italian, is an idiom which suggests Figaro's ability to dupe everyone around him. The libretto however, seems to present the idea depriving it of its witty double meaning. Paisiello's Figaro, following the initial rustic dance tune of this section now sings a smooth descending melody with light ornamentation to suggest the ironic meaning of the phrase, as well as the protagonist's ability to deceive. Subsequently, Figaro takes on a somewhat servile inquisitive tone stating in repeating motives that he is ready to serve his Excellency if he deserves the honour. The music takes on a military tone at the words "pronto a servire" (ready to serve). The motive that follows creates an elegant melody that repeats the phrase "if I prove worthy of such an honour". This implies a series of bowing motions on Figaro's part as the music suggests that the barber senses an opportunity to earn some money. As the count continues looking up at the windows of a house, Figaro repeats the last lines of the text to different music which is ever more aggressive and insistent. Although the protagonist's persona once presented does not grow or develop, depicted only partially as it is, and seems caricature-like as it is reduced to simple buffoonery throughout, his reactions are given life through Paisiello's music. While in the drama, Figaro's weapon is his ability to speak, in the opera, as he himself states, the words are meaningless, and only with music do they come to life.

In the recitative that follows, the count who is still looking up at the balcony, indicates that the two have to hide. Figaro obeys as the two observe the following scene. Rosina opens the curtain and inhales the fresh air. She is a character who unlike the barber, is more complex. In the following duetto, Paisiello clearly develops different aspects of her personality suggested by Beaumarchais. Instead of cutting the play, Petrosellini here expands Beaumarchais' phrase "Comme le grand air fait plaisir à respirer!" (Oh, it's lovely to breathe the fresh air!...) into the following:

Thanks Heaven
that my hundred-eyed Argus
has opened these shutters.
that my poor soul may at last
be invigorated by the fresh breeze. 63

One need not comment on the banality of this text, which was obviously created to introduce Rosina with an aria instead of a recitative. Paisiello begins with a sweet melody in the flute, creating an effective contrast with the preceding scene. The composer musically describes an aristocratic lady of the period who is in need of love and freedom to express herself. His delicate lines transmit the subtleties of her being. Rosina's Arietta "Lode al ciel" is in F-Major, 3/8 time, evokes a genuinely sad feeling of loneliness. Its gentle sentimentality is expressed in belcanto style as the orchestra imparts a special sensitivity with its light, transparent accompaniment. The soloistic material of the flutes, oboes, and bassoons is clearly heard through the texture. From this point on woodwinds accompany Rosina throughout. This introductory piece is pure and refined, symmetrically matching the introduction of the count, who also sang in sentimental style, in a similar musical language, and was also accompanied by the solo flute which envelopes the voice in a silvery light. This short piece is in ternary form stressing the seria character that the composer wished to depict.

When Bartolo suddenly appears in the window the calm and pastoral mood is broken. His conduct is aggressive. The old man asks what Rosina is holding in her hand. He suspects a letter. She tells him that it is a song from a new comedy entitled "The Useless Precaution". Bartolo is troubled by the "barbaric century" full of innovation and youthful enthusiasm which bores him. Beaumarchais stresses the doctor's dismay:

BARTHOLO: What is that paper you're holding there?

ROSINE: It's a song from "The Futile Precaution", which my singing master gave me yesterday.

BARTHOLO: What is this "Futile Precaution"?

ROSINE: It's a new play.
BARTHOLO: Yet another bourgeois drama! Some new-fangled piece of idiocy!

ROSINE: I don't know anything about it.

BARTHOLO: Ha! Well, the newspapers and the authorities will sort that out for us. What a barbaric age we live in!...

ROSINE: You are always insulting this poor century of ours.

BARTHOLO: Pardon me for living! What has it produced that we should praise it for? Idiocies of every variety: freedom of thought, the laws of gravity, electricity, religious tolerationism, vaccination, quinine, the Encyclopedia, and plays...

The libretto plays down Beaumarchais' critique of the old guardian's stale mentality:

BARTOLO: A piece of paper? What's that?

ROSINA: This here is a trifle of a song about useless precaution, which my music master sent me just yesterday.

BARTOLO: What "Precaution" is this?

ROSINA: A comic opera, sir.

BARTOLO: That takes one's appetite away. (Whoever could have devised it?)

With this last phrase, far from the obvious outburst of verbosity which depicts the ridiculous old man, Petrosellini again deprives the text of its vigorous humour. However, when Paisiello takes over, through his musical characterization of Bartolo, he restores Beaumarchais' original power of depiction, even when the character does not expand his thoughts verbally. The minute the doctor is introduced, the basses jump, the eighth notes are persistent. Figaro's foil, Bartolo, is a traditional buffo figure, the typical old lover character of the commedia dell'arte. He is ridiculous in his stubborn cautiousness, his anxiety, and miserliness. Throughout the opera, he blabbers incessantly and his motives
are repetitive and nagging just as in the play. Paisiello further emphasises Doctor Bartolo as the centre of mockery, an idea which appealed to Empress Catherine who as mentioned earlier, disrespected the medical profession.

A rapid ornamented line that falls in quick figurations represents hustle, as well as trills in the strings that express worry, as he asks about the paper which Rosina holds in her hand. In reaction to her tutor's aggressive behaviour she turns into a stubborn, cheeky girl. She becomes snappy, clever, and dishonest, lying in order to pass love notes to young Lindoro. To represent Rosina's cunning as she feigns agreeableness, while calmly inventing lies, Paisiello has the girl imitate her guardian's motives in reply. She makes fun of Bartolo's inquisitive, suspicious, and outraged manner in the same parlando style. When she tells him about the "Useless Precaution" (La précaution inutile), the doctor completely loses his calm. Rosina purposely drops her card into the street. Bartolo immediately dashes outside to help fetch the paper. He repeats "io corro cara" (I'll run, my dear), hurrying down the stairs. It is amusing because his line begins to rise, getting stuck in the middle of the passage with the orchestra supporting him in unison. The whole produces a decidedly buffo effect. In the meantime, Rosina signals to the count who leaps out of his hiding place to pick up the note. When Bartolo appears outside he searches in vain, complaining and grumbling. Finally, he goes back inside promising to shut the jalousie forever. The girl replies that she would be right to try and escape. Through this musical number, the audience understands Rosina's hatred for Dr. Bartolo who is not so much a guardian, as he is her prisoner.

This freely shaped duet is similar to a finale type ensemble. This is the most spirited scene in the entire act, because there is much dialogue and lively activity that propel the action. The events take place both on the balcony and in the street. Even though there are no shifts of tempo or metre, the many musical units that recur and make up this long unified number abound in contrasts. Judith Péteri compares the vocal aspect of the duet to Pergolesi's La Serva Padrona, where Bartolo's angular grumbling reminds
her of Uberta. However, she states that the "orchestral fabric and the lilt of the music seem at times to foreshadow the tenor of Mozart's ensembles." 66

The count and Figaro re-appear. Almaviva asks Figaro for help to win over Rosina's heart. Figaro promises to help as he plans the first ruse to outwit the old doctor. This is followed Bartolo looking for Don Basilio who will arrange the wedding between the tutor and his protégée. The count who hears this from his hiding is in shock. Figaro tells him that Don Basilio is a desperate, insignificant man, a musician who will do anything for money.

There follows the point at which Rosina's silhouette is seen behind the jalousie. This scene reenforces the power and necessity of music, keeping in mind that the play _Le barbier de Séville_, originally started out life as an _opéra comique_. As Figaro commented earlier, words become innocuous when sung. Earlier, Rosina sang from _La précaution_, imparting her true feelings through an aria. Now Figaro instructs the count to sing for the girl, while accompanying himself on the barber's guitar. Incidentally, the mandolin accompaniment reminds the listener of Don Giovanni's serenade, "Deh vieni alla finestra, o mio tesoro" (O come to the window, my treasure). Beaumarchais interspersed Figaro's comical interjections between the strophes of the count's sentimental serenade. 67 The Italian text by Petrosellini ignores Figaro's reactions, modifying his persona. In addition, the text of Beaumarchais' original song had the rhyme scheme _abba, cddc, effe_, which in Petrosellini's adaptation becomes _ab, cb, ddb, dd_. The text of the librettist's cavatina is stripped to the bare minimum as seen in the following comparison of the two texts:

Beaumarchais:  
Petrosellini:
C:  _By your command I name myself and sing._  _You wish to know my name, oh beauty._

_Though still unknown I dared you to adore:_  _and so you shall, for I shall tell you._

_How could a name bring any hope for more?_  _What can I do but kneel as to my king?_

F:  _Bloody hell, good stuff! Keep it going, sir!_
C: **My name's Lindor, my birth is very low.**
   **My status that of simple undergrad:**
   The trappings of a knight I wish I had:
   A brilliant rank and fortune'd suit you so.

F: The man's a genius, damn it! I couldn't
do better myself, and I'm a dab hand at
this stuff.

C: **Every morning here in tender song,**
   I'll sing again a love hopeless but true.
   It's joy enough to set my eyes on you:
   Yet might your heart, to hear me, beat
   more strong?

F: **Yet always, faithfully, each morning**
   I shall sing of my sufferings, Rosina dear.
   with my heart on my lips.

C: Figaro?

F: Excellency?

C: Do you think she heard me?

R: (In her room, sings.)
   **Lindor pleases me in every part,**
   I love him truly now with all my heart...
   (Behind the shutters.)
   **So Lindoro each morning**
   shall sing of his sufferings to Rosi...
   (The closing of a window bar cuts her off with a crash.)

The composer in turn, treats the obviously deficient adaptation by using a simple melody,
a symmetrical structure, and a strophic setting which implies purity and noble emotions.
Even though Almaviva pretends to be someone else, his feelings come out as genuine.
At times, however, the mandolin has dotted rhythms in its solo as a warning: the count's
feelings may be virtuous, but he is still passing himself off as someone else. Rosina
suspects nothing. At the end she picks up the same melody. Her singing demonstrates
acceptance and trust.

In the recitative that follows, the count discusses the practical aspects of his
proceedings. Money is discussed as Almaviva offers the barber a reward. The agreement
is reinforced by the duet which brings this first section to a close with some witty music.
which relates to Figaro's aria both in its buffo character and in structure. "Non dubitar o Figaro" (Don't worry, Figaro) propels the action after the static recitatives and cavatina.

In Act One, Figaro is central to the action, and by now his introduction is complete. From now on he withdraws and directs everything from a distance. While Figaro is not allowed to speak to his full potential, it is obvious that he is the expert master-mind behind the ingenious plan to unite the young lovers. It is against the barber's scheme that the old man's precautions prove useless. In the next act it is Bartolo who shows up as a more colourful character with the librettist concentrating on poking fun at the old doctor. Although the action of the play is still maintained, the focus is diverted. With this faulty emphasis any hint at political insurrection is avoided. Throughout the libretto, Bartolo is ridiculed for his old age, stupidity, jealousy, and his many precautions to ensure that he will have his protégée to himself.

The section commences as Rosina writes a love note to Lindoro when Figaro appears to tell her that the young man will soon pay her a visit. She gives the barber her letter just before he hides. Bartolo appears suspiciously inquiring whether Figaro has come by. Because Rosina does not answer, the doctor turns to the two servants whom he attempts to question. By using the traditional musical buffo tools for portrayal of the inane figure here, Paisiello depicts the old man who feels helpless against Figaro's artfulness and Rosina's stubbornness. The doctor cannot but grumble, fret, and make himself a disagreeable nuisance throughout. Petrosellini combined scenes VI and VII together into a terzetto in which the audience gets a glimpse at the doctor's domestic surroundings. This is an entirely comic scene through which Beaumarchais satirizes authority. Petrosellini carefully avoids comments like:

**BARTHOLO:** Fair! What's fairness got to do with wretches like you?
I am your master, and that makes me always right.

and:

**BARTHOLO:** When a thing is true! When I state that a thing is not true, I mean it to be not true. Allow all those scoundrels to be
right, and you'd soon see what happens to authority.

The *Terzetto* of Act Two is very successful. Solidly rooted in the Neapolitan *buffo* tradition that was inherent to Paisiello, the musician revitalised the scene to its utmost depths by emphasizing the absurdity of the situation. The brief instrumental introduction rapidly synthesizes the domestic atmosphere of the irritated doctor with his two imbecile servants. A huge yawn opens the ensemble. Bartolo raves over the tonic pedal, in active evenly moving eighth-notes, trying to get information. *Lo Svegliato* (Sprightly) continues to yawn hopelessly; and the other, *Il Giovinetto* (Laddie), sneezes non-stop. The restless excited music which comes on every time he appears, makes Bartolo easy to identify. Here he sings a fragmented melody, repeated almost ad nauseam which is recitative-like. The composer combines Bartolo's part with the yawning and sneezing onomatopoeic effects of his servants. The unifying cell repeats here, until the two are angrily chased out.

In this piece, Paisiello resorts to the traditional "rosalia" progression where the short phrase repeats ascending, as it modulates step by step. This hackneyed technique works well in this scene. Derived from a popular Italian song "Rosalia, mia cara", the stereotype is emphasized, providing a lively effect which characterizes the useless repetition and irritation on the doctor's part. With the music Paisiello restores Beaumarchais' wit and humour. When listening to the *Terzetto*, the audience does not sense the inadequacy of the libretto. In addition, the various comments from the play
mentioned above, simply would not work in a musical setting. In spoken drama they provide a noticeably comical bite, but in a musical drama they would sound awkward and serious.

Don Basilio enters to teach Bartolo the use of slander. He is the music master who will serve those who pay the most. He introduces calumny, a secret weapon of the weak. After a quick recitative, the music master sums up by singing an aria which is based on Beaumarchais' text:

**BAZILE**

Ah, calumny, sir! Do not disdain so powerful a weapon. I have seen the most upright men brought to the brink of collapse. elementary lie, no horror stories, no fantastical tale that you can't make the chattering classes repeat if you set about it the right way, and in this town we have some highly skilled operators! First a faint breath, skimming the ground like a swallow before the storm, *pianissimo*, whispers and winds its way, sowing the poisoned word. A mouth here gathers it up to savour, and, *piano, piano*, slides it into an ear there. The harm is done; it takes root, it crawls, it spreads, and *rinforzando* from mouth to mouth, it accelerates at an amazing rate; then, all of a sudden, I can't explain how, you see the calumny rear up, whistle and fill like a gathering wind, grow before your very eyes. It hurtles outwards, takes flight, tumbles and turns, envelops you, tears you up, carries you along, bursts and thunders until it becomes, praise be, a general cry, a public *crescendo*, a universal chorus of hatred and ostracism. Is

**BASILIO RECITATIVE:**

What can we do? Listen then: we have to use slander!

**BASILIO ARIA:**

And do you know, my dear Sir, what the slander should be? By itself I swear it always works wonders.

It sneaks along the ground and slowly, very slowly it gets going, then the big crowd of ordinary people take it up and blow it up, and so it spreads from mouth to mouth, and the devil carries it to every ear, that's how it works. The slander just grows and grows, it rises, hisses and swells perceptibly, it flies up and becomes a whirlwind. it flashes lightining, hissing, thundering, and as it keeps growing, see what it becomes: a disaster that upsets the world,
there a man in the world who could survive?

like a general chorus, and there's no remedy for it.

It is rather interesting to compare the two texts in the original languages. Petrosellini's faithfulness to the original is worthy of note. However, his use of "frenchisms" such as "turbigliona" from "tourbillonne" make the poetry unnatural. This lacks any expressive metric variety.

La calomnie, monsieur! Vous ne savez guère ce que vous dédaignez; j'ai vu les plus honnetes gens près d'en être accablés. Croyez qu'il n'y a pas de plate méchanceté, pas d'horreurs, pas de conte absurde, qu'on ne fasse et nous avons ici des gens d'une adresse!... D'abord un léger bruit, rasant le sol comme hirondelle avant l'orage, pianissimo murmure et file, et sème en courant le trait empoisonné. Telle bouche le recueille, et piano, piano, vous le glisse en l'oreille adroitement. Le mal est fait; il germe, il rampe, il chemine, et rinforzando de bouche en bouche il va le diable; puis tout à coup, ne sais comment, vous voyez calomnie se dresser, siffler, s'enfler, grandir à vue d'œil. Elle s'élance, étend son vol, tourbillonne, enveloppe, arrache, entraîne, éclate et tonne, et devient, grâce au ciel, un cri général, un crescendo public, un chorus universel de haine et de proscription. Qui diable y résisterait?

La calunnia, mio Signore, non sapete che cos'è?

Sol con questa a tutte l'ore si può far gran cose affè.

Questa qui radendo il suolo incomincia piano piano e del volgo il vasto stuolo la raccoglie, e rinforzando passa poi di bocca in bocca, ed il diavolo all'orecchie ve la porta, e così è. La calunnia intanto cresce, s'alza, fischia, gonfia a vista, vola in aria, e turbigliona, lampeggiando stride e tuona, e diviene poi crescendo un tumulto universale, come un coro generale, e rimedio più non v'è.
Petrosellini's text is indeed motionless. It is full of unnecessary words forced into a rhyme scheme. As a result, Paisiello's music seems independent of this text without any sense of the general crescendo that is implied or intended.

Musically, the menace of slander gives the whole D-Major aria a dark tone. It commences as a buffo piece, but after the introduction, it grows in intensity, using the principle motive from Figaro's aria which is repeated here several times. Paisiello who attempts to suggest musically the gradual explosion of scandal, has trouble communicating the text which is not stimulating. The crescendo has no substance as it grows over a sustained tonic pedal. Although the imagery itself is effective, because of the unsuccessful poetry, the relationship between the music and text does not feel natural. The versification breaks the intensity that is just beginning to take off. Therefore, the composer only uses the poem as a suggested framework. He insinuates density vocally and instrumentally by means of "a spiral" with an implied tonic pedal crescendo. When the text uses words "gonfia, volta, turbigliona, crescendo, and rinforzando", Paisiello lengthens the notes of the vocal line to underline the text with declamation without actually introducing any crescendo rhythmically, harmonically, or dynamically. Traditional chromatic orchestral figures depict thunder and lightning.

There is an abrupt break in music, even though the orchestra is pushing onwards, exploding with intensity. Basilio repeats varying the beginning without success, for the mood is lost in vocalistic detail. The ending is therefore weakened even though it is full of dynamic contrast, ranging from piano to forte.

Subsequently, in the play, Figaro, having heard everything, comes out of his hiding place and comments that pathetic men like Don Basilio have no power to start scandal. In the opera he directly proceeds to inform Rosina of her guardian's evil scheme to marry her. Bartolo returns, and just as with Figaro's opening aria "Scorsi gia molti paesi", Basilio's "Calunnia" aria, and many others, Petrosellini copies Beaumarchais' pattern. When the French playwright introduces a witty conversation and then sums up to
conclude with a monologue, the librettist uses a recitative which is then always summed up by an aria. The doctor, suspecting her of writing a love letter, interrogates Rosina about a missing piece of paper, the used pen, and her sullied finger. However, she lies to him and Bartolo becomes angry, to subsequently end with an aria.

To the French audience, Scene XI of the play directly criticized the nasty censorship of the autocratic regime. Bartolo's attitude towards Rosina is like that of a policeman to a captive. Beaumarchais who had been a prisoner before, and had dealt with the law, knew exactly how to ridicule this sort of authority. Petrosellini greatly shortens this scene by cutting out Bartolo's official interrogatory tone, mockery, and physical abuse. Through the recitative, the audience does not sense the violence implied in the original dialogue. However, in the aria which follows, the composer intensifies Bartolo's malicious character. Although, this is still a familiar musical portrait, the doctor's sarcasm has become threatening. The notes, lengthened by dotting are reinforced by the orchestra which moves in triplets against the vocal line. There are many sudden $sf$ and $f$ markings in the score. This is a rage aria, although the composer never loses sight of Bartolo as a buffo character who towards the end explodes in rapid triplet notes as he promises to lock Rosina up with a hundred keys.

The scene with the soldier breaks the conflict between the guardian and his prisoner. Again, drawn directly from Beaumarchais, this first ruse devised by Figaro opens with a recitative. The count dressed up as a drunken soldier shows up in the house with a letter from the army, demanding to be billeted at the old miser's place. This recitative is comical in itself, for there are amusing stage directions, asides, and plays on words which mock Bartolo. When the doctor leaves for a moment to find a document which exempts him from lodging soldiers, the lovers are alone for the first time. At that point, the music commences as a duet that grows into a trio when Bartolo reappears. This dramatic number is finale-like where events take place quickly. Unlike in the play, the audience participates in a psychological drama, intensified through the music.
Paisiello divides the ensemble into three units. There are two shifts in tempo, key, and theme. The first section in G-Major is the longest. It is dominated by an orchestral motive which is a nimble, ornamental string figure. Above that, the vocal parts transmit the characters' excited gestures and changes in mood. In the short section of this duet between Rosina and the count, two vocal motives alternate. The first is broader and more melodic, indicating the emotional relationship between the lovers. The second motive is faster and more speech-like, suggesting energetic whispering. When Bartolo returns, there are large upward leaps which express the indignation of the old man, as well as the change in overall speech dynamics going from a whisper to a normal level of amplification. In the dialogue that begins between Almaviva and Bartolo, the music communicates the emotional intensity. The question, "Vostra sposa?" and the reply, "Si signore" are set up as tonic to dominant and dominant to tonic progressions.

The leading motive is broken when Bartolo explodes because the drunken soldier has dashed the exemption out of his hand. Instead, the violins reinforce the old man's rapping hysteria with leaps sevenths, two octaves above his vocal line. With the word "battaglia" the count introduces a new fanfare motive which creates a tense mood leading all actors to sing simultaneously. Bartolo and Rosina have the same material, as the girl tries to calm the old man. The count menacingly contradicts Bartolo in wide intervals. Only the closing cadence is sung by all three together as a way of rounding the scene off musically on a D-Major chord.

The trio changes to B-flat-Major without any transition. The tempo, marked Maestoso, is slower. This section is initiated by a bagpipe-like orchestral introduction in the strings which provides tension as the end nears. The accompaniment changes constantly as the letter is presented through pantomime accentuated by unison passages, tremolos, fast figures, and numerous motives. In the final section the tempo seems to change without any indication in the score. However, the shift in character as the count speaks of his love letter is aria-like, smoothly leading to the recapitulation in G-Major.
(Larghetto), using asides throughout. This is a lyrical moment, as the lovers sing a melody together, their voices intertwining throughout in thirds, as though in a musical embrace. Underneath, Bartolo grumbles in buffo parlando style. The orchestra no longer carries an independent motive. The amorous couple is doubled by violins, stressing melodiousness. The vocal sections that are declamatory are framed by fast violin runs.

Following the Terzetto, Bartolo insists on reading Rosina's mail. She strongly resists and in Beaumarchais (Act II, Scene XV) she stresses her rights:

Do I go about examining the letters which arrive for you? What makes you think you have the right to interfere with ones addressed to me? If you do it out of jealousy, then I take it as an insult; if you are abusing an ill-founded authority, then I am all the more in revolt. She goes on to state that Bartolo has no right to exploit her by taking it upon himself to read her letters. When he suggests that she is his wife, Rosina declares that even if she were, there would still be no reason to be "subjected to an indignity no one else has to suffer." After he insists, she threatens to run away and seek refuge elsewhere. Beaumarchais sarcastic as ever, has Bartolo comment: "This is not France, where they always take the woman's side." He nevertheless takes the precaution of locking all the doors. Rosina who knows that he will persist until he reads the note, pretends to faint and replaces it with a letter from her cousin. Bartolo, feeling foolish, calms down and they make peace. Alone, Rosina reads the letter from Lindor which tells her to pick a quarrel with her guardian. Just having wasted a good fight by resolving it, she is upset about her predicament. In the opera her emotional situation is expressed through the cavatina "Giusto ciel", which closes the act. This might seem undramatic and weak as far as the structure of a musical drama is concerned. Indeed, instead of ending with a rapid and active finale with all the characters on stage, Paisiello chooses a lyrical aria that draws its influence from the opera seria. However, Rosina's frustration builds up to the moment where she is alone. The final release of pent up emotion expresses
hopelessness and makes a musically dramatic ending. Here Rosina foreshadows the lament of the distressed Countess Almaviva of Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*. The clarinets and bassoons moving in parallel thirds, accompany *sottovoce*, as Rosina prays to Heaven for her peace of mind. The clarinet, Paisiello's favourite instrument (which he used in his early compositions to depict Elysian and Stygian scenes) later served as a tool to describe emotion of love in the *aria d'affetto*. The melismatic ornamentation and the style of the cavatina, reveal the influence of *opera seria*.

The third act of the opera opens with a duet which initially resembles an aria, sung by Doctor Bartolo. As he informs the audience about Rosina not wanting to take any more music lessons from Don Basilio, he is interrupted by knocking on the door. Unlike in the Beaumarchais play, the hammering of the intruder is exaggerated to the point of raising suspicion in the doctor's mind. Also, unlike in the play, when the count appears dressed up as a student, he endlessly reiterates monotonous "gioia e pace" greeting which irritates the old man. This salutation extended through the duet for comical effect, only possible in an *opera buffa*, commences the second ruse devised by Figaro. The triplets which Paisiello already used as an accompanying motive as early as the second measure at the beginning of the scene in the orchestral introduction, are heard in the violins with insistence. When Bartolo finally succeeds in getting the very polite newcomer to stop repeating "joy and peace" and to speak normally, a recitative follows. Here the audience witnesses Almaviva's wit and talent for improvisation. Pretending to be Don Alonso, a student and agent of Don Basilio, he informs the doctor of the maestro's illness. To gain trust from the ever suspicious doctor, he hands Bartolo Rosina's love letter. When he takes over Rosina's music lesson, she sings her aria. This is a far cry from Beaumarchais' original song intended for theatrical performance. Seemingly an innocent pastoral ariette, in rhymed couplets, and Spanish in style, Beaumarchais' text depicts Spring and desire between Lindor and the young shepherdess who make love, but conceal their passion from jealous intruders. This number caused a riot in the audience at
the first performance after which the actress of the production was too embarrassed to repeat the sexually explicit song.

In the opera, Petrosellini minimized the text reducing it to a generic sentimental pastoral poem. Obviously relying on the music, (since he used a rather random rhyme scheme), he concentrated on the contrast between the flowering of Spring against the shepherdess' lonely longing for Lindoro. Here is an instance where Paisiello does not even attempt to bring forth Beaumarchais' original intention through the music, as shown in previous examples where he enlivens Petrosellini's flat texts. Instead, the composer resorts to the stylistic devices of opera seria, this time bringing out Petrosellini's banal sentimentality. The aria is in ABA da capo form, with a long orchestral introduction. The outside sections are in 3/4 time, while the slower middle section is in 6/8. The idyllic character of the music matches the text which is full of Arcadian similes. The aria is gushing with woodwinds and a vocal line that is overly melismatic. At the same time Rosina's love for Lindoro is indicated by the sound of the clarinet which accompanies throughout. At the end, Paisiello deliberately writes out a long cadenza, which underlines the composer's use of parody for melodramatic and humorous effect. This is precisely the aria that puts Bartolo to sleep.

When Bartolo wakes up he insists that the music of his youth is far more appealing than the modern songs. In an attempt to convince Rosina of his worthiness to be her husband, he performs the "Spanish Seguidilla":

(Bartolo ponders, scratching his head, and then starts singing, cracking his fingers like castanets and moving his knees in the manner of old men.)

BARTOLO
Dear Rosina,
do you want a good bargain:
a good-looking husband,
who deserves, my dear,
all your love?
I am no Thyrsis, 
yet I am still good; 
and I swear to you, 
that in the dark 
all tomcats 
are grey.

So my dear beauty, accept my heart...

This is an opportunity for Paisiello to stress humour through the music by enhancing the deliberately ridiculous text translated from Beaumarchais. By using angular rhythms and repetition, the composer further draws attention to the old man's awkwardness. The short musical phrase which consists of eight bars is irregular for the accent never falls on the first beat. The doctor sings and dances, as Figaro mimics Bartolo's movements from behind, further enhancing the comedic effect.

The following scene when Don Basilio shows up unexpectedly, drawn from Beaumarchais' Act III, Scenes XI, XII, and XIII, is a perfect opportunity for an ensemble number unified by Paisiello into a vigorous and long quintet. The general astonishment is demonstrated by the abrupt change to E-flat-Major right after a C-Major cadence. Paisiello builds the quintet's musical and dramatic structure out of the alteration and return of motives heard previously. The first section is dominated by astonishment, confusion, and fluster. The diction is clear and *parlando* where speed and the dynamics of live speech express each character's individual emotions. First Rosina is astonished, her motive set to a rising questioning figure after which Paisiello brings back the introductory orchestral theme. A series of asides follow where the count exclaims "Giusto cielo!", musically imitating Rosina's surprise. Figaro's reaction follows a rapid introduction in the strings in sixteenth notes, contrasting by muttering (*sottovoce*), "Questo il diavolo" on the off beat. Bartolo, hypocritically states a welcoming "Caro amico" out loud in a similar motive to Rosina and Almaviva. However his reaction is accompanied by the orchestra in the same manner as Figaro's, showing apprehension. It is obvious that for whatever the individual reason, none of the characters want Don Basilio
present. The music master is clueless, and is given cues by Bartolo so as not to spoil Don Alonso's cover. Don Basilio, obviously has no idea about who Don Alonso is, begins to exclaim, but is quickly interrupted by Figaro who does not want to reveal the count's identity to Bartolo. The barber impatiently stomps his foot, ready to shave Bartolo, right then and there. Don Basilio attempts to comprehend, realizing that everyone but him is involved in the plot. Every time he tries to utter a word, he is shut up by the other characters who form an alliance among each other. The count whispers to Bartolo: "Tell him that we have agreed", upon which Bartolo orders Don Basilio not to contradict. The confused music master consents, but his rising line interrupted by rests reveals that he really has no idea about what is going on. Paisiello introduces a new theme when Bartolo asks if he spoke with the lawyer. Each character one by one picks up the short motive outlining a B-flat Major triad, rising up in concern. At its climax, the singing ascends hysterically, leaping, with the phrases interrupting one another. (Naturally, in spoken drama this was not possible.) Suddenly after reaching the F-Major harmony, everything stops. Finally the count manages to take command of the situation by slipping a heavy purse into Don Basilio's hand while asking sympathetically: "why have you come here in this condition?" The composer uses minor seconds to outline the pathos. This moment is highlighted to the fullest by using long sustained chords in the strings. From then on everything proceeds more smoothly because Bartolo, Almaviva, Rosina, and Figaro all gang up on Don Basilio urging him to leave, and using his fictitious illness as an excuse. The group, returns to the initial motives, showing worry, for there is no doubt that Don Basilio is very, very unwell. The music master now has no choice but to withdraw, as the others animatedly repeat: "Go to bed." The characters bid a climactic farewell, while Don Basilio comments in an aside: "If it were not for this purse", as he withdraws.

The next section proceeds as a quartet in slower tempo shifting from 4/4 to 3/4 time. It shows relief on the part of the remaining characters, as well as their interest in
the business at hand. Here, two kinds of orchestral themes alternate: the bold motive which serves as the basis for normal conversation, and a dense trill-like string figure which interrupting, represents Bartolo's suspicions. The count, pretending to give Rosina pointers on singing, tells her of his plan to come back at midnight. Figaro blocks Bartolo's view, as the doctor complains about it. (In the play Figaro responds that if it were a ballet lesson, there would be something to see.) However, the doctor manages to push the barber away and listens in on the lovers' conversation. Figaro tries to warn them, but Bartolo unmasks them. The Allegro presto in 4/4 follows. Here Paisiello's chromatic writing accompanied by horns reveals Bartolo's extreme rage. This results in the ensemble breaking up into two camps, the three younger characters' parts forming a unit in counterpoint against the outrage of the old man. At one instance the music of the chorus is suspended in slow sottovoce, as the characters comment on Bartolo's anger.\textsuperscript{73} The coda brings the tempo and the excitement to a climax, forcing the singers into a patter; on the one side: "He's mad, mad, mad!" and on the other: "Rascals, rascals, rascals!", creating an atmosphere for a buffo finale. The music is full of effective contrasts.

Unlike in the play where the theatre goes dark and the orchestra performs the storm music between the acts for atmospheric effect, the final section of the opera opens with the orchestral Tempesta as the audience is presented with the same room as in the second and third acts. This orchestral interlude is a dramatic piece created through an effective use of instrumental figures which characterize rain, wind, thunder, and lightening. Frequently chromatic menacing figures are used. This reminds one of the scene of the spread of slander. After the storm, the main action and intrigues continue secco. Bartolo informs Rosina that the man she is in love with is none other than the infamous libertine Count Almaviva. The doctor proves this by showing her one of the letters she sent to Lindoro. She is shocked and humiliated by this betrayal. In despair Rosina accuses the count and cries. Musically, vocal phrases are broken to represent
breathlessness. This is supported by the orchestra. In this tragic instance, Paisiello slips into accompanied recitative to demonstrate Rosina's painful state. The orchestra represents her desperation with dramatic piano and forte contrasts.

The finale, "Cara sei tu il mio bene" (Dear, you are all my treasure) begins as a piece of reconciliation between Rosina and Count Almaviva. The lyrical exchange is supported throughout by the clarinets which represent love. When the lovers sing in thirds, Rosina and the count promise to be faithful to each other. When suddenly Figaro bursts in to announce that they are trapped and people are coming, the tempo shifts from Larghetto to Allegro moderato and the meter from 3/4 to 2/4 respectively. Everything becomes buffo, as the clarinets are also replaced by oboes. Basilio enters with the notary who asks if this is the couple to be wed. The count and Rosina state their names over a pompous orchestral chordal accompaniment which creates a ceremonial effect. When Basilio panics and refuses to be their witness, the count gives him a purse full of gold. Naturally, the music master immediately signs the contract, which leads all the characters to comment about the weight that prompts one to agree. A march-like rhythm follows in the ensemble where the word "si" (yes) is sung triumphantly in praise of money that always wins. When Bartolo arrives with the magistrate, the buffo cross-questioning offers a life-like musical portrayal of varying human reactions and attitudes. Figaro states with pride, represented by huge leaps of sevenths, that he in fact has arrived at the house with the great Count Almaviva. At this point Bartolo is amazed, repeating "Almaviva" in astonishment and emphasis. He attempts to protest, but realizing that the contract has been signed, he is hopelessly powerless. He blames himself for not having taken sufficient precautions to shield Rosina. In the play Bartolo is isolated in his rage and self-castigation while Figaro comments that he failed for not having sufficient brains concluding:

...But let's be honest, Doctor: when youth and love are working hand in hand to foil an old man, even the very best
he can do to prevent them can only be called, as it has turned out to be, a "Futile Precaution".

The closing of the opera however, is a traditional buffo conclusion. Here Bartolo's reactions are downplayed so that he can be brought into the chorus, underlining the resolution of conflict where all the characters draw up a moral and bid farewell to the audience. This finale is a solemn chorale-like hymn that is an homage to Catherine the Great.  

When in two young hearts
The god of love wishes for the same thing,
all precaution
will be useless.
What has happened here can truly
and with good cause be called
useless precaution.
III. CONCLUSION.

*Il barbiere* presents a balanced structure of perfect correspondence between the comic and lyrical elements.\(^75\) The opera's language and means of expression are aristocratic and classical. The characters are simplistic but treated with refinement, for the work was not written for the middle or working class of Naples, but for an educated and highly gallant auditorium.\(^76\) Figaro, Rosina, Bartolo, and the Count are like stylized porcelain figures, or rather like the masks of the *commedia dell'arte*. The work is an idealized vision of society the way the apathetic aristocrats at the northern Imperial court saw it.

This comedy reflects the trend of the times, for the ideas of the Enlightenment Era affected both the bourgeoisie and the aristocrats. However, each group interpreted education and rationalism in its own way. While the members of the middle class attempted to change the structure of society (*ancien régime*), the authorities needed to maintain it.

The aristocracy appreciated the revolutionary enlightened thought of the *encyclopédistes* because it was stylish. The ideas were acceptable to them only within the context of the old regime. The Imperial Court was not to be offended by satire that crossed humorous bounds and attacked with shocking intensity. Only light mockery as a playful diversion was acceptable to the audience which observed the plebeian inclinations from their opulent pedestals. Living in palaces, everything seemed to prevail through the centuries: boredom lead to dinners and entertainments, and indulgence in new concepts was a mere pastime. Seeing the revolutionary connotations on the theatre stage tantalized their minds. Unfortunately, they were blind to the inevitable reality that was disguised behind the masks; they were not able to see the danger lurking among the discontented masses.
The transformation of *Le barbier* into *Il barbiere* demonstrates how *opera buffa* with its clowning distracted from the prevalent issues which lead up to the French Revolution. The transformed entertainment proved successful with both the upper and middle class, appealing to everybody's taste. Through Italian *opera buffa* different camps seemed to find a compromise, musical theatre seeming harmless. Through his comedy Beaumarchais showed the futility of prudence, force, and money. In the end all precautions and censorship proved in vain, for the natural flow of events could not be prevented. As it were, French revolutionary theatre permeated the palaces of the aristocrats disguised as Italian *opera buffa* and innocently from the stage hinted at, and prepared the ground for the enormous change to come.

*Il barbiere di Siviglia o l'inutile precauzione*, was performed in St. Petersburg's Hermitage Theatre on September 26, 1782, suitably, in the year of the Empress' twentieth anniversary on the Russian Throne. The opera was a success, although no account of the premiere exists. All European rulers reacted favourably to the new work. One can gauge the extent of the composer's accomplishment through the fact that it was performed many times thereafter, in Russia and all over Europe: in Vienna, Naples, Warsaw, Prague, Versailles, Cassel, Pressburg, Mannheim, Madrid, Liège, Berlin, London, Paris, Lisbon, and later in the United States. It was translated into many languages, including French, German, Spanish, and Russian.

Despite the banality of the bad libretto and the crippling cuts made to the play that was originally full of Beaumarchais' personal political critique, Paisiello's ability and talent for satire are demonstrated through the music. The composer treats the Italian text with musical inventiveness and ingenuity in an attempt to add dynamism and credibility to the action. While *Il barbiere* is an Italian reduction which is politically inoffensive and entertaining, the final result is a work that is more advanced and sophisticated than those compositions presented in the Neapolitan theatres. However, the limitations created by
the libretto's mechanical application of traditional Italian comedy concepts are obvious, especially to an audience acquainted with Beaumarchais' original.

The French author worked from his own personal individual thoughts and ideas, communicating a strong politico-social critique. His use of Italy and Spain was a point of departure in order to mock and mimic the French culture before the public. The composer, on the other hand, follows the Neapolitan comic theatre tradition in order to characterize through music, vocal and instrumental, while working for Catherine the Great. This goes to show that the two artists had very different goals in mind. One implied politics, while using traditional methods as a medium, the other allowed a superficial rendering by focussing on the comedy itself.

Like Figaro and Beaumarchais himself who was a poet, an adventurer and jack of all trades, Paisiello, the traveller and the artist who adjusted to any situation, surviving by his own wit and ingenuity; was able to relate to the barber's persona while working for mass consumption and appeal. His music made the drama comforting for those who might be afraid of the politics that the play implied. Thus, Paisiello refused to characterize Figaro throughout the opera. Instead he recreated the Figaro of the Italian text by thematically unifying him with the character of the Doctor Bartolo. And although Paisiello's composition is entertaining when considered on its own merit, a comparison with the original throws light on some of the inclinations and ideas of eighteenth century pre revolutionary society.
IV. EPILOGUE.

During his last three years in Russia, Paisiello started to think of his homeland. When the Grand Duke Paul and Grand Duchess Maria Fedorovna were planning their journey to Europe that included a visit to Naples, they requested a letter of introduction to Don Ferdinando Galiani. Paisiello praised the two aristocrats, asking the councillor to take them around the city. In return he asked them to visit King Ferdinand of Naples, the composer's former patron, and remind him of Paisiello's successes in Russia. The composer's far-sightedness demonstrated his longing to return to his homeland. He planned to serve his former patron King Ferdinand IV of Naples. When he finally secured a position through Galiani, he needed to eventually find a good excuse to leave the Russian Court.

At that time, due to shortage of funds, the Committee of the Imperial Theatres in St. Petersburg gave Paisiello extra administrative responsibilities. Paisiello became infuriated with their decision, for they were not going to increase his salary. His refusal was seen as a sign of disrespect. Paisiello stormed out of the meeting, slamming the door, and did not return to subsequent negotiations.

That same evening Paisiello found himself surrounded by soldiers who had been sent to arrest him, but he managed to escape. He did not return home that evening, for he knew that the soldiers had proceeded there in order to capture him upon his arrival. Upon hearing of the incident, the grand duchess tried to intervene with the Committee on Paisiello's behalf, but to no avail.

The next morning Paisiello surrendered to the police because he wanted to spare his wife from the soldiers who refused to leave their apartments until they arrested the composer. Paisiello was disgusted with the Committee, and, realizing that he could not reconcile himself with its members, wrote to Catherine and asked to be released. His excuse was his wife's illness due to the cold Russian climate. The Empress, although
sympathetic to the situation, did not want to let him go. She allowed him a year of absence from St. Petersburg with full salary and all of his travel expenses paid. In return, he was to send her a copy of all the music composed while on leave, and to search for good singers who could be invited to the czarina's court.

Paisiello accepted this generous offer, and after he learned about his appointment at the Neapolitan court, he hurriedly left on 25 January 1784. Catherine wrote to her friend Grimm: '...Paisiello nous quitte; il s'est brouillé avec la nouvelle direction, ou bien celle-ci avec lui...'.

Paisiello certainly had no intention of ever returning to St. Petersburg. Of course he was cautious not to let anyone know of his newly secured position. After all, he did not want to lose the salary that was given him while on leave. He took full advantage of the benevolence and support of his friends and patrons.

Throughout his long and productive career, Paisiello always remained successful musically and politically. He served emperors and kings, carefully appealing to their tastes, managing to remain on the good side of those who paid. He was a clever, resourceful Neapolitan adventurer. He was Figaro himself.
There were a number of problems that occurred during that period. Sophie's mother, for example was sent home on accusation of spying for the Prussian king. Incidentally, Peter the future Emperor of Russia was educated at the Prussian court and was more of a Prussian than a Russian. This was very convenient for Friedrich II.

3There were a number of problems that occurred during that period. Sophie's mother, for example was sent home on accusation of spying for the Prussian king.
4Raeff, 127.
5Ibid., 34-35.
6Ibid., 70.
7Ibid., 14.
8S.N. Syrov, Pages of History. (Moscow: Russky Yazyck, 1987),120.
10"Souls" -- in Russian "duschi", were male serfs, or slaves.
11Syrov, 124.
12Ibid., 103-118.
13Raeff, 14.
14Ibid., 62 - 63.
15Ibid., 39.
16Ibid., 39.
17Ibid., 83.
18Ibid., 83-85.
19Ibid., 76.
20Ibid., 11-12.
21Syrov, 103-118.
23Hunt, 20.
24In her own comic opera libretti she attempted to use Russian folklore.
He was one of the most influential and well-known opera composers of his time. His life is usually divided into three creative periods: the early (1740-1776), the years in Russia (1776-1784), and the final years in Naples (1784-1816). It is very important to see his creativity as a whole, for it illustrates the span of an age that was cosmopolitan, an era which was predominated by the Italian musical style. Moreover Paisiello's life must be seen in a historical context, since, after all, he worked in many different political circumstances. At first he was a preferred composer of Bourbon King Ferdinand IV of Naples, then in Russia as a favourite of Catherine the Great, subsequently, for the Hapsburg Emperor Joseph II at Vienna, and finally greatly admired by Napoleon Bonaparte who was both a patron and friend. Towards the end of his life, after the restoration of the Bourbons in 1815, Paisiello although in semi-disgrace, was still considered a great composer. It was Paisiello's political astuteness then which allowed him to survive and be favoured by so many different powerful patrons.
55

40 "une intrigue plaisante et des situations aussi piquantes qu'accordées aux particulières nécessités de l'opéra buffa"
Mooser, 327.

41 Se farà delle commedie, Le Mariage de Figaro non mi servirà certo di modello. Le frasi di Molière erano libere e fiorivano da una gaieté naturale, ma il suo pensiero non era mai vizioso; mentre, in questa commedia, così corrotta, il sottinteso non val nulla; e pure va avanti per tre ore e mezza. Non ho riso una sola volta, leggendola.
Zanetti, 1333.

42 ...potrà fargli fare un libro, e le sue fatighe saranno ricompensate, in maniera che sarà contento, e il denaro gli sarà consegnato dal signor conte Razamowsky, a cui dovrà consegnare il libro. Quello poi che dovrà raccomandargli si è la brevità, perché non deve durare più di un'ora e mezza, e se sarà più breve, si farà più onore. Non dev'essere che in un atto solo, o pure due, solamente a cinque o quattro personaggi, i caratteri della glie spiegherò qui sotto, e che attualmente sono al servizio di questa imperial corte. Un buffo caricato, il quale fa eccellentemente la parte di vecchio, di padre, di tutore geloso, di filosofo. Un secondo buffo caricato, il quale lo puol paragonare a gennaro Luzio. Il tenore puol paragonarlo a Grimaldi, ma recita ancora il gran comico e canta bene. Abbiamo un buffa, che fa eccellentemente qualunque carattere caricato. Abbiamo un'altra donna, la quale recita il mezzo carattere, la quale fa parte eguale con l'altra; e questo glielo avviso, accio possa regolarsi il poeta per la distribuzione delle pezzi in musica, accio una non possa dire che ha meno dell'altra. Eccogli descritta la compagnia che si trova qui al servizio, onde sopra di questi caratteri deve il poeta travagliare. Gli avvero: pochi, pochissimi recitativi, perché non s'intende la lingua, pezzi in musica quanti ne vuole, in arie, cavatine, duetti, terzetti e finali all'uso di Napoli...
Zanetti, 1333.


44 Quello che m'ha indotto a tradurre la Commedia del Barbiere di Siviglia dalla Prosa francese in Versi italiani, e a farne un Dramma giocoso, non è stato per aver letto nella Prefazione, o sia Lettera moderata dell'autore, il seguente paragrafo, cioè: A propos de Chanson, dit la Dame: Vous êtes ben honnète d'avoir été donner votre Pièce aux François! moi qui n'ait de petite Loge qu'aux Italiens! Pourquoi n'en avoir pas fait un 'Opéra comique' ce fut, dit-on, votre première idée. La Pièce est d'un genre à comporter de la Musique. Ma bensi mi son risolto a far ciò che per il fortunato incontro della suddetta Commedia, quale con preferenza ed applauso viene spesso rappresentata sopra questo Imperiale Teatro in varj idiomi.
Zanetti, 1334.

45 ...se poi nel tradurla l'ho abbreviata, l'ho fatto a solo fine d'adattarmi al genio di questa Imperial Corte, sperando che la musica supplirà alle bellezze di quelle scene, che sono stato necessitato di tagliare, per rendere lo spettacolo il più corto possibile.
Ibid, 1334.

46 Sometimes it is said to be in two acts and four parts ("in due atti e quattro parti") Ricordi edition.
It is important to note again that the text was a verbatim translation of songs, and expressions used by Beaumarchais. This probably made the action easy to understand. After all, the French play was performed in 1781, one year earlier, and French was the language spoken by every aristocrat at court.

After all, the French play was performed in 1781, one year earlier, and French was the language spoken by every aristocrat at court.

Years later, in Naples, Paisiello and Lorenzi reworked the opera into three acts. This fact alone confirms the composer's dissatisfaction with the original libretto that he had to work with in Russia.

The spelling of names will be Italian style from now on. Bartholo, Lindor, Rosine, Basile of the play is: Bartolo, Lindoro, Rosina, and Basilio in the opera.

Le jour est moins avancé que je ne croyais. L'heure à laquelle elle a coutume de se montrer derrière sa jalousie est encore éloignée. N'importe; il vaut mieux arriver trop tôt que de manquer l'instant de la voir.

Si quelque aimable de la cour pouvait me deviner a cent lieues de Madrid, arrêté tous les matins sous les fenêtres d'une femme à qui je n'ai jamais parlé, il me prendrait pour un Espagnol du temps d'Isabelle... Pourquoi non? chacun court après le bonheur. Il est pour moi dans le coeur de Rosine...

Non vorrei che qualcheduno
mi vedesse in queste spoglie...
Mais quoi! suivre une femme à Séville, quand Madrid et la cour offrent de toutes parts des plaisirs si faciles?... Et c'est cela même que je fuis. Je suis las des conquêtes que l'intérêt, la convenance ou la vanité nous présentent sans cesse. Il est si doux d'être aimé pour soi-même! Et si je pouvais m'assurer sous ce déguisement...

... Eh! mon dieu, nos faiseurs d'opéras-comiques n'y regardent pas de si près. Aujourd'hui, ce qui ne vaut pas la peine d'être dit, on le chante. (Il chante)......Hem, hem, quand il y aura des accompagnements là-dessous, nous verrons encore, messieurs de la cabale, si je ne sais ce que je dis...

(Translation commences on: I left Madrid): J'ai quitté Madrid; et, mon bagage en sautoir, parcourant philosophiquement les deux Castilles, la Manche, L'Estramadure, la Sierra-Morena, l'Andalousie; accueilli dans une ville, emprisonné dans l'autre, et partout supérieur aux événements; loué par ceux-ci, blâmé par ceux-là; aidant au bon temps, supportant le mauvais; me moquant des sots, bravant les méchants; riant de ma misère, et faisant la barbe à tout le monde;"

Scorsi già molti paesi, molti, molti, molti paesi.
In Madrid io debuttai, feci un'opera, e cascai e col mio bagaglio addosso
Me ne corsi a più non posso in Castiglia e nella Mancia nell'Asturie, in Catalogna; poi passai l'Andalusia, e girai l'Estremadura: come ancor Sierra Morena, ed in fin nella Galizia in un luogo bene accolto e in un altro in lacci avvolto ma però di buon umore, d'ogni evento superior.

However, interestingly enough, this aria reminds one, of Leporello's famous Catalogue" aria. Indeed, throughout this opera, one can detect the influence that Paisiello had on Mozart.

Lode al ciel, che alfine aperse L'Argo mio la gelosia; or potrà quest'alma mia la fresc'aura respirar.

BARTHOLO: Quel papier tenez-vous là?
ROSINE: Ce sont des couplets de la Précaution inutile, que
mon maître à chanter m’a donné hier.

BARTHOLO: Qu'est-ce que la Précaution inutile?

ROSINE: C'est une comédie nouvelle.

BARTHOLO: Quelque drame encore! quelque sottise d'un nouveau genre!

ROSINE: Je n'en sais rien.

BARTHOLO: Euh, euh, les journaux et l'autorité nous en feront raison.
Siècle barbare!...

ROSINE: Vous injurez toujours notre pauvre siècle.

BARTHOLO: Pardon de la liberté! Qu'a-t-il produit pour qu'on le loue?
Sottises de toute espèce: la liberté de penser, l'attraction,
l'électricité, le tolérantisme, l'inoculation, le quinquina,
l'Encyclopédie, et les drames...

BARTOLO: Una carta? cos'è quella?

ROSINA: Questa qui è una canzone dell’Inutil precauzione,
che il maestro di cappella ieri appunto mi mandò.

BARTOLO: Cos'è questa Precauzione?

ROSINA: Mio signor, è una commedia.

BARTOLO: Si, da far venir l'inedia. (Ah! chi sa chi l'inventò!)

65 Judit Péteri, 10.

67 Mozart's Don Giovanni Act II, Scene I. This is a parallel between the Count
Almaviva and Don Giovanni, and Figaro and Leporello who also interjects.

68 Petrosellini's Cavatina text is given here in Italian:

Saper bramate, bella, il mio nome;
ecco ascoltate; ve lo dirò.

Io son Lindoro, di basso stato;
nè alcun tesoro, darvi potrò.
Ma sempre fido, ogni mattina
a voi mie pene, cara Rosina,
col cuor sul'labbri vi canterò.

Dunque Lindoro ogni mattina
le di lui pene all Rosi...

69 ROSINE: Vais-je examiner les papiers qui vous arrivent? Pourquoi vous donnez-vous les airs de toucher à ceux qui me sont adressés? Si c'est jalousie, elle m'insulte; s'il s'agit de l'abus d'une autorité usurpée, j'en suis plus révoltée encore.

70 Judit Péteri compares the two Cavatinas, 10.
71 Il barbiere, Act 2, part 3.
72 There is a similar situation in Mozart and Da Ponte's Marriage of Figaro. Act IV, Scene VI.
73 This is similar to Mozart's technique used in Marriage of Figaro, Finale of Act II where Count Almaviva rages.
74 Ghislanzoni, 84.
75 Ibid., 82.
76 Ibid., 82.
77 Various sources sight the 15th as the date, due to the differences between the Julian and Gregorian calendars.
78 Riccardo, 25.
79 See Mooser for details on the financial troubles of 1780's.
81 Ghislanzoni, 89.
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