*Joan Grimalt**

Escola Superior de música de Catalunya,
Universitat Internacional de Catalunya

# SOME MILITARY MUSICAL TOPICS BEFORE 1914

**Abstract**: The article deals with military musical topics in concert music. Historically, the first World War marks a shift in the value of those topics. In Romantic music, martial topics are mostly euphoric: the virtual marching characters are the "good guys". In most of the music after the bloody conflict, however, the march represents the dark side of humanity's aggressiveness. This shift can be heard in Shostakovich's and Prokofiev's works, and has a clear precedent in the music of Gustav Mahler, who intuitively foresaw the forthcoming disasters. The article also describes two military topics that have received too little attention, despite their frequent use: the 'Dysphoric March' and the 'Toy Army'. (The latter was described, but not labelled, by Raymond Monelle [2000]).

**Key words**: military musical topics, music before 1914, Raymond Monelle

**Military and Classical music?**

The military has an enormous presence in Classical music. Considering the pacifist stance of most musicians and musicologists of our time, it requires quite an effort for us to understand this historical phenomenon. To evaluate the expressive meaning of marches in Mozart's or Mahler's music, the fundamental role of the army in society at that time needs to be taken into account. On the other hand, enlightened, emancipatory thinking pushed those composers and their output into an ambiguous position regarding the army – or any institutionalized power. Here, two musical manifestations of a challenge to the military are shown: the 'Toy Army' and the 'Dysphoric March'.

---

* Author contact information: jokpl123@gmail.com

**Ex. No. 1**: Mozart, *Jupiter* Symphony/I: begin.



In concert music, the 'Lyric' and the 'Epic' are semantic fields, rather than genres. The Epic is a field of rich profusion, with great expressive versatility, ranging from euphoria to despair. Yet, epic markers tend to appear in conjunction with other meanings, including fields traditionally considered incompatible with the army. The main subject of Mozart's *Jupiter* symphony, e.g., combines the military with the 'sensitive' style, with no transition (Ex. No. 1)

Note the imitation of the drums by the violins: first incongruence. Both semantic fields, 'Lyric' and 'Epic', are put into question through their contiguity. This is a strategy that conveys 'Irony', arguably the predominant attitude in the Classical style. It colours the martial topics found in most of the music by Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven.

The markers of musical 'Epic' are
• Marches,
• Calls and fanfares,
• Trumpets and drums, and their imitation;
• Dotted rhythms;
• Accents (*sforzati*), intensity (*forte, fortissimo*).

**Marches, dotted rhythms**

The march as a functional genre can still be heard occasionally today, but we can only imagine the importance it had for the acoustical environment of the people in the 18th and 19th centuries. One example of a patent use of the genre is found in no. 8 of Mozart's opera seria *Idomeneo* K 366 (1781). It bears the explicit title of *Marcia*, and it is meant to honour Neptune, who just saved the Trojan sailors. The stage directions say, "Warlike march during disembarkment" (*Marcia guerriera durante lo sbarco*). (Ex. No. 2a, 2b)

The aforementioned markers are there: a binary metre, calls, dotted rhythms, the sonority of brass and percussion, and a propensity to broken chords and to the overtone series which mark the natural cornet. But even in such a patent ex-

**Ex. No. 2a**: Mozart, *Idomeneo*, no. 8: *Marcia*, begin.



**Ex. No. 2b**: Mozart, *Idomeneo*, no. 8: mm. 23-26.

ample, irony finds its way. In the contrasting sections, *piano*, one hears motives from the opera *buffa*, and even some laughter[1]

The march is often integrated into foreign contexts in a topical, latent way. Josef Haydn's Sonata Hob. xvi/21 (1773), e.g., starts like this.

**Ex. No. 3**: Haydn, Sonata Hob. xvi/21/I, begin.



The 'March' works as a topic, as an allusion to its functional origin, integrated into an autonomous genre. This monothematic movement offers contrast through Lyricism, with occasional triplet rhythms in step motion, and through dysphoric details such as the minor mode, flats, and some dissonance.

Something similar happens in Franz Schubert's song *Der Schäferund der Reiter* D517 ('The shepherd and the horseman'), 1817. The two main characters suggest the musical opposition between the pastoral and themilitary world, just as in the song cycle *Die schöne Müllerin*. The hunter is a predator, a symbol of human aggressiveness, focused on survival. The historical correlate is 'Gallop'.[2] However, the 'Gallop' topic appears here in its dysphoric variant.

Beethoven's *Waldstein* Sonata op. 53 (1804) also displays a martial start (Ex. No. 4).

Here, the march and the military world are far away from the expressive meaning of the piece. It seems to use the semantic field of Epic, and specifically what Charles Rosen calls "energetic pulsion", as a correlate of some psychological mood within the 'musical Persona', not on the battlefield.[3] In contrast, the secondary theme uses the topic of the '*Choral*'. That doesn't indicate 'Church' or 'Luther', but the gravity and the spiritual attitude proper to that semantic field.

---

[1] The 'Laughter' as a musical topic is described in Grimalt 2014.
[2] Raymond Monelle masterfully recreates its history and calls it the 'Noble Horse':
[3] Rosen 1972 and 2002. See also Grabócz 2009: pp. 167–190.

Both fields have in common that they represent the collective force of law to the individual. Moreover, the modern state – as the institutionalization of the army's force – and the Religious share an ultimately transcendent goal.

**Ex. No. 4**: Beethoven, Sonata op. 53/I, beginning.



Following in Beethoven's footsteps, the Romantic generation uses the energy of the march to allude to a positive, euphoric mood, but in a spiritual rather than a materialistic sense. The patriotic, aggressive connotation of the martial is thus eliminated from the common practice of the 'March' topic. The "March of David's Confederates against the Philistines," which closes Schumann's *Carnaval* op. 9 (1834/35), for instance, is no march, in spite of its title: it is in three-quarter time.But it does retain its character, combining the genres of the 'Triumphal Hymn' and the 'Minuet' (Ex. No. 5).

**Ex. No. 5**: Schumann, *Carnaval op*. 9: final march, beginning.



It is not surprising to find this "subversive" bias in a genre originally linked to authoritarianism and submission, considering that century's love for freedom. There are some cases, however, where the 'March' is clearly a march. The question is: what does this 'March' as a topic mean, in a Romantic context? Surely something besides soldiers and war.

To prepare the dénouement of his *Fantasie* op. 17, Schumann dares to employ this trope between 'Hymn' and 'Epic', maybe with a patriotic background (Ex. No. 6).

**Ex. No. 6:** Schumann, *Fantasie* op. 17/II: beginning.



The work's primary subject, however, seems to be 'Love', as it can be inferred from the quotation of Beethoven's song cycle *An die ferne Geliebte*. This second movement continues with some *cantabile* clauses, a falling, partially chromatic bass, and some sixth ascendent leaps that are often qualified as "yearning". These lyrical elements further question the previous military accents, reducing them to their energetic essence, full of a positive, bodily vibration.

**Marching into the 20th century**

In all previous examples of latent marches, the character is euphoric. Until First World War 1 (1914–1918), the martial genre, even sublimated to its spiritual essence, denotes positive forces, linked to "our side". The collective "Us" that marches courageously, until the turn of the 20th century, does so by inviting the hearer to identify with it. In Dmitri Shostakovich's work, instead, it is quite clear that those marching are "the bad guys". The government of the Soviet Union held him under suspicion for many years, no matter how hard he tried to convince them that his music and his efforts were on the side of the 1917 revolution. The Soviet authorities refused to believe the composer's interpretation, which associated those marches with the enemies of his country, e.g. the Nazis. His use of military topics conveys overt sarcasm, or caricature, often projecting a grotesque image of warfare. Issues like this made him lose the favour of the Politburo and the Soviet government for nearly two years.[4]

---

[4] Meyer 1995/1997, Gojowy 1983, Volkov 1979, and especially Sheinberg 2000, who establishes a hermodelic study on a "Theory of Musical [ironic] Incongruities".

An example of an aggressive march, closer to the terror of the 18th-century *Ombra* than to the Romantic world, is the 2nd movement of Shostakovich's Tenth Symphony op. 93 (1953). The work is widely heard as a musical portrait of Stalin, who died that very year after holding a long, personal standoff with the composer: an unfair one, humiliating and exhausting for the one who had but the music to defend himself.

Shostakovich could have learned this feature from one of his favourite composers, Gustav Mahler (1860–1911). Most of the marches which appear in the latter's work are dysphoric or threatening as well. As if Mahler sensed the bloody brutality that was about to fall over Europe, his marches have lost, once and for all, the innocence of the Schumannesque ones. They still seem to believe in the possibility of a modern, national fight; a fight that culminates in a brotherly triumph over an enemy who is not only stranger, but above all evil, morally inferior.

One example of a terrifying march that could have been a model for Shostakovich's is found in the 1st movement of Mahler's Third Symphony (1893–96). The rhythm is martial and dysphoric, but it does not match any of the usual marching rhythms (Ex. No. 7).

**Ex. No. 7**: Mahler, Symphony no. 3/I: Rhythm of the first march.
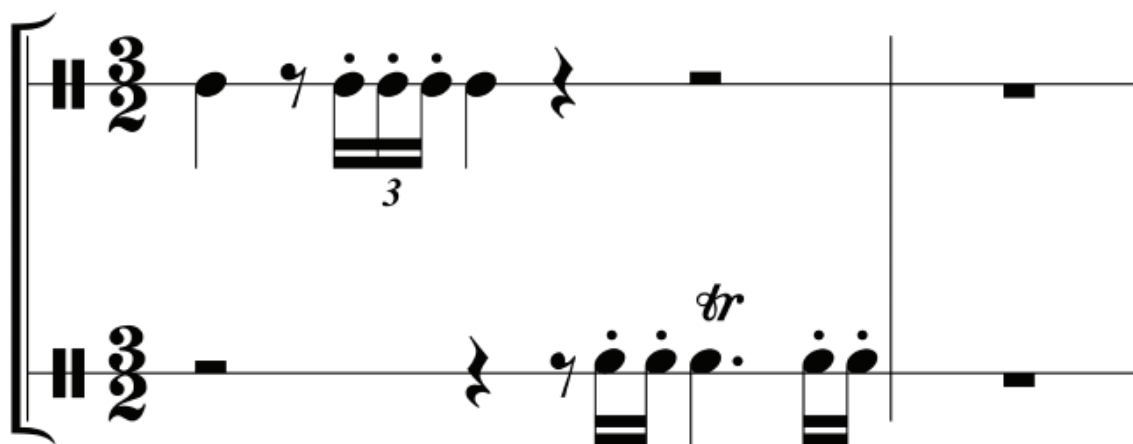


Within the 1st movement, this peculiar march has the role of an anti-theme. There is no other main subject; the search for thematic material constitutes the Exposition of the sonata form. Even if Beethoven does the same thing in op. 31 no. 2/I, this procedure is so rare that some experts even consider this Exposition an Introduction. In a classicist gesture, however, Mahler repeats the Exposition and saves his main subject for the second part of the Reprise, where a new march has its epiphany. It is the **a**-theme, heralded in the initial motto, and used throughout the Development.Only through the whole piece, *per aspera ad*

*astra*, the musical subject of Mahler's Third eventually reveals itself in a quiet triumph, in the last *Adagio*. Thus is its subtitle fulfilled: "Pan's awakening. Summer marches in".

In recent decades, the march has been revived in the field of soundtracks. John Williams, Steven Spielberg's favourite composer, uses them extensively, in an exhilarating way. In his marches, the martial pace is combined with the syncopated rhythms of popular music with Afro-American roots.

**Calls and fanfares**

The 'Call', whether of hunting or military origin, certainly deserves discussion as a musical topic. As part of a hunting code, it has been studied in depth as a cultural phenomenon by Raymond Monelle (2006: 42 ff.). A comparison between both kinds of calls is outlined in table No. 1, *infra*.

The music of the Viennese classics provided a new medium for 'Calls' as musical topics. Their adaptation from a functional origin to an artistic, autonomous context allowed for expressive possibilities that the composers of Modernity readily explored. In this case, the topic and its functional counterpart work contemporaneously and influence each other, in France as well as in the Germanic countries. There are collections of calls or fanfares from the 18th century for two or three horns, where the emphasis was obviously on the music rather than on the sporting activity. On the other hand, the shift from the functional to the artistic reverts to stylization. The 'Calls' found in sonatas, symphonies, etc., are mostly simpler and shorter, often just one note.

Faced with a 'Call' in an artistic context, a useful question is: Who is calling whom? And why? An astonishing example of a reduction to a minimum of both signifier and signified is to be found in Giovanni P. da Palestrina's *Missa Papæ Marcelli* (1562?). The initial invocation 'Lord, have mercy' (*Kyrie, eleison*) seems to find in the ascending interval of fourth the most suitable translation. It has to be taken into account that, in the classic polyphony style, a leap of a fourth is considered quite a big one.[5] The composer, in any case, not only uses this 'Call' as the keystone of the whole *Kyrie*, but he lets it appear again, as a kind of *Leitmotiv*, throughout the Mass. (Ex. No. 8).

A more modern example of the expressive possibilities of the 'Call' is in the first movement of the Sonata *quasi una fantasia* by Beethoven, op. 27 no. 2, traditionally called *Moonlight* (*Mondschein-Sonate*, 1801). The main theme becomes melodic only after emitting a whole series of 'Calls' in a dysphoric tone. (Ex. No. 9).

---

[5] Vg. Jeppesen 1935 (1930).

**Ex. No. 8**: Palestrina, *Missa Papæ Marcelli: Kyrie*, beginning.



**Ex. No. 9**: Beethoven, Sonata op. 27 n. 2/I, mm. 3-10.



Imagining someone mournfully calling out in the middle of the night, albeit discreetly, accompanied by a plucked-string instrument, can help to locate the genre of this well-known piece. The nocturnal scene, however, is not described in a realistic manner, but seems to take place as a memory, within the spirit of the 'musical Persona'. That the memory takes the form of a lyrical melody, with the typical accompaniment of the serenade, and that a second voice is heard, later on, seems to indicate that the musical Persona's inner 'Call' has a virtual addressee: behind the whole thing 'Romance' can be sensed. The minor mode, as if giving a dysphoric version of the remembered serenade, on the other hand, might connote that those 'Calls' do not expect to receive any reply, because the relationship belongs to an irretrievable past.

The main subject of the *Adagio* in Schubert's Quintet D 956 (1828) utters some similar 'Calls' (Ex. No. 10).

The compound metre and the *pizzicato* on the second violoncello, as well as the *pianissimo* dynamics, all seem to point to another nightly serenade. Here, however, the mode starts in a major key. Now who might be calling whom? What is the relationship between this first section and the inner *Tempesta* of the

**Ex. No. 10**: Schubert, Quintet D 956/II: beginning.



central part of the movement? How should we interpret the static serenity of the initial accompaniment, combined with the 'Calls', which are by definition an invitation to movement? And what is the narrative sense of the return of the first section, after the 'Storm'? Those are fundamental questions, for the listeners as well as for performers, but every interpretation answers them in its own terms, explicitly or implicitly.

The theme that dominates Schubert's F-minor *Fantasie* for four hands D 940, also composed just months before the composer's death, in 1828, sounds very similar to the previous example. Both share the combination of 'Call' and 'Lyricism'. Here the minor mode and the imitation of plucked strings are reminiscent of Beethoven's *quasi una fantasia* (Ex. No. 11).

Both Schubert 'Calls' present the fourth interval that we found first in Palestrina, and that Raymond Monelle (2006: 35 and ff.) identifies as typical of primitive hunting horns since mid-14th century. Musical 'Hunting' is the gentler part of the globally violent terrain of Epic. Therefore, 'Calls' that can be linked to it, especially in 19th-century music, are closer to melancholy and Lyric than to the epical field where they originally belong.

All these dysphoric 'Calls', integrated into a lyric, instrumental piece, remind of Josef Haydn's *Andante con variazioni* in F-minor, Hob. xvii/6 (1793). Those are double variations: the theme has a minor, dysphoric face, and then another one in a major key, in a euphoric tone. Each receives, in turn, two variations; an epilogue closes the piece. Moreover, the minor section shows features of the 'Love Duet', but instead of the usual harmony, the 'masculine' voice (in a lower register) seems to lead quite a different discourse than the 'feminine': the only agreement is on the minor mode.

42

**Ex. No. 11**: Schubert, *Fantasia* D 940 (arr. for 2 hands): beginning.



As for the fanfare, it could be described as an enlarged call. Fanfares were usually played with a set of brass instruments, to announce the arrival of an important person. However, in the collections of calls of the 18th century, both 'call' and 'fanfare' are used as synonyms.

Two examples of the 'Fanfare' as a topic, in a symphonic context, are the beginning of Gustav Mahler's First Symphony (1888/96), where the clarinets first imitate, *pianissimo*, some faraway trumpets (mm. 9-12). A few measures later, the real trumpets, behind the stage "at a great distance", as the score reads, start a second fanfare, in a similar mood. They combine military features – short upbeats with triple-tonguing, or the timbre of the trumpet – with hunting signs – *Horn motion*, the diatonic melody. In spite of the rhapsodic character of the various motivic elements appearing in this slow introduction, without any apparent connection, they all have consequences and end up configuring a coherent world, formally as well as semantically. (Ex. No. 12).

A comparison between signifiers –or markers– and signifieds –or connotations– of the hunting and the military topics can be shown in a diagram (Table No. 1)

**Table No. 1**: Comparison between the military and the hunting topics

| | | Military | Hunting |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Signifiers** | Metre | 2/4, 4/4, simple. | 6/8, compound. |
| | Timbres | Trumpets, drums. | Horns |
| | Texture | Basically monodic | Horn motion (*Hornquinten*) |
| | Melody | Triads, broken chords. | Diatonic, fourths, repeated notes. |
| | Rhythms | Dotted | Dotted, galloping. |
| | Typical keys | C-major, G-major, D-major. | F-Major, E-flat major, D-major. |
| **Signifieds** | Functional origini | Marches, calls, parades. | Calls, (staged) hunting. |
| | Setting | Battlefield, parade. | Woods |
| | Character | Brillant, aggressive, triumphant. | Kind, close to pastoral. |
| | Typical time | Undetermined | Morning, autumn. |
| | Values | Fatherland, masculine bravery. | Freedom, masc. bravery, nobility. |

**Ex. No. 12**: Horn motion (*Horn quinten*)



**Dysphoric march: the defeated.**

The expressive meaning of the martial genre, as it appears in much of music of the 19th century, is full of euphoric energy, but this can also turn into its opposite. In Franz Schubert's A-minor Sonata D 784, the first movement suggests the pace of a march, but a dysphoric one. (Ex. No. 13).

**Ex. No. 13**: Schubert, Sonata D 784/I: beginning.



The initial song of Schubert's *Winterreise* D 911 (1828), *GuteNacht*, is also a 'Dysphoric march'. As in the initial theme of his F-minor *Fantasie* for piano four hands D 940 (1828), mentioned above, a propos 'Dysphoric calls'.

'Dysphoric Marches' are sometimes erroneously labelled 'Funeral Marches'. The latter, however, is a genre unto itself, in function until very recently. Even as a topic, imported to a purely musical context, it conveys a perfectly delimited situation. The one in Beethoven's Third Symphony, e.g., bears the title *Sulla morte di uneroe*. The third movement of Chopin's Sonata en B-flat minor op. 35 reads also *Marche funèbre*. The 'Dysphoric March', on the other hand, is an altered version of a euphoric march; a completely artificial subgenre, that can be imagined within the 'musical Persona', but never in a realistic context.

This is manifest in Mahler's music, and in its experiments with the March genre and all its variants. Among the 11 kinds of march described in *La música de Gustav Mahler* (2012: p. 402), both the 'Dysphoric' and the 'Funeral' march play an important role. Of the former, the clearest example is the last song of the Wayfarer cycle, *Die zwei blauen Augen*. The score reads: *Alla marcia. Durch*

*aus mit geheimnis voll schwer müthigem Ausdruck (nicht schleppen),* i.e. "Alla-marcia. With a mysteriously melancholic expression throughout (no dragging)". This is a 'Funeral March', but in a topical use. It is not the situation but the mood of a burial that is represented. (Ex. No. 14).

**Ex. No. 14**: Mahler, *Die zwei blauen Augen*, beginning.



As for the 'Dysphoric March', there is a beautiful example in Mahler's song *Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen* (*Humoresken*, 1898). After an introduction full of 'Dysphoric Calls' – too slow, in minor mode, or on inadequate instruments – the singer introduces a march in the same dismaying mood. The musical setting of the poem presents an incongruence: the original *Wunderhorn* text, a love song, receives the music of this 'Dysphoric March'. Mahler's own text, however, adds to the song the military subject, and death. Neither of them were mentioned in the poem. This new aspect's musical correlate is a diatonic, euphonic (ironical) waltz, just too pretty to be true.

In a purely instrumental context, the first movement of Mahler's Second Symphony (1888–1895) offers a 'Dysphoric and Heroic March'. Style and key

correspond to the *Pathetic* Style described by Elaine Sisman (1994). On the other hand, the narrative archetype – or "expressive genre", in Robert Hatten's terminology– that gives coherence to the whole work is the transformation of an initial tragic state into a triumphant one. In this case, the analysis of the genres contradicts the piece's original subtitle, *Totenfeier*, "Funeral".

There is a variant of the 'Dysphoric March' that might have its origin in Anton Bruckner's music: the 'Elegiac March'. Mahler's song *Der Tamboursg'sell* starts as a 'Dysphoric March': the first 3 stanzas describe a drummer boy being carried to the scaffold, for unknown reasons. And then this enthralling moment arrives: an orchestral interlude that separates both halves of the song. The first half, in a descriptive tone, works as a recitative to the second, which corresponds to the lyric expansion one normally finds in operatic arias. The mood is elegiac: rather than the march's aggressiveness, a melancholic, resigned lyricism dominates. (Ex. No. 15).

**Ex. No. 15**: Mahler, *Der Tamboursg'sell*: Interlude.



An 'Elegiac March' is also heard in Schubert's Trio in E-flat D 929 (1827). Its second movement, *Andante con moto*, has been often used in films, in dramaturgic contexts of loss or grief.

**Ex. No. 16**: Schubert, Trio D 929/II, beginning.

In a scene from the American tv-series *John Adams* (Tom Hooper 2008), the second president of the USA leaves the White House, in the early morning, all by himself. He gets in a carriage full of common people, stupefied to share transport with him. Adams's exit from the house and his entrance into the coach receive some original music, thematically loose, slow and dysphoric. The moment the carriage starts, however, an arrangement of Schubert's 'Elegiac March' is heard (Ex. No. 16), while the vehicle is seen moving away, thus sealing the end of the protagonist's time in office.[6]

The 'Dysphoric March' has the markers of the march – simple metre, dotted rhythms, triadic broken chords, drum rolls – but in a slower tempo, and in minor mode. Its expressive meaning can be interpreted as the loser's march, the one who comes defeated from battle, whereto he or she had gone full of hope and energy.

## A 'Toy Army'

The music of the Viennese classics usually treat martial topics with an ironic tone. One frequent feature of that irony is to reduce the virtual army it evokes into a harmless, toy-like one. In *The Sense of Music*, Raymond Monelle mentions "a 'toy' aria about military life, with fanfares".[7] He means François-Adrien Boieldieu's opera *La dame blanche* (1825), whose n. 2, *Ah, quel plaisir d'être soldat,* in spite of the horrific wars of the 19th century, keeps a jovial, cheerful tone.[8] Both World Wars will bring in an appalling contrast to that nonchalance: listen e.g. to the planet *Mars, the Bringer of War* by Gustav Holst (1914), or Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem* (1962), with precursors in Mahler's or Shostakovich's dysphoric or terror-infused marches.

This difference is manifest in the way Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven treat the musical army. Monelle himself offers the paradigmatic example of what could be labelled the 'Toy Army': Figaro's aria *Non più andrai*. Figaro addresses a young aristocrat whom the count would like to move from the palace and into the army, to avoid bumping into him again during his erotic adventures. For the teenager Cherubino, the access to the Officers School is a great gift. All of Figaro's descriptions about the negative sides of the military service apply to somebody like the singing servant, not to the young nobleman listening. With this dramaturgic situation in mind, Mozart finds pleasure in parodying musically

---

[6] See http://youtu.be/F8JHDinpGIw. The 'Elegiac March' starts on minute 1:38.

[7] Monelle 2000: pp. 19–20.

[8] There is a version of the aria, with R. Blake and M. Minkovski, at http://youtu.be/aSO8t-tUGG-M, including the text.

**Ex. No. 17**: Mozart, *Le nozze di Figaro: Non più andrai*, beginning.



the epic markers appearing in the aria. The contrast between the *forte* accent on the first beat and the *piano* on the violins' figuration, at the very start, place the march on the terrain of the *buffo* opera. It is a march, but with incongruent dynamics and accompaniment. To this, the parodic responses of the oboes are added: to Figaro's first line, and at the end of every stanza. (Ex. No. 17).

The music Mozart sets to the repetition of the second stanza's last line, *quel vermiglio, donnesco color* ('that reddish, feminine colour'), m. 25, is also incongruent, in its exaggerated martial character. The previous stanza had already presented this ironic clash between a reference to the women and some military calls. It calls to mind Denis de Rougemont's description (1940) of the army officers of that time:

> In place of sacred chivalry, ascetic, bloody, and barded with iron, there arose […] an army commanded by courtiers in lace cuffs, who, since they were libertines, did not intend to jeopardize the refinements of life.[9]

---

[9]  Rougemont *Passion and Society* (1956/1940), p. 257. Quoted by Monelle 2000: 37.

But above all the juicy descriptions of military life which da Ponte sets in Figaro's mouth awaken Mozart's parodic vein, to display an amazing array of calls, fanfares and dotted rhythms.They are not only excessive, butalsoinadequateto the situation on stage. The hyperbole culminates in the instrumental epilogue to the aria, a pompous march where the trumpet calls on mm. 109 and 111 stand out, and the final chords, that could serve to close a whole symphony. The pleasure of the composer in presenting all these martial markers in an ironic tone seems remarkable.

In fact, Mozart's music makes this semantic field to one of his favourite places, with the ironic distance that is typical of the Viennese classicism. Leonard Ratner (1980: p. 16), with his usual sharpness, registers a *different* tone in many of Mozart's marches, and calls them a "Mixture of bourrée and march". The bourrée is a genre with a popular origin, which in the hands of Classical composers connotes the opera *buffa*, or parody of the baroque world of the *Ancien Régime*. This is Ratner's example, based on an observation by Quantz (1752). (Ex. No. 18).

**Ex. No. 18**: Mozart, Sonata for piano and violin K 376/III (1781), beginning.



The martial elements appear as in miniature, questioned by comical repetitions and by the neatly vocal style of the first two measures. Raymond Monelle does not label the topic, but describes it accurately in *The Sense of Music* (2000: pp. 35–38). And he explains the historical circumstances of that attitude of distance and refinement towards the military world during the last third of the 18th century:

> Mozart's concerto dates, however, from a period like our own, in which traditional heroism was not much written about. The soldiery reflected in Mozart's themes is merely a picturesque fable of the salon, but also reflects a development in the social and technological history of warfare, not very much chronicled in literature.

And he concludes:

> The good-mannered, small-time bonhomie of the eighteenth-century army reflected a kind of compromised masculinity somewhere between heroism and playacting. This helps to explain the diminutiveness, the toy-like quality, of many manifestations of fanfarism.

Monelle's example, besides that of *Non più andrai*, is Mozart's piano concerto K 595, that he qualifies as *concerto guerriero*, "a chamber piece touched with warlike sentiments that are light-hearted and ironic".[10]All the themes of the initial *Allegro* are based on calls, fanfares or triads. The second movement features the dotted rhythms which mark the martial topic, and the finale is a "military gigue". Another example of a 'Toy Army' by Mozart is the first movement of the piano concerto in B-flat K 456.

But this stance towards the military fits with the time, and is not an exclusively Mozartian feature. Many examples in Haydn's and Beethoven's music document this. Haydn's Sonata n. 48 Hob. xvi/35 (1777/79?) seems to allude to the enlightened 'Toy Army', from the first subject on: a miniature march, including a comical version of the rhetoric figure of the *exclamatio* on the fourth beat of the first measure, and a melody reminiscent of calls and fanfares. (Ex. No. 19a)

In mm. 32–35, the lyric accompaniment interrupts itself to articulate the transition and the first thematic section in an excessively high-flown gesture,

**Ex. No. 19a**: Haydn, Sonata in C-major Hob. xvi/35/I, beginning.
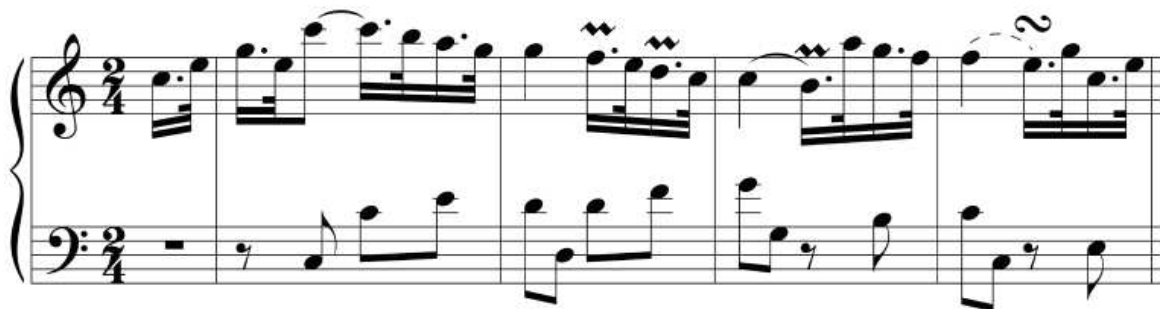
**Ex. No. 19b**: Haydn, Sonata in C-major Hob. xvi/35/I, mm. 32–35.

---

[10]  Monelle 2000: 35.

suggesting a theatrical baroque orchestra. This is an ironic feature that could be called the 'Grandiloquent Unison'. It serves to manifest the arrogance of some *Ancien Régime* character, e.g. in Mozart operas. (Ex. No. 19b).

The main subject of the first movement of Beethoven's Sonata op. 2 no. 2 in A-major sounds like a 'Call', replied by a drum roll, and by an operatic 'Grandiloquent Unison'. The *piano* dynamic, in this initial version of the theme, is the first ironic incongruence. (Ex. No. 20).

**Ex. No. 20**: Beethoven, Sonata op. 2 n. 2/I, beginning.
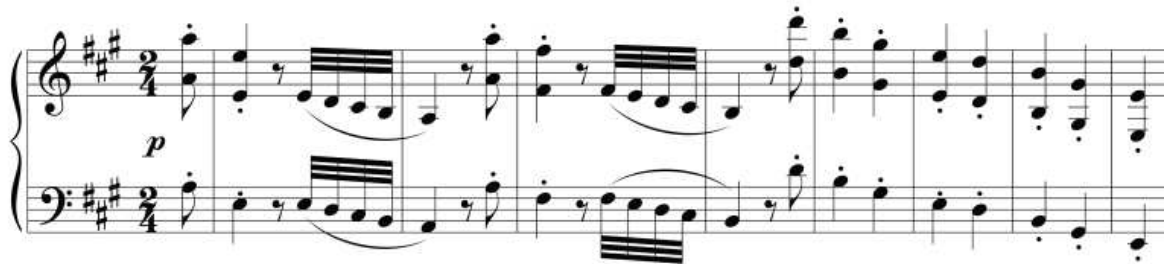


There is an overt parody of the military march in the second movement of Beethoven's Sonata op. 14 no. 2. (Ex. No. 21)

**Ex. No. 21**: Beethoven, Sonata op. 14 n. 2/II, beginning.



The translation from the intimate atmosphere of the piano to the public one in the orchestral medium underlines the freethinking, if not subversive, background of the 'Toy Army' procedure. This is evident throughout Beethoven's First Symphony, and also in the finale of his Concerto in C-minor (1800), where the hearer witnesses the transformation of military and dysphoric motives into a laughing, uncontrolled dance.

## Bibliography

Agawu, Kofi, *Music as discourse*. Oxford University Press: Oxford 2009.

Grabócz, Márta, *Musique, narrativité, signification*. L'Harmattan: Paris 2009.

Grimalt, Joan *La música de Gustav Mahler. Una guia d'audició*. Ed. Duxelm: Barcelona 2012a.

Grimalt, Joan "Is Musical Laughter a Topic?". In: *Philosophies of Performance*, ed.D. Martinelli, E. Tarasti i J. Torvinen. The Finnish Semiotic Society: Helsinki 2014, pp. 225–240.

Jeppesen, Knud, *Kontrapunkt*. Breitkopf & Härtel: 11th ed. 1966. 1st Danish ed. 1930, 1st German ed. 1935.

Monelle, Raymond, *The Sense of Music: Semiotic Essays*. Princeton University Press, 2000.

Monelle, Raymond, *The musical topic*. Indiana University Press 2006.

Ratner, Leonard G., *Classic Music. Expression, Form and Style*. Wadsworth Publishing: Califòrnia 1985, 1ª ed. 1980.

Rosen, Charles, *The Classical Style*. Norton: New York 1972, reed. 1997.

Rosen, Charles, *Beethoven's Piano Sonatas: A Short Companion*. Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 2002.

Sheinberg, Esti, *Irony, Satire, Parody and the Grotesque in the Music of Shostakovich. A Theory of Musical Incongruities*. Ashgate: Aldershot (GB), Burlington (USA), Singapore and Sydney 2000.

Sisman, Elaine, *Pathos and the* Pathétique*: Rhetorical Stance in Beethoven's C-minor Sonata, op. 13*. In *Beethoven Forum*, iii (1994), pp. 81–105.