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## Introduction FREE

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The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory

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## Abstract and Keywords

Critical reception of topic theory over the last decades has been adversely affected by the conviction that the concept of topics has no basis in eighteenth-century music theory, aesthetics, and criticism. Furthermore, the study of musical topics has been confounded by discrepancies between representatives of topic theory, who expanded this concept beyond cross-references between styles and genres. Drawing on a wide range of eighteenth-century sources, this introduction clears away the discrepancies, clarifies the concept of topics, and relates it to Johann Georg Sulzer's concept of characters. The relation between Ratner's topics and Sulzer's characters bears on the scope and semiotic status of topical signification, which is here reconsidered in light of eighteenth-century semiotics. In turn, the origins of Sulzer's characters in the Baroque theory of affects explain the relation between musical topics and rhetorical *loci topici*, discussed by Johann David Heinichen and Johann Mattheson as tools of musical invention.

Keywords: topic, style, genre, affect, character, semiotics, rhetoric, invention, Sulzer, Mattheson

THE concept of topics was introduced into the vocabulary of music scholars by Leonard Ratner. In his seminal book *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style*, which promises the reader "a full-scale explication of the stylistic premises of classic music" (1980: xiv), Ratner defines topics as "subjects for musical discourse" (9) and divides them into "types" and "styles." The former group embraces dances and marches. The latter includes such styles as Turkish, military, or hunting. The inventory of types and the fact that they "appear as fully worked-out pieces" implies that they are equivalent to genres. By contrast, styles are "progressions within a piece" but, as Ratner points out, "the distinction between types and styles is flexible; minuets and marches represent complete types of composition, but they also furnish styles for other pieces" (9). The further course of his discussion makes clear that it is their deployment in other pieces and mixtures with other styles that turns styles into topics. Some of them are derived from popular and functional music. Others form cross-references between artistic styles and genres. Before

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Ratner such cross-references went largely unnoticed. His insight that classical masterpieces were full of references to eighteenth-century soundscape transformed their reception by modern listeners as the discovery that the Parthenon was painted transformed the reception of monumental ruins of classical antiquity. To modern spectators of monochromatic marble it revealed that the uniformity of color was due only to time. For inhabitants of Athens in the fifth century BC the marble appeared full of colors, which adorned the metopes of gods, heroes, and centaurs. Similarly, for listeners in eighteenth-century Vienna the musical repertoire of the time presented a colorful gallery of characters known from everyday musical life. As the repository of stylistic knowledge shared by composers and listeners, Ratner's topics constituted a source of meaning and means of communication in eighteenth-century music. Today they allow one to gain access to its meaning and expression in a way that can be intersubjectively verified.<sup>1</sup>

This might be why topics are so attractive. By now they have become part of the common vocabulary of music scholars and have been applied to a wide range of musical repertoires. Topic theory was developed from Ratner's seminal insight by Wye Allanbrook, (p. 2) Kofi Agawu, Robert Hatten, Raymond Monelle, and others, who explored its epistemological implications and furnished tools for analysis, but in the process the concept of topics has lost its sharp profile.<sup>2</sup> Allanbrook's study of *topoi* in Mozart's operas (1983) explored the meanings of dances and marches—Ratner's types—but in his later article Ratner suggested that a topic could be not only “a style” or “a type” but also “a figure, a process or a plan of action” (1991: 615). Other authors have expanded this concept ever further. The Universe of Topic outlined by Agawu (1991: 30) supplements Ratnerian topics with an affect (*amoroso*) and melodic figures (sigh motive, Mannheim rocket). In the most recent version (2009: 43–44) it comes up to sixty-one items and includes further affects (pathetic, tragic), melodic figures (military figures, hunting fanfares, horn calls, *Lebewohl*), and accompanimental patterns (Alberti bass, murky bass, *Trommelbass*). The ultimate expansion of the Topical Universe takes place in Allanbrook's posthumous book (2014: Chapter 3), where the concept of topics subsumes styles and genres, affects, accompanimental patterns, melodic and rhetorical figures, harmonic schemata (cadence)—even meters (4/4). In light of these discrepancies, the fundamental question of topic theory is: What are musical topics? To be sure, they are conventions, but do they form a “trustworthy umbrella” (Allanbrook 2014: 117) for all kinds of musical conventions or do they represent a special kind? In this volume we propose that it is useful to distinguish topics from other conventions in order to see how they interact with each other. Consequently, we return to Ratner's original concept of topics and define them as *musical styles and genres taken out of their proper context and used in another one*. Other conventions, subsumed under this concept by other authors, are not topics, even if some of them are related to topics on the grounds of this definition: melodic or accompanimental figures are musical characteristics of topics insofar as they allow one to recognize a style or genre; affects form part of topical signification. Rhetorical figures and harmonic schemata are unrelated to topics but can combine with them into more or less stable amalgamates that are conventional in their own rights.

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The definition of topics adopted in this volume has implications for the historical basis of topic theory. Securing this basis was of utmost importance for Ratner, who coined the concept of topics as part of his larger project “to approach the music and musical precepts of the 18th century in much the same way a listener of that time would have done” (1980: xvi). Accordingly, his discussion of topics is prefaced with a historical survey of eighteenth-century ideas of expression and the discussions of individual topics are full of references to historical sources. Further references were culled by Allanbrook (1983: 1–70) and Agawu (1991: 26–30), but their validity was questioned by Monelle (2000), who critically reviewed Ratner’s sources, accused him of their problematic selection and odd translation, and concluded that “contemporary writers are no good as buttresses of topic theory” (2000: 33). This verdict undermined the credentials of topic theory in the age of authenticity. The fact that the concept of topics did not exist in the eighteenth century and Monelle’s suggestion that it had no basis in eighteenth-century sources discredited it in the eyes of those for whom historical pedigree of theoretical concepts featured high on the agenda. As a result, topic theory has not been integrated into the field of historically informed music theory, although the advances of this field (p. 3) in the last three decades were stimulated by Ratner’s project. But the reserved attitude toward stylistic cross-references, represented by topics, does not account for the basic premise of eighteenth-century music aesthetics, according to which all dimensions of musical structure stand in service of affect and character, which, in their turn, are closely related to styles and genres. If topics are styles and genres used out of their proper context, the question of the historical basis of topic theory splits into two different but interrelated questions: first, whether or not a given style or genre was recognized by contemporary writers; second, whether or not it was recognized in other contexts, when mixed with other styles and genres. I will deal with these questions in section 1 of this introduction. I will then try to find a place for topics in eighteenth-century music aesthetics (section 2). This will take me on a journey during which I explore the connection between music and affect and relate Ratnerian topics to Sulzer’s concept of characters. This relation bears on the scope and semiotic status of topical signification, as I show in section 3. In section 4 I revisit and reaffirm the distinction between topics and pictorialism, blurred by Monelle (2000). In section 5 I address the thorny issue of their relation to rhetoric. The final section of the introduction reviews further questions emerging from critical reception of topic theory, explains the structure of the volume, and opens the floor for other authors.

## 1. Styles and Genres

The concept of style emerged in seventeenth-century music theory to become an object of special attention in the first half of the eighteenth century. The oldest stylistic division was that into *stilo antico* and *stilo moderno*. Derived from Claudio Monteverdi’s distinction between *prima* and *seconda prattica* by Giovanni Battista Doni (1635), it was adopted in Germany by Christoph Bernhard and continued in the eighteenth century under the names of the strict and free (or galant) styles. Another stylistic division originated with Marco Scacchi (1649), who distinguished between the church style (*stylus ecclesiasticus*), theatrical style (*stylus theatralis*), and chamber style (*stylus camerae*).

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This classification was combined by Johann Mattheson with a set of stylistic categories devised by Athanasius Kircher (1650): *stylus ecclesiasticus*, *canonicus*, *motecticus*, *phantasticus*, *madrigalescus*, *melismaticus*, *hyporchematicus*, *symphoniacus*, and *recitativus*. In *Das beschützte Orchester* (1717) Mattheson subsumes Kircher's *species stylosum* under Scacchi's *genera stylosum*. He retains this stylistic system in *Kern melodischer Wissenschaft* (1737) and *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* (1739).<sup>3</sup>

Yet another classification was proposed by Johann Adolph Scheibe (1745). Although Scheibe accepts the division into the church, theatrical, and chamber styles, he subordinates it to the division into the high, middle, and low styles. As he points out, each of these “good” styles “can and must be used for church music as well as theatrical and chamber pieces,”<sup>4</sup> even though it has to be properly modified. Mattheson makes the same observation, but for him the need of modification is not a proof that the church, (p. 4) theatrical, and, chamber styles are subordinated to the high, middle, and low styles but, on the contrary, that the high, middle, and low styles should be subordinated to the church, theatrical, and chamber styles, which he calls the “main” styles: “For any and all expressions [*alle und iede Ausdrücke*], though they may comprehend something elevated [*erhabenes*], moderate [*mäßiges*], or lowly [*geringes*], must inevitably and without exception conform in all respects to the above-mentioned three most important genera [*Geschlechtern*] of writing style with all thoughts, inventions and strengths, as servants to their masters” (Mattheson 1739: 69; Harriss 1981: 190, translation modified). While the distinction between the high, middle, and low style became obsolete in the second half of the eighteenth century (see Forkel 1788: 44; Koch 1802: col. 1455), the division into the church, theatrical, and chamber style persisted into the nineteenth. As noted by Heinrich Christoph Koch (1802: col. 1452), it overlaps with the division into the strict and free style because the former has its privileged place in church music. Since it is difficult to draw a borderline—based on technical criteria—between the theatrical and chamber styles (col. 1455), these two styles fall into one. As a result, “one could divide the musical style into religious and profane or, as the elders used to say, in the sacred and secular.”<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, the three main styles could be grouped into public (church, theatrical) and private (chamber) (Sulzer 1792–94, 1: 441). Some authors develop the stylistic division into church, theatrical, and chamber styles by adding further branches or subdivisions. Mattheson considers the possibility of a separate martial style:

Heretofore I thought that the categories of these styles would some day be increased: for, whoever only would want could spread not only the secondary branches quite a bit; but also other branches would appear, among which especially the field or martial style would be of no small consideration. For though marches and such many melodies belong to the hyporchematic style; still the martial music itself has, in many respects, things which are somewhat peculiar to it which might be worth investigating.

(Mattheson 1739: 93; Harriss 1981: 225)

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Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart (1806) posits a *pantomimischer Styl*, which includes dance music, and supplements the classification with a *populärer Styl*, including popular music and folk songs. In the eighteenth century the division into church, theatrical, and chamber styles coexists with other stylistic divisions. The styles of vocal and instrumental melodies were described by Mattheson (1739: 203–10; Harriss 1981: 418–29). The concept of national styles reached back to Kircher (1650: 543–45). The most important among them were the French and the Italian, but other national styles were frequently mentioned: Mattheson (1713: 200–31) singles out English and German; Scheibe (1745: 145–50) German and Polish. By the end of the eighteenth century the German style reaches an international position on a par with the styles of French and Italian music.

In all these classifications the emphasis lies on differences between styles and the purpose of their discussion is to teach composers how to use them in their proper contexts. Instances of using styles in other contexts or mixing them with other styles are only (p. 5) infrequently mentioned. If they receive any comments, evaluations of such mixtures are invariably negative. Mattheson continues his deliberations as follows:

These were my thoughts heretofore; now however, after considering everything carefully, I am a little worried, namely that as time goes by only a few or even perhaps not a single one of these styles and their categories might remain unadulterated and with distinguishing characteristics. For there is already such a mishmash [*Mischmasch*] to be found in the styles of many self-instructed composers, as if everything were deteriorating into a formless mass. And I believe that one would find many, who, upon inquiry as to the style in which this or that piece was set, would be embarrassed for an answer.

(Mattheson 1739: 93; Harriss 1981: 225)

Scheibe grants mixtures of styles a separate place in his stylistic system, in which the “good” styles—high, middle, and low—are contrasted with their “bad” counterparts: the pompous style (*die schwülstige Schreibart*), the disorderly or uneven style (*die unordentliche oder ungleiche Schreibart*), and the flat or mean style (*die platte oder niederträchtige Schreibart*). He describes the disorderly style as follows:

One has written one line in high, another in middle, yet another in low style. Here stand French, there Italian passages. First goes a theatrical phrase, then one which belongs to the church. Everything is so chaotically mixed together that one cannot find a dominant style or a proper expression.

Furthermore, one mixes particular characteristics of certain compositions. For instance, one writes overtures in the manner of symphonies or concertos, or one inserts such passages into symphonies and concertos which properly belong to overtures. The melody of an aria sounds like a recitative but recitative turns into an aria. Generally, one pulls together several kinds of pieces, throws them on one heap, and writes at whim the first name above it which comes to mind.... This unevenness arises also when one throws together the characters of French,

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Italian, German, or other compositions without considering the fact that each composition requires its own elaboration. The style also becomes uneven when one mixes the expression of different moral characters or mixes up the expression of one character with the other....Am I not right when I call this lumpy, bumpy, and disorderly style the worst of all? Yes, it is this style that covers music with the greatest dishonour since it suppresses the beautiful and natural to the greatest extent. And yet it occurs in most musical works.

Man hat in einer Zeile hoch, in der andern mittelmäßig, und in der dritten endlich gar niedrig geschrieben. Hier stehen französische, dort aber italienische Stellen. Bald zeigt sich ein theatralischer Satz, bald auch ein anderer, der sich in die Kirche schickte. Ja, alles ist so bunt und so kraus durch einander gemischt, daß man keinesweges eine herrschende Schreibart, oder einen gehörigen Ausdruck der Sachen finden wird.

Man vermischt ferner die besondern Eigenschaften gewisser Stücke, indem man in Ouverturen symphoniemäßig und concertenmäßig schreibt, oder auch in die Symphonien und Concerten solche Stellen einrückt, die in die Ouverture gehören. Die Melodie der Arie wird oft recitativmäßig, das Recitativ aber zur Arie gemacht. Ueberhaupt aber wirft man vielerley besondere Arten einzelner Stücke in einen (p. 6) Haufen, und schreibt nach Belieben einen Namen darüber, welcher dem erfahrenen Componisten am ersten einfällt....Diese Ungleichheit wird auch verursacht, wenn man die Charactere der französischen, italienischen, deutschen oder anderer Stücke, unter einander wirft, ohne zu bedenken, daß jedes Stück seine eigene Ausarbeitung erfordert. Auch wird die Schreibart ungleich, wenn man den Ausdruck verschiedener moralischen Charactere vermischt, oder auch den Ausdruck des einen mit dem andern verwechselt....Werde ich nun wohl unrecht haben, wenn ich diese höckerische, holprichte und unordentliche Schreibart die allerschlechteste nenne? Ja, diese ist es eben, die der Musik am meisten zu Schande gereicht: weil sie am meisten das Schöne und Natürliche verhindert und unterdrückt, dennoch aber sich in den meisten musikalischen Stücken befindet.

(Scheibe 1745: 134–36)

The works condemned by Scheibe for their disorderly style represented the new Italian style of instrumental music gaining the upper hand in the first half of the eighteenth century. As the popularity of this style increased in the second half, subsequent generations of German critics continued to raise the charges of “mishmash” (*Mischmasch*) and “disorder” (*Unordnung*) against younger generations of Italian and Italianate composers.<sup>6</sup>

The reason for this criticism was related to the fact that different styles were associated with different affects. The division into the high, middle, and low style was based on the dignity of affect. Scheibe equates this dignity with strength. For instance, “the magnanimity, the majesty, thirst for power, the splendour, the arrogance, the wonder, the

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anger, the horror, the fury, the vengeance, the rage, the despair...can be expressed in no other style than the high one."<sup>7</sup> By contrast, for Mattheson the dignity of an affect depends not on its strength but moral value. He polemically raises this issue in his debate with Scheibe:<sup>8</sup>

Among those affections which one commonly attributes to the high style are many which do not deserve to be called high at all, in the good sense. For, what can be lower than anger, fear, vengeance, despair, etc. Beating, boasting, snoring is indeed not true nobility. Arrogance is itself only an inflating of the soul, and actually requires more bombast than nobility for expression: now the most haughty are again unflinching the most angry, in their feelings one debility after another takes the helm.

(Mattheson 1739: 71; Harriss 1981: 194)

The division into the church, theatrical, and chamber style is based on venue but it, too, has affective implications because different venues call for different affects.<sup>9</sup> This is why high, middle, and low styles are modified by their use in church, theatrical, or chamber styles. These stylistic divisions intersect because they bring about alternative ways of grouping affects. The affects of the church style can be high, middle, or low, but not every high, middle, or low affect can be used in this style:

Divine majesty, heavenly splendor, rapture and magnificence, together with the elevated style of writing [*hohen Schreib-Art*] naturally required for it, are subordinated to the sacred main style [*dem geistlichen Haupt-Styl unterworfen*]. Devotion, patience [*Geduld*], etc., together with their appropriate middle style of writing correctly belong there, too, namely, in the church, i.e., in the service of God. Repentance, (p. 7) suppliant entreaties, etc., in their appropriate low style similarly stand under the same banner, and these three types of characteristics must together be at the disposal of the church style as well as the dramatic and domestic ones, each in its own way.

(Mattheson; 1739: 70; Harriss 1981: 191, translation modified)

Affects were also associated with genres. If styles encompass broad affective zones, genres composed in these styles are related to specific affects. This concerns, in particular, the instrumental genres that Mattheson called "small *Pièces*" and took the pride of first describing in *Das Neu-Eröffnete Orchestre* (1713: 189-90). When he returns to them in *Kern melodischer Wissenschaft* and *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, each genre receives its typical affect. For example, the affect of the *allemande* is one of a "contented or satisfied spirit," of the *bourrée* "contentment and pleasantness," of the *courante* "sweet hopefulness," of *sarabande* "ambition," of the *rigaudon* "trifling jocularity," of the *passepied* "frivolity," of the *gavotte* "exalting joy," of the *gigue* "passionate and volatile ardour," of the *canarie* "eagerness and swiftness," of the *angloise* "stubbornness," and of the *minuet* "moderate gaiety" (Buelow 1983: 406-7). Affective characters of larger pieces are less specific. In symphonies, which form introductions to

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operas or church or chamber music, “the expression of affects...would have to conform to those passions which predominate in the work itself” (Mattheson 1739: 234; Harriss 1981: 467). In sonatas and concerti grossi affects are “manifold and various” (Mattheson 1739: 234; Harriss 1981: 467).

While Mattheson relishes in this variety and does not try to constrain it, subsequent generations of German critics insist that various affects of larger instrumental pieces should be unified by a single character. The concept of character entered eighteenth-century discourse about music through the writings of Scheibe, who inherited it from his teacher, Johann Christian Gottsched. In *Versuch einer critischen Dichtkunst* (1730) Gottsched explains that character embraces the entire disposition of a given person, which consists of natural inclinations and acquired habits and manifests itself in feelings, deeds, and words. This disposition bears traces of life and descent: “the nature and its creator, the country where one was born, the parents and ancestors, the gender and age, the wealth and status, the education, the times in which one lives, the good and bad luck, the persons with whom one mixes and so on.”<sup>10</sup> A poet should be at pains that his characters be plausible in light of such circumstances. Above all, he should avoid furnishing them with contradictory features. “A self-contradictory character is a monster which does not occur in nature: therefore a greedy man must be greedy, a proud man proud, a hot-headed man hot-headed, a faint-hearted man faint-hearted—and so he must remain.”<sup>11</sup>

Scheibe applies this concept of character to persons represented in operas as well as oratorios, cantatas, church music, and songs. As he points out, characters of such persons consist of outer (or general) and inner (or particular) characters. The outer character is determined by their social status. The inner character can be called the character proper. Taken together, the outer and the inner character condition the strength of affects experienced by a given person: “The character of persons softens or strengthens the passions. (p. 8) The joy, the sadness, the horror, the fear, the hate, the love etc. are not equally violent, medium, or weak in all persons. We have certain degrees which the characters of persons forbid us to exceed.”<sup>12</sup> Although a given person can experience a wide range of affects, they are unified by the character. “It should therefore be noted as a basic rule that, when the composer observes the characters of persons, he will never transgress against affects.”<sup>13</sup> When he “mixes the expression of different moral characters or mixes up the expression of one character with the other,” the composer ends up in an uneven or disorderly style.

The concept of character was further developed by Johann Georg Sulzer. If Scheibe applies it to vocal music, Sulzer extends it to vocal and instrumental genres:

Every composition, whether it is vocal or instrumental, should possess a definite character and be able to arouse specific sentiments in the minds of listeners. It would be foolish of the composer to begin composing without having established the character of his work. He must know whether the language he will set down is that of a man who is proud or humble, courageous or timid, pleading or



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commanding [*eines Bittenden oder Gebietenden*], tender or tempestuous. Even if he stumbles upon his theme by chance, or he arbitrarily selects it, he must still examine its character carefully so that he can sustain it while composing.

(Sulzer 1792–94, 1: 273; Baker and Christensen 1995: 53, translation modified)

In the article “Charakter” from the *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste* Sulzer declares that characters of persons are the most important objects of fine arts (Sulzer 1792–94, 1: 454). Since passions and actions spring from the character of a given person like fruits from a tree, mixing features of different characters is as unnatural as mixing features of different species:

Just as the painter must obey nature, for instance, by attributing to each tree the leaves and fruits which are natural to it and placing them only on those branches on which they really grow, and not at arbitrarily selected places; so also the poet must deal with expressions of emotion, which are as natural effects of the character as leaves and fruits are effects of the particular nature of a tree.

Wie der Mahler sich lediglich an die Natur halten, und z. E. jedem Baume, nicht nur die Art der Blüthe oder Frucht zueigen muß, die ihm natürlich ist, sondern sie auch nur an denjenigen Arten der Zweige, an denen sie wirklich wachsen, nicht aber an willkürlichen Stellen, anbringen darf; so muß es auch der Dichter mit jeder Aeüßerung des Gemüths halten, die eben so natürliche Wirkungen des Charakters sind, als Blüten und Früchte Wirkungen der besondern Natur eines Baumes.

(Sulzer 1792–94, 1: 456)

The same holds for the composer. Incoherent mixtures of sentiments in larger instrumental pieces, such as symphonies, sonatas, or concerti, are aesthetically and morally suspect because they resemble “people who in their deeds and way of thinking show no definite character; they are like weathercocks, which can take any turn and position, and thus let themselves to be dragged along in any direction.”<sup>14</sup> Since, under normal circumstances, contrasting affects are not experienced in quick succession, sudden contrasts of (p. 9) affects suffer under the lack of verisimilitude (*vraisemblance*), a fundamental principle of neoclassical aesthetics.

To be sure, contrasting affects can be experienced under exceptional circumstances. Such circumstances are frequently portrayed in tragedies, where characters are tossed between contrasting affects by series of dramatic events, but there the events are explained by the text. The role of the text in explaining context of affects determined the superiority of vocal over instrumental music in eighteenth-century aesthetics and inspired the apology of instrumental genres undertaken by Johann Abraham Peter Schulz and Koch. In the articles “Sonate” and “Symphonie” written for Sulzer’s *Allgemeine Theorie*, Schulz compares the sonata to a cantata and a symphony to a chorus. Koch picks up on these comparisons in the *Versuch einer Anleitung zur Composition* (1782–93) and goes on

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to question Sulzer's negative verdict about the concerto by comparing it with an ancient tragedy in which the "actor expressed his feelings not towards the pit, but to the chorus" (Koch 1983: 209; see also 1802: col. 354).<sup>15</sup> But the stylistic and affective mixtures characteristic of the southern style of instrumental music sustained no comparison to tragedy. Rather, they resembled the Viennese comedy, a theatrical genre modeled on the Italian *commedia dell'arte*. Ultimately, the charge of "disorder" and "mishmash" raised against the new instrumental style was a charge against its comic spirit.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, as critics point out, the incompatible affects par excellence are the serious and the comic. Schulz, who praises the freedom of sonatas to "assume any character and every expression" (Sulzer 1792–94, 4: 425; Baker and Christensen 1995: 103), faults Italian sonatas for their "bizarre sudden changes in character from joy to despair, from the pathetic to the trivial" (Sulzer 1792–94, 4: 425; Baker and Christensen 1995: 104). Johann Christoph Stockman brandmarks "the strange mixture of comic and serious, of the trifling and the moving" (Heartz 1995: 349), and Johann Adam Hiller warns composers of instrumental music "of that strange mixture of the comic and the serious, the happy and the sad, the elevated and the lowly, that will remain tasteless as long as it is unnatural to laugh and cry at the same time" (Hosler 1981: 7). For him, such contrasts do not resemble affective torments of noble heroines and heroes but "vulgar antics" of Hans Wurst, the stock character of Viennese comic scene.<sup>17</sup>

To be sure, the North-German critics correctly recognized the origins of the new instrumental style in comedy and its musical counterpart: opera buffa. What prevented them from appreciating this style on its own terms was the difference between their aesthetic theory and the compositional practice of Italian and South-German composers. Whereas the critics, formed by the Lutheran tradition, insisted on the moral function of music, the composers, exposed to commercial demands of the musical market, relished in its function as entertainment. Since their style did not develop its own aesthetics, in its days it received no adequate critical appraisal. The topic theory, concerned with cross-references between styles and genres, can be considered a theory of this style, and *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory* will go some way toward reconstructing its aesthetic underpinnings—but it will not start from scratch. Rather, it will build on premises of North-German music aesthetics. As we will see, South-German composers were committed to them, even if they used them *a rebours*. (p. 10)

## 2. Music and Affects

Undoubtedly, the basic premise of eighteenth-century music aesthetics was the connection between music and affects. The belief that music had the power to arouse and appease emotions went back to antiquity and permeated the Middle Ages. After the Reformation it continued in both Lutheran and Catholic traditions. Luther was enthusiastic about music's effects on the soul, illustrating them with the biblical story of David and King Saul.<sup>18</sup> In the seventeenth century his views were frequently reiterated by German authors (Otto 1937) and the "wonderful effects of music" (Hosler 1981: 37) described in terms of affects or affections. Derived from Latin *affectus* and equivalent to

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Greek *pathos*, this concept was synonymous to passion (*Leidenschaft*) and remained in use until the end of the eighteenth century, but if before the connection between music and affects was supported by theological speculation, now it invited scientific explanation.

The first attempt to explain the affective power of music was undertaken by Mattheson. This explanation, contained in Part One of *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* and frequently—if improperly—called the doctrine of affections (*Affektenlehre*),<sup>19</sup> stipulates that the connection between music and affect is based on similarity between musical motion (*Bewegung*) and emotion or, as Mattheson calls it, “motion of the soul” (*Gemüthsbewegung*). His account of the latter motion relies on the theory of emotion adopted by Athanasius Kircher in *Musurgia universalis* (1650), according to which affects are caused by the so-called animal spirits flowing in nerves and stimulating physiological processes such as blood circulation. Kircher discusses eight affects—love, sorrow, joy, anger, compassion, fear, insolence, and wonder—the first three of them being the most important. Mattheson calls them the main affects (*Haupt-Affekte*), distinguishes them from subsidiary affects (*Nebenaffekte*), and construes other affects as combinations of *Haupt-* and *Nebenaffekten*. As he explains, each affect is characterized by a specific motion of the animal spirits, which can be represented by music.<sup>20</sup>

Since, for example, joy is felt [*empfunden*] as an expansion of our animal spirits [*Lebens-Geister*], thus it follows reasonably and naturally that I could best express this affect by large and enlarged [*erweiterte*] intervals. Instead, if one knows that sadness is a contraction of these subtle parts of our body, then it is easy to see that the small and smallest intervals are the most suitable for this passion [*Leidenschaft*]. If we further consider that love is in fact essentially a diffusion of the spirits [*Geister*], then we will rightly conform to this in composing, and use similar relationships [*gleichförmigen Verhältnissen*] of sounds (*intervallis n. diffusis & luxuriantibus*).

(Mattheson 1739: 16; Harriss 1981: 104–5, translation modified)

The image displays two musical examples from Mattheson's *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*. Example A, titled 'A. Wenn wir in höchsten Nöthen se.', shows a chorale melody in 4/4 time being transformed into a minuet in 3/4 time. Example B, titled 'B. Wie schön leuchtet st.', shows a chorale melody in 4/4 time being transformed into a gavotte in 2/4 time. Both examples include the original chorale notation and the new dance notation with different rhythmic patterns and meters.

Example 0.1 Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* (1739), 161: (A) chorale *Wenn wir in höchsten Nöthen* turned into a minuet and (B) chorale *Wie schön leuchtet* turned into a gavotte.

If, initially, Mattheson concentrates on affective qualities of intervals, this is because they were discussed by Kircher and Christoph Raupach *alias* Veritophilus in a treatise about affective power of music that Mattheson edited and prefaced (1717), but his further (p. 11) discussion in Part Two of *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* makes clear that all musical parameters have affective qualities. Paramount among them is rhythm. Mattheson demonstrates this in an experiment in

which he transforms affects of melodies by changing their rhythmic patterns. As a result, he turns five chorales into dances—a minuet (Example 0.1A), a gavotte (Example 0.1B), a sarabande, a bourrée, and two polonaises—and two dances—a minuet and an angloise—into chorales.<sup>21</sup> In each case the change of rhythmic pattern causes a change of meter. Affective qualities of meter are not discussed in *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, but Mattheson refers the reader back to his first treatise, *Das Neu-Eröffnete Orchestre* (1713: 76–89), where meters are assigned different affects and related to different genres. In the same treatise Mattheson discusses affective qualities of keys (231–53). Although his discussion is specific and detailed, he admits that key characteristics are surrounded by controversies and explains differences of opinions about them in terms of differences between temperaments, so that “for someone with a (p. 12) sanguine temperament a key may seem lively and merry, but for someone who is phlegmatic, it will seem complaining and troubled etc.” (Buelow 1983: 402).<sup>22</sup>

For Scheibe and the next generation of North-German critics the connection between music and emotion was based on the doctrine of mimesis. According to this doctrine, derived from Aristotelian poetics by the French neoclassicism and propagated in Germany by Gottsched, the function of arts was imitation of nature but, while fine arts imitate the physical world, music should imitate the world of human passions as they express themselves in inarticulate cries and sighs as well as accents and inflections of articulated speech. One of the first to propose this notion of imitation was Abbé Jean-Baptiste DuBos in *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et sur la peinture* (1719): “Just as the painter imitates the forms and colours of nature so the musician imitates the tones of the voice—its accents, sighs and inflections. He imitates in short all the sounds that nature

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herself uses to express the feelings and passions” (Le Huray and Day 1981: 18). This notion was further developed by Charles Batteux in *Les Beaux Arts réduits à un même principe* (1746). If DuBos introduced it in reference to vocal music, Batteux applied the principle of imitation to vocal and instrumental music but allowed instrumental music to imitate unimpassioned sounds. Drawing on the parallel with painting, he thus distinguished two kinds of music based on “the same” (*un même*) principle:

The one merely imitates unimpassioned sounds and noises and is equivalent to landscape painting. The other expresses animated sounds and relates to the feelings. This corresponds to portrait painting. The musician is no freer than the painter: he is continuously subject in every way to comparison with nature. In depicting a storm or little stream or a gentle breeze, the sounds come from nature, and from nature alone must he take them.

(Le Huray and Day 1981: 49)

Batteux’s treatise—translated by Gottsched in 1751—further consolidated the influence of the French neoclassic aesthetics into Germany, but this aesthetics met with resistance from advocates of a new taste in German literature and Gottsched’s position was undermined by the controversy with the Swiss critics Johann Jacob Bodmer and Johann Jacob Breitinger, whose ideas strongly influenced Sulzer. Indeed, although he uses the word “imitation” (*Nachahmung*) and accepts DuBos’s notion that music imitates accents of passionate speech, Sulzer rejects the principle of imitation formulated by Batteux. As he emphasizes in the article “*Nachahmung*,” “only the fine arts seem to have arisen from imitation of nature. But eloquence, poetry, music, and dance have arisen from the fullness of animated sentiments and from the desire to express them, [and] to maintain them in ourselves and in others. Indubitably, the first poets, singers, and dancers expressed their own real—not merely imitated—sentiments.”<sup>23</sup> As well as his reaction against Batteux, Sulzer’s position indicates the influence of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Rousseau’s ambivalence about the concept of imitation is reflected in *Essai sur l’origine des langues, où il est parlé de la mélodie et de l’imitation musicale*. As the subtitle makes clear, Rousseau did not discard the concept of imitation, but his take on this concept was different from Batteux’s. If for Batteux music is “the artificial portrait of the human passions” (Le Huray and Day 1981: 46)—“nothing about them is true; everything is (p. 13) artificial” (48)—for Rousseau musical imitation reaches beyond its artifice and back to its origins in real passions.

By imitating the inflections of the voice, melody expresses complaints, cries of suffering or of joy, threats, moans; all the vocal signs of the passions fall within its province. It imitates the accents of [various] languages as well as the idiomatic expressions commonly associated in each one of them with given movements of the soul; it not only imitates, it speaks; and its language, though inarticulate, is lively, ardent, passionate, and a hundred times more vigorous than speech itself. This is where musical imitation acquires its power, and song its hold on sensitive hearts.

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(Rousseau 1986: 282)<sup>24</sup>

Through written between 1755–61, *Essai sur l'origine des langues* was published in 1781, after the first edition of Sulzer's *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste* (1771–74), but the step from imitation to expression was taken by Rousseau in *Dictionnaire de musique* (1768) and his earlier novels.<sup>25</sup> In *Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse* (1761), which went through countless editions and reached enormous popularity on the wave of sentimentalism, the male protagonist Saint Preux explains to Julie his experience of listening to an opera:

During the brilliant passages, full of strong expression, through which the disorder of violent passions is at once depicted and aroused, I completely lost any idea of music, song, and imitation. I believed I was hearing the voice of pain, fury, and despair itself; I thought I heard lamenting mothers, betrayed lovers, and furious tyrants, and I could hardly remain in my place due to the great shock which I felt.

Bey den glänzenden Stellen, voll eines starken Ausdrucks, wodurch die Unordnung heftiger Leidenschaften gemahlt, und zugleich wirklich erregt wird, verlor sich bey mir die Vorstellung von Musik, Gesang und Nachahmung gänzlich. Ich glaubte die Stimme des Schmerzens, des Zorns, der Verzweiflung selbst zu hören; ich dachte, jammernde Mütter, betrogene Verliebte, rasende Tyrannen zu hören, und hatte Mühe, bey der großen Erschütterung, die ich fühlte, auf meiner Stelle zu bleiben.

(Sulzer 1792–94, 3: 432–33)

This passage is quoted by Sulzer in the article “Musik” as a proof of music’s power to arouse passions. In fact, Saint Preux’s account of his listening experience makes clear that Rousseau goes beyond the doctrine of mimesis as regards not only the origin of musical imitation but also its goal. For him, the process of imitation does not stop at the recognition of passions by the listener. Rather, their recognition results in arousal of these passions by way of sympathy or compassion (*la pitié*). Sulzer adopts the concept of sympathy from Rousseau. In the article “Theilnehmung” he explains that “the good effect of the most important works of art is based on the characteristic of the human soul which makes us quite often feel moved by good or bad fate of other people as by our own and thus capable of true and heartfelt sympathy with them.”<sup>26</sup> But, if Rousseau goes beyond Batteux’s concept of imitation, Sulzer goes beyond Rousseau’s concept of sympathy in that the listener’s passions may be aroused not only by sympathy with others but also by sympathetic vibration.

This acoustic phenomenon was known from the seventeenth century and is described by Mattheson (1739: 12–13; Harriss 1981: 100) but plays no role in his discussion of affects. (p. 14) The idea that emotion can be accounted for in terms of vibration emerged in the further course of the eighteenth century with the rise of a new theory of emotions based on nerves and nervous system. To be sure, nerves played an important role in the old theory of emotions adopted by Mattheson from Kircher but they were thought to be

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hollow channels that enabled the flow of animal spirits. In the new theory nerves were solid and susceptible to vibrations.<sup>27</sup> This view, advanced by Isaac Newton, was adopted by John Locke in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), but Locke did not describe the operations of nerves in any detail, which explains why Mattheson did not refer to them, although he was the first German music theorist to embrace Locke's sensualism. Only with the rise of experimental physiology in the 1740s did vibrations of nerves become part of common knowledge. Consequently, vibration of the air transmitted to the ear by the sound (*Schall*) was thought of to incite sympathetic vibration of nervous fibers. This common knowledge is assumed by Sulzer in his commentary on the words of Saint Preux:

One knows that the animation of sentiments depends on the play of nerves and the fast speed of blood circulation. It cannot be denied that music has an effect on both. Since it depends on the movement of the air, which stimulates the most sensitive nerves of hearing, it affects the body; and how could it fail to do this, if it even shakes inanimate matter—not just thin windows but solid walls?

Man weiß, daß die Lebhaftigkeit der Empfindungen von dem Spiel der Nerven, und dem schnellen Laufe des Geblütes herkommet; daß die Musik wirklich auf beyde würke, kann gar nicht geläugnet werden. Da sie mit einer Bewegung der Luft verbunden ist, welche die höchst reizbaren Nerven des Gehörs angreift, so würket sie auch auf den Körper; und wie sollte sie dieses nicht thun, da sie selbst die unbelebte Materie, nicht blos dünne Fenster, sondern sogar feste Mauern erschütteret?

(Sulzer 1792–94, 3: 433)

The epistemology of sensualism and aesthetics of sentimentalism led Sulzer to update his terminology for emotions. Although he uses the word *Affekt* and retains the German synonym for passion (*Leidenschaft*), his term of choice is *Empfindung*, which can mean either sentiment or sensation. Thus, it implies that music's power to arouse passions results from the sensual effect of the sound (*Schall*) on the nervous system. As Sulzer observes, "sound can carry tenderness, good will, hate, anger, despair, or another passionate expression of a soul. Therefore one soul can become sensible to the other through sound."<sup>28</sup>

The twofold manner of arousing sentiments—indirectly by way of sympathy and directly through sympathetic vibration—suggested to Sulzer two ways in which composers can learn the art of musical expression. On the one hand, they should observe others in order to become familiar with *outer* expressions of passions, in particular, their vocal expressions:

Every passion must be seen not simply in respect to its idea, but in respect to its particular character: tone of voice [*Ton der Stimme*], register, tempo, and accent of the speech [*den Accent der Rede*]....Joy speaks [*spricht*] with full tones, a tempo that is not rushed, and moderate gradations of dynamics and pitch. Sadness

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expresses itself (p. 15) in slower speeches [*in langsamen Reden*]; it wells up from deep within the breast and with subdued tones. Every sentiment has something special that distinguishes it in speech [*in der Sprache etwas eigenes*].

(Sulzer 1792–94, 1: 272; Baker and Christensen 1995: 51–52, translation modified)

On the other hand, composers should feel the passions within themselves in order to observe their *inner* effect on the soul. In this regard Sulzer's advices for composers are similar to Mattheson's (1739: 16–17; Harriss 1981: 105–7). The difference between them lies in the fact that, for Sulzer, the motion of the soul is not a motion of animal spirits but

a series of moving impressions. This is already revealed by the phrase we use to express passion: the movement of emotions [*Gemüthsbewegung*]. There are passions in which impressions flow evenly like a gentle brook. There are other passions which flow onward faster and with more turbulence. In a few, the succession of impressions rush forward as if a raging stream whose banks are swollen after a heavy rain, sweeping away everything that stands in its way. Sometimes the feelings caused by these impressions are like the wild sea crashing before the shore, retreating back only to surge forth again with renewed strength.

(Sulzer 1792–94, 1: 272; Baker and Christensen 1995: 52)

In the further course of the article "Ausdruck," from which this quote is excerpted, Sulzer makes clear that this movement can be portrayed by all musical parameters. Consequently, all musical parameters are means of expression.

These means are: (1) The basic progression of harmony without regard to meter. ...; (2) Meter, by which the general character of every kind of movement may be imitated; (3) Melody and rhythm, which are themselves capable of portraying the language of all emotions; (4) Changes in the dynamics of notes, which may contribute much to expression; (5) The accompaniment and particularly the choice and mixture of accompanying instruments; And finally, (6) Modulation to, and digression in, foreign keys.

(Sulzer 1792–94, 1: 272–73; Baker and Christensen 1995: 52–53)

Sulzer extends this list in other articles. In the article "Musik" he supplements it with key. In the article "Singen" with ornamentation. In the article "Melodie" he adds tempo, articulation, register, and phrase rhythm. He follows this discussion with an experiment that demonstrates "how the same series of pitches can acquire quite different characters through changes of meter, rhythm, and phrase rhythm."<sup>29</sup> This experiment is clearly inspired by Mattheson in that the affective quality of the melody is transformed by its temporal arrangement (Example 0.2).





Example 0.2 Sulzer, *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste* (1792–94), vol. 3, 379.

Near the end of the article “Musik” Sulzer discloses that the content of this and other articles about music is indebted to Johann Philipp Kirnberger and announces the forthcoming publication of the second volume of Kirnberger’s *Die Kunst des reinen Satzes in der Musik*, which “will undoubtedly become the most important work about the theory” of this art.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, in the first section of this volume, published 1776, Kirnberger (p. 16)

(p. 17) undertakes the task of describing all musical parameters in so far as they contribute to expression. In Chapter 1 he elaborates on Sulzer’s discussion of harmony—the first point on the previously quoted list of parameters in the article “Ausdruck”—and describes four methods of harmonizing a melody with regard to the intensity of expression. He points out that the same melody can acquire different expression through different harmonization and demonstrates this with a series of twenty-six harmonizations of the chorale *Ach Gott und Herr, wie gross und schwer sind mein begangne Sünden!* (Example 0.3). Once again, this demonstration is strikingly similar to the experiments carried out by Mattheson and Sulzer, but the fact that the parameter singled out for attention is not rhythm but harmony stands in marked contrast to the suppression of harmony by the earlier authors. Of course, this change of focus reflects the influence of Jean-Philippe Rameau, whose theory of harmony Kirnberger embraced in the first volume of *Die Kunst des reinen Satzes* (1771).<sup>31</sup> In the following chapters of the second volume Kirnberger discusses key characteristics (Chapter 2), melodic progressions (Chapter 3), tempo, meter, and phrase rhythm (Chapter 4). The most interesting—and modern—aspect of Kirnberger’s discussion is his emphasis on the interdependence of musical parameters and their mutual modification of each other’s expression. For instance, his unique attempt to define expression of all—ascending and descending—melodic intervals is qualified by the remark that this expression can be changed by other parameters:

Much depends here on what precedes and follows and, in general, on the totality of the melodic phrase in which these progressions occur; it also depends on the position of the intermingled minor and major seconds of the scale or mode, and above all on the beat of the measure on which they are used and on the harmony that is placed under them. Every melodic progression can acquire a different shade of expression from the harmony.

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(Kirnberger 1776: 104; 1982: 374)

Similar remarks are made about tempo, meter, rhythm, and key, explaining—in a new way—the controversies around key characteristics, noted by Mattheson.



*Example 0.3* The last six harmonizations of the chorale *Ach Gott und Herr, wie gross und schwer sind mein begangne Sünden!* from Kirnberger, *Die Kunst des reinen Satzes in der Musik* (1771–79), vol. 2, section 1, 28–29.

Even though Sulzer's concept of sentiments has different physiological foundations and philosophical implications than Mattheson's affects, it should be clear from the foregoing discussion that the description of musical parameters with regard to expression, undertaken by Sulzer and Kirnberger, forms a continuation of Mattheson's doctrine of affections. For them, as for Mattheson, all musical parameters have affective qualities. All states of such parameters and their configurations can express

affects. Consequently, music is comparable to the "unfathomable sea" (*unergründlichen Meer*) of affects described by Mattheson in *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* (1739: 19): an inexhaustible source of expression and boundless resource for infinitely nuanced representation of emotional states. The difference between Mattheson's affects and Sulzer's sentiments is that affects are static and distinct from each other while sentiments are dynamic and fluid. The ebb and flow of sentiments means that each of them is always in danger of sliding into others.<sup>32</sup> This fluctuation of sentiments is reflected in the fluidity of parametric reconfigurations and mutual modifications described by Sulzer and Kirnberger. Still, some states and configurations of musical parameters are more stable (p. 18) than others. In this regard, they are comparable not so much to sentiments as, rather, to characters. This brings us back to the concept of character discussed in the previous section. For Sulzer the difference between a character and a sentiment is equivalent to that between *ethos* and *pathos* (1792–94, 3: 237). While the latter is a fleeting passion, the former refers to a constant disposition of a given person. At the same time, characters are closely related to sentiments. On the one hand, they determine the strength (p. 19) of sentiments a person can perceive in relation to other persons and objects. (It is this function of characters, described in section 2, that safeguards affective unity of musical pieces.) On the other hand, sentiments have influence on characters if they are consolidated by repetition. "A feeling that through constant repetition and reinforcement becomes the cause of certain inner or external

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actions” is called by Sulzer sentiment “in a moral sense” and is distinguished by him from sentiments “in a psychological sense.” (p. 20) Moral sentiments are “the sentiments that in their differing mix and strengths determine the moral character of men” (Sulzer 1792–94, 2: 54; Baker and Christensen 1995: 28).<sup>33</sup> Consequently, these sentiments can stand for the character as such. When Sulzer writes about characters of men who are “proud or humble, courageous or timid, pleading or commanding, tender or tempestuous,” he describes them with adjectives derived from their moral sentiments.

This close relation between characters and sentiments makes possible musical representation of characters. Although characters are the most important objects of arts, Sulzer admits that music can represent them only insofar as they express themselves in sentiments.

Since the differing degrees of animation of individual men and the way they express their emotions have the greatest influence upon their moral character, music can often be used to express the morality of such men and entire people, in so far as they may be sensed. So indeed are national songs and dances a true reflection of morality. They can be as sprightly or serious, tender or tempestuous, refined or coarse, as the morals of the people themselves.

(Sulzer 1792–94, 3: 425; Baker and Christensen 1995: 84)

Their connection with moral characters explains why national songs and dances attract Sulzer’s attention. His discussions of dances in *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste* draw on Mattheson’s discussions of small compositions in *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, but what Mattheson called “affect” now turns into “character.” That this last term is used by Sulzer in the sense of a “moral character” is clear from his entries on the sarabande, the musette, and the rigaudon—dances that he relates to different characters in ballets. The sarabande can be used “for serious characters who appear with great dignity or majesty” (*zu den ernsthaften Charakteren, die mit großer Würde, oder mit Majestät verbunden sind*; 4: 128); the musette suits “both noble pastoral and lowly peasant characters” (*sowol zu edlen Schäfercharakteren, als zu niedrigen bäuerischen*; 3: 421); and the rigaudon can be applied to a “serious as well as humorous and lowly character” (*sowol zum ernsthaften, als zum scherzhaften und niedrigen Charakter gebraucht*; 4: 106). Apart from dances, characters are ascribed by Sulzer to two other genres: festive entrées (*Aufzüge*) and military marches.

By contrast to small compositions, larger compositions have no determined characters. This does not mean that they have no characters at all—every composition must have a character that safeguards its affective unity—but their characters are defined by the composer rather than by genre. To this category belong overtures, symphonies, sonatas, and concerti. The freedom of composers in selecting characters of these genres is not equal, though, but more or less limited by their function. The character of overtures, whose function is similar to entrées, is most closely determined (3: 643). The character of church and theatrical symphonies, which serve to prepare the listener for the subsequent piece, is determined by this piece (4: 479–80). The character of a chamber symphony is

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free from this limitation but it should harmonize with the expression of “the grand, the festive, and the sublime” (*des Großen, des Feyerlichen und* (p. 21) *Erhabenen*; 4: 478). Sonatas can assume “any character and every expression” (4: 425; Baker and Christensen 1995: 103), whereas concerti are criticized by Sulzer on account of the fact that their composers—who, for the most part, are also their performers—are not in the business of representing characters but of highlighting their technical skills (1: 573).<sup>34</sup>

Sulzer’s distinction between small compositions of determined character and larger compositions of undetermined character is adopted by Koch. As he explains in *Versuch einer Anleitung zur Composition* (1782–93), small compositions—to which he counts dances and marches—“aim to arouse only one feeling,” whereas in larger compositions “different kinds of feelings follow one another” (Baker and Christensen 1995: 147). Koch retains this distinction and retraces Sulzer’s discussions of small compositions in *Musikalisches Lexikon* (1802). It is this distinction that makes room for topics in eighteenth-century music aesthetics. From my discussion it follows that small compositions of determined character are equivalent to Ratner’s types. As such, they are the source of his core musical topics. By contrast, larger compositions “of undetermined character” (*von unbestimmtem Charakter*), that is, such “which can acquire every character” (*die jeden Charakter annehmen können*; Koch 1802: col. 314), are the genres that create opportunities for topics to mix together. In other words, they are the field of topical play in eighteenth-century music.<sup>35</sup> The play, too, was recognized by Sulzer. When, in the article “Vortrag,” he recommends performers to practice “dance pieces of different character and expression” (*Tanzstücken von verschiedenem Charakter und Ausdruck*; 1792–94, 4: 711) in order to learn how to express characters in other genres, he motivates this advice with the remark that “the dance pieces contain most, if not all, of what our good and bad pieces of every art contain: the latter are different from the former only in that they combine several dances put together into a more or less coherent whole.”<sup>36</sup> Whether the whole is “more or less coherent” depends on the character of the dances in relation to one another and to the character of the larger composition selected by the composer. The requirement of coherence is the hallmark of North-German aesthetics, but Sulzer’s remark indicates that—coherent or not—by the late eighteenth century topical mixtures were the bread and butter of instrumental music in the North and the South.

## 3. Affects and Topics

The discussion of the connection between music and affects helps us to clarify the relation between affects and topics. To be sure, this relation lies at the heart of topic theory. Ratner’s discussion of topics in *Classic Music* fills in the first part of his book, devoted to expression, which, as he emphasizes from the outset, “was an ever-present concern in 18th-century musical thought and practice” (1980: 1). Agawu treats “the concept of topic as key to expression” (1991: 128) and links it to this term of the dichotomy between (p. 22) “expression” and “structure.” The status of topics as expressive signs, first posited by Agawu, was consolidated by Robert Hatten (1994, 2004)

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and Raymond Monelle (2000, 2006) in their studies framing topics within the field of music semiotics. The fact that Ratnerian topics have their source in small compositions that, in turn, are related by Sulzer to characters confirms the intimate link between topics and expression of eighteenth-century music but it suggests that topical signification stands in relief from affective signification and differs from it in two respects: the scope and semiotic status.

### 3.1. Scope

Insofar as small compositions form stable configurations of musical parameters that, like moral sentiments, are consolidated by repetition, the scope of topical signification is more restricted than the scope of affective signification, which embraces all states of musical parameters and their configurations. It follows that some passages of eighteenth-century music may display no topics.

So far the right of eighteenth-century music to contain topically neutral passages has not been acknowledged by representatives of topic theory. Agawu questions it on the basis of the provisional status of the Universe of Topic: “Theoretically, UT is open, since it continues to expand as more and more topics are uncovered; UT can only attain closure on the last day of research” (Agawu 1991: 128). This means that “references to an area of ‘neutral’ topical activity indicate not necessarily the absence of topic, but, rather, the absence of an appropriate label within the restricted domain of our topical universe” (49). This opinion is further radicalized by Allanbrook, who explicitly denies the existence of topically neutral passages in Classic music:

Expression saturates this music; it is never *not* a parameter, even if a particular *topos* does not have a convenient style name or obvious historical association. The *topoi* do appear with varying degrees of markedness: we can say of one passage that it is a military march or a sarabande, while of another only that it is legato or lyrical. But “legato” or “lyrical” are *topoi* simply by virtue of being juxtaposed to passages that are staccato or that clearly mimic orchestral rather than vocal procedures. No moment is ever “expressively neutral”: when it ceases to be A, it must be B or C or D. *Topoi* articulate each other’s differences in the same way as modern linguists understand phonic units as delimiting each other: by juxtaposition and opposition, by rubbing shoulders, “jostling each other about.”

(Allanbrook 2002: 214)<sup>37</sup>

To be sure, “the *topoi* do appear with varying degrees of markedness” or, to put it more properly, some topics are more salient than others.<sup>38</sup> This is, first, because topics form sets of characteristics derived from higher or lower numbers of musical parameters. For instance, the military march is described by Sulzer (1792–94, 3: 363–65) in terms of its major key (especially B flat, C, D, or E flat), 4/4 or  $\phi$  meter, uniform pace, dotted rhythms, slower or faster but “pathetic” tempo, orchestration featuring trumpets and horns, and a phrase rhythm consisting of two-measure incises or pairs of one-measure incises that start either with downbeats or quarter-note upbeat and combine into (p. 23) four-

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measure phrases. This topic is thus more salient than the sarabande, which is in slow tempo, 3/2 or 3/4 meter, and starts with the downbeat (Sulzer 1792–94, 4: 128).<sup>39</sup> Second, some topics can occur without some of their characteristics. For instance, the topic of military march can dispense with trumpets and horns when it is played by a string quartet. But from the fact that some topics are less salient than others it does not follow that all eighteenth-century music is topical. In terms of modern linguistics, invoked by Allanbrook, musical characteristics of topics can indeed be compared to distinctive features of phonemes (“phonic units”) and sorted out through oppositions<sup>40</sup>—the opposition between “legato” and “staccato” being one of them—but such characteristics are not topics, and not every configuration of musical characteristics is a topic of eighteenth-century music, just as not every configuration of distinctive features is a phoneme of English language. Some passages may share characteristics of several topics, while some others may represent no specific topic. In other words, expression saturates eighteenth-century music without necessarily being A, B, C, or D.

Clearly, Allanbrook can jump from the premise that “no moment is ever expressively neutral” to the conclusion that every moment is topical because she equates topics with expression, but this equation has no foundation in eighteenth-century sources. What these sources suggest is, instead, that *topics are islands of affective signification emerging from the sea of eighteenth-century music*. In fact, Allanbrook’s description of topics “rubbing shoulders” and “jostling each other about” resembles Johann Nikolaus Forkel’s description of the “sea of affects,” which arguably forms the apex of the doctrine of affections developed before him by Mattheson, Sulzer, and Kirnberger. Like those authors, Forkel conceives of emotion in terms of motion (*Bewegung*) but gives this concept a new twist. Rather than the motion of animal spirits, described by Mattheson, or the series of moving impressions, evoked by Sulzer, he identifies it with modification or “modulation” of sentiment, that is, its intensification and deintensification.

No sentiment, which should last for some time—not just be aroused but also sustained—remains the same from the beginning until the end. It increases and decreases through infinite and indiscernible degrees of intensity. This growth and decline of sentiment is called “modification” but it could equally well or even better be called “modulation,” which word is taken from the technical vocabulary of music. Not only is the process of musical modulation perfectly equivalent to the tiny and gradual transitions of sentiment between greater or lesser degrees of intensity but it also gives us a hint that the modulation of sentiment can be best expressed and imitated through the modulation of tones. Even if a sentiment can express itself in many ways, it is easy to note that only at one point is it exactly itself and differs from any other sentiment; all other points and degrees of this sentiment border on sentiments of some other sort—which are more or less distant from another main sentiment—and can serve the definition of these sentiments as much as they served the definition of the original sentiment as soon as their relations to each other are changed.

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Keine Empfindung, die anhaltend seyn, oder durch irgend ein Mittel nicht nur geweckt, sondern auch unterhalten werden soll, ist sich, vom Anfang ihrer Entstehung an bis ans Ende, gleich. Sie nimmt nach und nach durch unendliche (p. 24) und unbegreifliche Grade von Stärke und Schwäche an und zu. Dieses Wachsen und Abnehmen der Empfindung nennt man gewöhnlich Modification; es könnte aber eben so füglich, und vielleicht noch füglicher mit einem Worte bezeichnet werden, welches wir in der musikalischen Kunstsprache moduliren nennen; denn das musikalische Moduliren entspricht den feinen allmählichen Uebergängen der Empfindung zur Stärke oder Schwäche nicht nur vollkommen, sondern giebt auch gleichsam einen kleinen Wink, daß die Modulation der Leidenschaft durch die Modulation der Töne am besten auszudrücken, und nachzuahmen sey. So vielartig aber auch immer eine Leidenschaft sich äußern kann, so ist doch leicht zu bemerken, daß sie nur auf einem einzigen Punkte genau diejenige Empfindung sey, die sie von allen andern unterscheidet; alle andere Punkte oder Grade derselben gränzen auf eine oder die andere Art, mehr oder weniger entfernt an eine andere Hauptempfindung, und dienen zur genauern Bestimmung derselben ebensowol, wie sie zur Bestimmung der ersten dienen, sobald ihre Verhältnisse, oder ihre Beziehungen unter einander verändert werden.

(Forkel 1788: 8)

For Forkel, it is sentiments that delimit each other “by juxtaposition and opposition.” Modulation of sentiments and transitions between them are engineered by reconfiguration of musical parameters. The same state of a given parameter can express different sentiments if it is combined with different states of other parameters. In order to illustrate this occurrence, Forkel singles out harmony and demonstrates how it can change expression of the same melody. This demonstration builds on Kirnberger’s experiment with different harmonizations of the chorale and develops his remark that “every melodic progression can acquire a different shade of expression from the harmony,” which determines its tonal context and, therefore, scale degrees represented by its pitches within a given (major or minor) key. Forkel’s brief melody (Example 0.4a ) is harmonized in four different keys—C major, G major, E minor, and A minor (Example 0.4b) —“and has a different meaning in each of these four tonal contexts” (*und hat unstreitig in jeder dieser vier Beziehungen eine andere Bedeutung*; Forkel 1788: 13). In this way, harmony is elevated by him to the status of the musical parameter that defines finest subtleties of human feeling.

### 3.2. Semiotic Status



Example 0.4 Forkel, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik*, vol. 1 (1788), 13–14: (a) melody and (b) its harmonizations in four different keys.

The rise of topic theory in the 1980s coincided with the rapid growth of semiotics, which developed from an arcane discipline to an all-embracing theory of signs aspiring to redefine the terms of human knowledge. As a source of meaning and expression, topics yielded themselves to this theory and the study of topics became the foremost branch of music

semiotics. So far the semiotic status of topics has been framed in terms of modern semiotics developed by twentieth-century authors such as Charles Sanders Peirce, Ferdinand de Saussure, Roman Jakobson, and Umberto Eco, but the eighteenth century possessed its own theory of signs that imbued music aesthetics.<sup>41</sup> It will be necessary to

(p. 25) turn to eighteenth-century semiotics in order to explain the difference between affective and topical signification of eighteenth-century music.

The fundamental distinction drawn by eighteenth-century authors was that between natural and arbitrary signs. It was based on the origin of the sign-object relation. In natural signs this relation is given in nature, because “natural signs precede, follow upon (or are co-present with) the things they signify” (Wellbery 1984: 26). In terms of Peircian semiotics, a natural sign is thus an *index*: “a sign that is related to its object through co-occurrence in actual experience” (Turino 1999: 227). Natural signs produced by man include postures, gestures, facial expressions, unarticulated sighs, and cries as well as vocal accents and inflections of articulated speech. By contrast, arbitrary signs are instituted by human beings. Consequently, they correspond to Peircian *symbols*: signs related to their objects by convention and, most characteristically, represented by words.

The distinction between natural signs and arbitrary signs was the touchstone of musical mimesis. When Abbé DuBos points out that “the musician imitates the tones of the voice—its accents, sighs and inflections,” he adds:

All these sounds...have a wonderful power to move us because they are the signs of the passions that are the work of nature herself, from whence they have derived their energy. Spoken words, on the other hand are only arbitrary symbols of the passions. The spoken word only derives its meaning and value from man-made conventions and it has only limited geographical currency.

(Le Huray and Day 1981: 18)



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(p. 26) Insofar as music imitates the signs of passions, it is an *icon*. This term “refers to a sign that is related to its object through some type of resemblance between them” (Turino 1999: 226). Translated into terms of Peircian semiotics, affective signification of music posited by the doctrine of mimesis involves two levels of signification: musical sounds are *icons* of natural sounds, which are *indices* of emotional states. But, in the French Enlightenment, the category of imitative signs (*icons*) was not cleanly distinguished from expressive signs (*indices*). Consequently, music was subsumed under natural signs and contrasted with language (Wellbery 1984: 29–30).<sup>42</sup>

The collapse of two levels of musical signification—*icon* and *index*—into one natural sign was facilitated by Rousseau. At the same time as he takes the contrast between music and language to extremes, he traces them back to their common origin in songs sung by southern nations at the fountains where men and women came to fetch water for their herds and households:

Around the fountains which I have mentioned, the first speeches were the first songs: the periodic and measured recurrences of rhythm, the melodious inflections of accents, caused poetry and music to be born together with language; or rather, all this was nothing other than language itself in those happy climates and those happy ages when the only pressing needs that required another’s collaboration were needs born of the heart.

(Rousseau 1986: 276)

This myth of the origin explains how imitation and expression are united in Rousseau’s aesthetics. Though the concept of imitation is not banned from it, music does not imitate speech but, rather, itself: eighteenth-century operatic recitatives and airs imitate the first songs of passion. Embracing Rousseau’s aesthetics, Sulzer adopts his theory of signs:

The individual sounds that comprise song are the expressions of animated sentiments, since man expresses pleasure, pain, or sadness through sounds, and the sentiments aroused demand to be expressed, even if against one’s will, by the sounds of song, not speech. Thus the elements of song are not so much the invention of man as of nature herself. Rather than calling these the extracted sounds from the sentiments of man, we will simply call them passionate tones [*leidenschaftliche Töne*]. The sounds of speech are drawing tones [*zeichnende Töne*], which originally served to awaken images of things which produce such or similar sounds [*Vorstellungen von Dingen zu erweken, die solche oder ähnliche Töne hören lassen*]. Now most such sounds are indifferent tones [*gleichgültige Töne*] or arbitrary signs [*willkürliche Zeichen*], while the passionate tones are natural signs [*natürliche Zeichen*] of sentiment. A succession of arbitrary sounds designates speech, a succession of passionate tones, song.

(Sulzer 1792–94, 2: 369; Baker and Christensen 1995: 93, translation modified)

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For Sulzer, thus, language is a system of arbitrary signs, while music consists of natural signs. Insofar as the listener is affected by sympathy, that is, through recognition of natural signs of affections, the arousal of passions by music is a semiotic process.

At the same time, however, arousal of passions can be unmediated by signs, if it is caused by sympathetic vibration. The idea that emotions consist in vibration of nerves (p. 27) and can be induced by sound (*Schall*) formed an uneasy match with Rousseau's aesthetics. Instead, it aligned with Rameau's theory of *corps sonore*. Since Rameau's example of *corps sonore* was the monochord, vibration of strings became an image for the vibration of nerves and the listener's body was thought of as a *corps sonore* on which music can play like on a clavichord. A follower of Rameau, Michel Paul Gui de Chabanon, declared that "man is only an instrument" and the arousal of passions by music is a purely sensual effect that takes place "without the mediation of the soul" (Chua 1999: 101).<sup>43</sup> This sensual effect of music was vigorously opposed by Rousseau. In fact, the myth of song proposed by him as an account of the origins of music and language was an alternative to Rameau's theory of *corps sonore*, which Rousseau rejected on the grounds that it substitutes sentiments with sensations:

As long as sounds continue to be considered exclusively in terms of the excitation they trigger in our nerves, the true principles of music and of its power over men's hearts will remain elusive. In a melody, sounds act on us not only as sounds but as signs of our affections, of our sentiments; that is how they arouse in us the motions which they express and the image of which we recognize in them.

(Rousseau 1986: 283)

The fact that Sulzer embraces Rousseau's aesthetics while accepting aesthetic ideas inspired by his main opponent may create an impression of eclecticism, but to call him eclectic does not do justice to Sulzer. For one thing, he could not have read the above-quoted passage, excerpted from the *Essai sur l'origine des langues*. In *Dictionnaire de musique*, which Sulzer consulted, Rousseau admits that music has an effect "on the ear and on the soul" (Thomas 1995: 126 n. 110).<sup>44</sup> When Sulzer follows the passage from *La nouvelle Héloïse* with remarks about vibration of the air "which stimulates the most sensitive nerves of hearing," he does not contradict Rousseau but implies that music has an effect on Saint Preux's soul and body.<sup>45</sup> Sulzer's comments on the circulation of blood—alongside "the play of nerves"—point toward Mattheson, and his further remarks about therapeutic effects of music parallel those with which Mattheson precedes his discussion of music's affective power in *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* (1739: 14–15; Harriss 1981: 102–3). In fact, a close reading of Sulzer's articles about music in *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste* suggests that he attempted a synthesis of the French doctrine of mimesis, anthropologically inflected by Rousseau, with the German doctrine of affections inherited from Mattheson and filtered through the sensualist epistemology.<sup>46</sup> The common denominator of both doctrines is the concept of emotion as motion of the soul. For Mattheson this motion (*Gemüthsbewegung*) should be emulated by musical motion. For DuBos, Batteux, and Rousseau music should imitate motions of the soul (*mouvements*

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*de l'âme*) as they express themselves in vocal accents of passionate speech. Such accents are expressive signs (*indices*) but, at the same time, they are similar to “the motions which they express” due to the similarity between causes and effects. Such similarity was posited by Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten and his pupil Georg Friedrich Meier in connection with the concept of “essential signs” (*wesentliche Zeichen*) whose relation to objects is based on similarity (Wellbery 1984: 29–30). (p. 28) Essential signs are equivalents of Peirce’s *icons*, but the idea that effects are similar to causes means that there is no significant difference between iconic signs and indexical signs caused by their objects.<sup>47</sup> Just as imitative signs (*icons*) produced by the composer are expressive (*indices*), so also expressive signs of emotion (*indices*) produced by nature are imitative (*icons*).<sup>48</sup> By imitating accents of passionate speech, as stipulated by the doctrine of mimesis, the composer imitates “the motions which they express”—be they the motions of animal spirits or vibrations of nerves—but he can also represent these motions by similar motions along any number of musical parameters, as stipulated by the doctrine of affections. In both doctrines music consists of icons.

If affective signification of music takes an important place in the system of eighteenth-century semiotics, topical signification—based on cross-references between styles and genres—does not easily fit in it. The only text that has been invoked as a proof of its eighteenth-century recognition comes from Chabanon, who denies that music can imitate anything else than other music:

Imitation in music is not truly sensed unless its object is music. In songs one can successfully imitate warlike fanfares, hunting airs, rustic melodies, etc. It is only a question of giving one song the character of another. Art, in that case, does not suffer violence. When one moves away from this, however, imitation grows weaker, actually because of the insufficiency of means which music can employ.

(Allanbrook 1983: 6)

Although this passage is inspired by Chabanon’s insistence on the sensual basis of music and his rejection of the doctrine of mimesis, Allanbrook used it to frame topics within this doctrine. According to Allanbrook, topics form a kind of musical mimesis that consists in imitation of “simpler music which men use to accompany their daily activities and amusements” (Allanbrook 1983: 6). Classic music is “a musical language created out of the ordinary materials of its own musical life” (Allanbrook 1996: 75). In other words, it is “music made out of music” (Allanbrook 2014: 114). With this last remark Allanbrook echoes Sulzer’s opinion that larger compositions are made out of small compositions: “The dance pieces contain most, if not all, of what our good and bad pieces of all kinds consist.”

Although Allanbrook is not concerned with semiotics, her references to the doctrine of mimesis help us clarify the semiotic status of topics. For Allanbrook the first step of topical signification is the recognition of a style or genre imitated in a given passage of Classic music. “Eighteenth-century listeners were fully familiar with this musical vocabulary. They encountered it in its basic forms daily, so recognition would have been

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instant and enjoyable” (Allanbrook 2014: 111). But topical signification does not stop at this recognition: it extends, on the one hand, to associations of styles and genres with affects, and, on the other hand, to their associations with social contexts. For instance, dances raise associations with ballrooms and social status of dancers; military marches with parades or battlefields; church music with religious rituals; pastoral music with the countryside; hunting calls with hunts. According to Allanbrook, this is how Classic music is mimetic not just of other music but “of the world of men, their (p. 29) habits and actions” (1983: 3). Again, she could have supported her insistence on the role of social context in the definition of topics with Sulzer’s remarks about small compositions. In the article “Instrumentalmusik” Sulzer observes that such compositions need no text in order to explain objects of sentiments, since these objects are explained by context and function of such compositions in everyday life: “One can easily dispense with vocal music for dancing, festive entrées [*Aufzügen*] and military marches, since instruments alone are sufficient to arouse and sustain the appropriate sentiments for such occasions” (Sulzer 1792–94, 2: 677; Baker and Christensen 1995: 95, translation modified). This observation is reiterated by Koch, whose article “Instrumentalmusik” in *Musikalisches Lexikon* draws on Sulzer’s: “If instrumental music...is meant to awaken and maintain specific feelings, then it must be involved in such political, religious, or domestic circumstances and actions as are of pronounced interest for us, and in which our heart is predisposed to the expression of the sentiments that it [the instrumental music] is supposed to awaken and maintain.”<sup>49</sup> While she leaves out Sulzer, Allanbrook quotes Koch’s words (1988: 11; 2014: 107) but turns them against Koch. As she points out, “he fails to realize that the ‘political, religious, or domestic’ associations that topoi carry with them will complement the indeterminate feelings aroused naturally by the textless music alone, supplying a context out of context” (2014: 107). Accordingly, she questions the further course of Koch’s argument:

If, however, it [music] should undertake to stimulate in us feelings for which the situation in which we find ourselves offers no occasion, feelings to which our hearts are not open, it lacks the means to make these feelings interesting to our hearts through the unarticulated tones of instrumental music. It cannot under these circumstances make comprehensible to us why it wants to transport us into gentle or sad, exalted or happy, sentiments; it cannot awaken in us either the images of that good whose enjoyment is to delight us, or the images of that evil that is to cause fear or distress. To sum up, it can infuse into our hearts no interest in the sentiments which it expresses.

Wenn sie [die Musik] es aber unternehmen soll, in uns Gefühle anzufachen, wozu in der Lage, in welcher wir uns befinden, keine Ursache vorhanden, wofür unser Herz nicht aufgeschlossen ist, so fehlt es ihr, wenn es bloß durch die unartikulierten Töne der Instrumentalmusik geschehen soll, an Mitteln, unsern Herzen diese Gefühle interessant zu machen. Sie kann uns unter diesen Umständen nicht begreiflich machen, warum sie uns in sanfte oder traurige, in erhabene oder fröhliche Empfindungen versetzen will; sie kann in uns weder die Bilder desjenigen Gutes, dessen Genuß uns ergötzen, noch die Bilder desjenigen

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Uebels darstellen, welches Furcht oder Betrübniß veranlassen soll. Kurz, sie kann unsern Herzen kein merkliches Interesse an den Empfindungen, die sie ausdrückt, einflößen.

(Koch 1802: cols. 792–93)

Koch concludes that, in order to arouse such interest, music needs text that “prepares the listener, helps him to the intended frame of mind, and gives interest to the feelings to be expressed.”<sup>50</sup> He uses this argument to proclaim the superiority of vocal over instrumental music, but Allanbrook rejects this claim and uses topics as the springboard for an apology of instrumental music: “There was no reason why instrumental music, granted (p. 30) the direct reference due to its intimate connection with human occasions, could not provide its particular blend of instruction and pleasure for audiences outside the venues that originally supplied it with these meanings” (Allanbrook 2014: 108). For her, such music needs no text to have a context. Rather, the context is supplied by topics. Because “topoi bear their contexts with them like a snail traveling in its shell” (107), they take over the role of text and explain the feelings expressed by instrumental music. This is how topic theory writes the unwritten aesthetics of South-German instrumental music in North-German terms.

The foregoing discussion brings to light a number of differences between affective and topical signification of eighteenth-century music, which are summarized in Figure 0.1. Solid arrows in this figure represent sign-object relations. Affective signification of music is represented by the lower horizontal arrow. As this arrow suggests, all states of musical parameters and their configurations have affective qualities and carry affective signification. Some of these configurations are characteristic of topics. This is indicated by the dashed vertical arrow. Topics refer to styles and genres from which they are derived. This first step of topical signification is represented by the upper horizontal arrow. Further steps arise from associations of styles and genres with social contexts and functions (upward vertical arrow) and from their associations with affects (downward vertical arrow). Ultimately, topical signification thus reaches affects but, if affective signification of music rests on a direct *iconic* relation between music and affect—so direct, in fact, as to risk losing its semiotic status and turning into “a pure form of sentient communication” (Chua 1999: 118)<sup>51</sup>—affective signification of topics is indirect because it arises from their similarity (*icon*) to genres or styles that, in their turn, are associated (*index*) with specific affects or affective zones. As a result, this signification is more stable than affective signification of music posited by the doctrine of mimesis and the doctrine of affections. Whereas affective signification posited by these doctrines is susceptible to fluctuations of parametric configurations and therefore cannot be detached from actual music, topical signification can be cued by names of styles or genres in absence of any actual music.<sup>52</sup> This justifies the comparison of topics to words, implied by terms such as “thesaurus” or “vocabulary,”<sup>53</sup> and their relation to Sulzer’s characters represented by moral sentiments. Just as moral sentiments form a subset of psychological sentiments that have been consolidated by repetition, topics form a subset of all configurations of musical parameters consolidated by their associations with styles and

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genres and affects represented by topics form a subset of all affects that can be expressed by music. Recognition of these affects is based on the listener's recognition of styles or genres. Nonetheless, topically marked musical passages contain both types of signification. Even if the listener does not recognize a given topic, she can perceive the affect of this topic by virtue of musical motion characteristic of it.

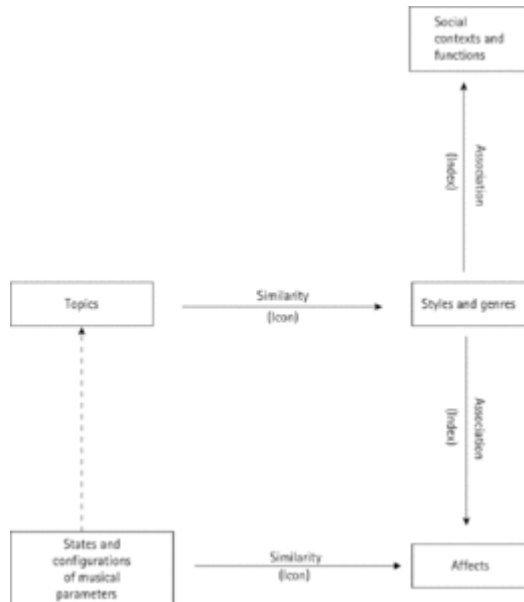


Figure 0.1 Semiotic model of affective and topical signification.

The differences between affective and topical signification, gleaned from eighteenth-century semiotics and Allanbrook's discussion, feed back into the semiotic status of topics in modern semiotics. The route of topical signification in Figure 0.1 resembles the semiotic model put forward by Raymond Monelle, shown in Figure 0.2, but his figure strays from mine in one important respect: whereas in Figure 0.1 the

relation of topics to (p. 31) styles and genres is iconic, in Figure 0.2 the relation of musical item to object is indexical. Indeed, for Monelle,

many topics are in the first place not iconic, but indexical; the dance measures listed by Ratner and Allanbrook, the "fanfare" motive, the topics of "French overture" and "Turkish music" do not signify by virtue of resemblance, but because they reproduce styles and repertoires from elsewhere. Insofar as the slow movement of the "Jupiter" Symphony is in sarabande meter, it presents the dance measure itself rather than an imitation of it, and thus signifies indexically. (2000: 17–18)



Figure 0.2 Semiotic model of indexical topics, after Monelle, *The Sense of Music* (2000), 18, fig. 2.1.

Ironically, Monelle goes on to substantiate this view by quoting Chabanon's words cited by Allanbrook without taking into

account that Chabanon writes about imitation—not reproduction—of styles and repertoires and that such imitation seldom replicates all musical parameters. "In songs" that Chabanon describes, "warlike fanfares" (p. 32) or "hunting airs" are played not by hunting horns or military trumpets but by the keyboard; the same instrument can imitate the orchestral timbre of French overture and Turkish music, as testified by the

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introduction of Beethoven's "Pathétique" and Mozart's "Rondo alla Turca." Even in orchestral music the sound of Turkish instruments used in Janissary bands is imitated by a set of winds and percussion detailed by Monelle (2006: 117–19).

Of course, Monelle is aware that topics do not "reproduce" all aspects of styles or repertoires from which they are derived. This is why he qualifies his original statement in the second sentence, when he writes that the slow movement of the "Jupiter" Symphony "presents" the sarabande "measure" rather than the sarabande. But "presentation" of selected qualities is not a "reproduction" and, in semiotic terms, it does not qualify as an *index* but an *icon*. The fact that Monelle bases his interpretation of "indexical topics" on the concept of reproduction indicates that he treats these topics as "samples" of genres and styles that have been "torn out" of their objects and incorporated into other styles or genres. The relation of a sample to its objects is based on "contiguity," which belongs to the definition of indexical signs (Monelle 2000: 17), but one can only speak of a sample if it reproduces all qualities of the object save its shape and size. A sample that reproduces some qualities of the object while omitting others is not a sample but an imitation—like Chinese imitations of fashion products by Giorgio Armani.<sup>54</sup> This issue touches on the debate about iconic signs, which rolled through the semiotic circles in the 1970s. In Eco's (1976: 191–217) account, Peirce defined an icon as a sign that represents "its object mainly by its similarity" (195) but failed to explain the notion of similarity as such. This task was left to his followers. According to Charles Morris, an "iconic sign...is any sign which is similar in some respects to what it denotes" (192). But, as Eco points out, "the problem lies first of all in the meaning given to the expression 'in some respects': if an iconic sign is similar to the thing denoted *in some respects*, then we arrive at a definition which satisfies common sense, but not semiotics" (193). His own solution, in a nutshell, is that "one decides to recognize as similar two things because one chooses certain elements as pertinent and disregards certain others" (196). As Eco emphasizes, the choice of pertinent elements is dictated by conventional rules that have been culturally accepted and coded.<sup>55</sup> His notion of similarity inspired Naomi Cumming's definition of a musical icon. Drawing on Peirce and Eco, Cumming proposes that X is an icon of Y if "certain characteristics of Y may be heard in X" (2000: 89). That is what can be said about the sarabande (Y) in the slow movement of the "Jupiter" Symphony (X). Consequently, this movement is an icon of the sarabande.<sup>56</sup>

## (p. 33) 4. Topics and Pictorialism

Whereas the route of topical signification in Figure 0.1 strays from Monelle's model of *indexical topics* (Figure 0.2), it is equivalent to his model of *iconic topics* (Figure 0.3). For Monelle, this group of topics includes such "musical items" as *pianto* or "noble horse." Iconic topics feature an *iconic* relation between the sign and its object and an *indexical* relation between the object-as-a-sign and its signification.

What may have induced Monelle to introduce the concept of iconic topics is Ratner's ambivalence about the relationship between topics and pictorialism. At the beginning of

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his chapter about topics Ratner divides them into types and styles but at the end he includes a section on pictorialism and in the first sentence of this section he writes: “Given the wealth of available topics, 18th-century composers at times could easily take a further step and become frankly pictorial in their music” (1980: 25). Whether this step would lead them into another group of topics or take them beyond the field of topics into a different realm is not clearly stated. Throughout the book Ratner never uses the concept of topics in reference to pictorialism, and pictorial effects are not subsumed under this concept by Allanbrook and Agawu.<sup>57</sup> Monelle justifies his decision to subsume them under topics with the fact that “topics may be glimpsed through a feature that seems universal to them: a focus on *the indexicality of the content*, rather than the content itself” (2000: 17). This “indexicality of the content” is represented by the right-hand-side arrows in Figures 0.2 and 0.3. It is a common feature of indexical and iconic topics and it marks the difference between iconic topics and *musical icons*. In the former the object of the iconic relation arouses further associations with culturally prescribed meanings, whereas in the latter such associations do not arise. The structure of musical icons is thus reduced to the iconic relation between musical item and signification (Figure 0.4). For Monelle, “the commonest musical icons” are “portrayals of waves, clouds, storms, horses” (17).<sup>58</sup> As a border case, he considers the cuckoo’s call. “If it is culturally prescribed that the imitation of a cuckoo by an orchestral instrument *inevitably signifies the heralding of spring*, then this icon has been transformed into a topic. It is not at all clear that this is the case; the cuckoo must be considered a prototopic” (17).



Figure 0.3 Semiotic model of iconic topics, after Monelle, *The Sense of Music* (2000), 18, fig. 2.1.



Figure 0.4 Semiotic model of musical icons, after Monelle, *The Sense of Music* (2000), 18, fig. 2.2.

Even if subsuming pictorialism under the concept of topics raises no logical problems, it is historically problematic insofar as musical

imitation of other music was unrelated to pictorialism in the eighteenth century. If the former was absent from the doctrine of mimesis, the latter had its firm place in this doctrine, though more modest than musical imitation of human voice. DuBos distinguished imitation of passionate utterances (p. 34) from imitation of natural sounds of inanimate objects (Le Huray and Day 1981: 19–20). Batteux drew an equivalent distinction between musical “portrait painting” and “landscape painting” but he considered “landscape painting” an inferior type of musical imitation. Rousseau and Sulzer criticized tone painting on the grounds that it compromises the aim of music, which is expression of sentiments.



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Using only tone [*Ton*] and movement [*Bewegung*], it is possible to imitate wind, thunder, the roar of the ocean, or the gurgles of a brook, a flash of lightning, and other such things. Even the most learned and skilled composers can be found doing this. But such [tone] painting violates the true spirit of music, which is to express the sentiments of feeling, not to convey images of inanimate objects.

(Sulzer 1792–94, 2: 357; Baker and Christensen 1995: 90, translation modified)

Ultimately, tone painting entered the edifice of eighteenth-century music aesthetics through the back door opened by Johann Jakob Engel. In his essay *Über die musikalische Malerey* (1780) Engel distinguished three types of tone painting. The first type, which can be called “tone painting” proper, consists in imitation of sonic impressions. The second type includes sonic analogues of other sensory impressions. The third type arises when the composer represents “not a part or a property of the object itself, but the impression that this object tends to make on the soul” (1998: 222).<sup>59</sup> This last category was inspired by Rousseau, who insisted that the composer should “not directly represent things, but excite in the soul the same movement which we feel in seeing them” (Barry 1987: 10). Engel echoes Rousseau when he emphasizes that

the composer should always paint feelings rather than objects of feelings; always the state into which the soul and with it the body are conveyed through contemplation of a certain matter and event, rather than this matter and event itself....So in the kind of storm symphony that appears in various operas, it is always better to paint the inner movements of the soul in a storm than the storm that occasions these movements.

(Engel 1998: 225)

The means of painting these movements listed by Engel—mode, key, melody, tempo, rhythm, harmony, register, instrumentation, and dynamics—correspond to those called on by Mattheson, Sulzer, and Kirnberger. One could thus argue that the third type of tone painting is the doctrine of affections in disguise. But this doctrine itself makes room for pictorialism. While it stipulates that music should represent movements of the soul (*Gemüthsbewegungen*), these movements may be similar to physical movements. As we have seen, Sulzer compares emotion to the motion of a gentle brook, a raging stream, or a wild sea. If physical motion and emotion display the same pattern, the difference (p. 35) between them disappears. Consequently, a musical passage may represent (1) a storm, (2) a feeling caused by storm, or (3) a stormy feeling. This line of argument is pursued by Koch in the article “Malerey” from the *Musikalisches Lexikon* (1802). At first, Koch follows in Sulzer’s footsteps and condemns tone painting but then he draws consequences from Sulzer’s comparison between physical motion and emotion and justifies pictorial effects when they depict feelings:

When certain sounds and motions out of inanimate Nature, such as the rolling of thunder, the tumult of the sea, the rustle of the wind and such, are imitated in music, this is called tone painting....However, occasionally there are instances in

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which such tone paintings are immediately related to the state of the soul or where they can express the stirring of sentiments. An example will explain this. When the composer takes recourse to a restless and wavering movement of tones in the aria from Wieland's *Alceste*—My life wavers / Between fear and hope / Like a skiff which moves between rocks / in the rage of swollen rapids—then this kind of movement is an artistic means of expressing the emotion. Here one should not think that the composer's intention is to paint a skiff thrown back and forth in swollen rapids or the swollen rapids themselves. Rather, the wavering and restless movement of tones represents the heart struggling between fear and hope and, therefore, the nature of the sentiment itself.<sup>60</sup>

Wenn in einem Tonstücke gewisse Bewegungen oder Töne aus der leblosen Natur nachgeahmt werden, wie z. B. das Rollen des Donners, das Brausen des Meeres, oder das Säufeln des Windes u. d. gl. so nennet man eine solche Nachahmung eine Malerey oder ein Gemälde....Es kommen aber auch zuweilen Fälle vor, wo sich solche Tongemälde unmittelbar auf die Schilderung des Seelenzustandes selbst beziehen, oder wo sie Ausdruck der Bewegung der Empfindungen sind. Ein Beyspiel wird dieses deutlicher machen. Wenn der Tonsetzer sich z. B. bey der Arie aus Wielands *Alceste*: Zwischen Angst und zwischen Hoffen / Schwankt mein Leben; wie im Rachen / Der empörten Flut ein Nachen / Aengstlich zwischen Klippen treibt—einer gewissen unruhigen und schwankenden Bewegung der Töne bedient, so ist diese Art der Bewegung eines derjenigen Kunstmittel, diesen Seelenzustand auszudrücken. Hier muß man also nicht glauben, als sey die Absicht des Tonsetzers durch diese unruhige und schwankende Bewegung ein Gemälde eines Nachens darzustellen, welcher in empörten Fluten hin und her geworfen wird, oder die empörte Flut selbst zu malen; sondern hier ist die schwankende und unruhige Bewegung der Töne auf das genaueste mit dem zwischen Angst und Hoffnung kämpfenden Herzen, und also mit der Natur der Empfindung selbst, verwandt.

(Koch 1802: cols. 924-25)

When Beethoven insists that his "Pastoral" Symphony (1806), including a depiction of storm, is "more expression of sentiments than tone painting" (*mehr Ausdruck der Empfindung als Malerey*), he takes recourse to Koch's argument and uses Koch's vocabulary.

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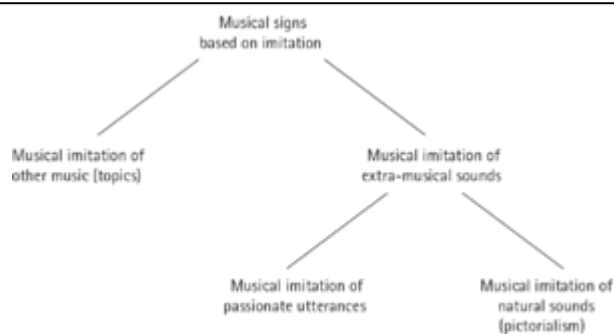


Figure 0.5 Classification of musical signs based on imitation.

From the perspective adopted in this volume, Monelle’s “iconic topics” are not topics because they do not form cross-references between musical styles or genres. Instead of dividing musical topics into iconic and indexical, it will be more appropriate to distinguish between two classes of

musical signs based on imitation (Figure 0.5): musical (p. 36) imitation of other music (topics) and imitation of extra-musical sounds. The second class can be further subdivided into two types: imitation of passionate utterances and imitation of natural sounds (pictorialism). The former type of imitation was preferred by the doctrine of mimesis; the latter was recognized but not preferred by this doctrine. Musical imitation of other music—Ratner’s topics—lay outside the doctrine of mimesis in the eighteenth century but was subsumed under this doctrine in the twentieth. Note that Monelle’s “iconic topics” not only blur the distinction between the two classes of signs based on imitation—including, respectively, topics and pictorialism—but also conflate two historically distinct types of musical imitation subsumed under the second class. Whereas the topic of *pianto* (sigh motive) is an imitation of passionate utterance (sigh), the topic of “noble horse” is an imitation of a natural sound (gallop).

Although the signs in Figure 0.5 refer to different kinds of objects, they have the same structure of signification, shown in Figure 0.3, within which different sign-object relations receive different emphasis. In the second group, embracing imitation of passionate utterances and pictorialism, the emphasis falls on the *iconic* relation between the musical item and its object. If the sign-object relation between the musical item (sigh motive) and the object (sigh) is recognized, the listener can associate the idea of sigh with a range of contexts and situations without misinterpreting the musical sign. The same holds for the topic of “noble horse” in relation to gallop. It follows that the *indexical* relation between object and signification is less important and the difference between iconic topics and musical icons, based on this relation, less crucial than suggested by Monelle. (Incidentally, it is contentious that the signification of the “cuckoo” is less “culturally prescribed” than the signification of the “noble horse.”) By contrast, in the case of Ratner’s topics, the iconic relation between a musical item (sarabande-as-a-topic) and its object (sarabande-as-a-genre) is trivial because both of them belong to the musical realm. Instead, signification of topics hinges on the *indexical* relation between the object (sarabande-as-a-genre) and its affect, which Monelle describes, quoting Ratner, as a dance of “a deliberate, serious character which represented the high style” (2000: 18).

(p. 37) He adds that “it was thought to have had a Spanish origin (Koch 1802, column 1289); perhaps it made people think of the Spanish court, and thus of lofty decorum.

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Mozart's signification in the 'Jupiter' is *seriousness* and *decorum*, not merely 'sarabande'" (2000: 17–18). The distinction drawn by Monelle between the seriousness and the decorum of the sarabande hinges on the distinction between affects and social contexts of styles and genres represented, respectively, by the downward and upward arrows on the right-hand side of Figure 0.1. The downward arrow represents seriousness as an affective association of the sarabande. The upward arrow represents its decorum, which relates to further associations of this dance with its social function at the Spanish court. Koch took the information about Spanish origins of the sarabande from Sulzer (1792–94, 4: 128), who in turn took it from Mattheson (1713: 187). The culturally prescribed signification of the sarabande in the "Jupiter" Symphony thus reached Mozart's audience through the lineage described in section 2.

If, occasionally, the distinction between topics and pictorialism becomes obliterated, this is not because some pictorial effects are topics but, rather, because some topics originate in pictorial effects that have turned into styles or genres. For instance, frequent musical imitations of storm turned into the style of storm scenes in opera seria. Taken out of its proper context and used in other genres, the style of such scenes gave rise to the topic called by Ratner *Sturm und Drang*. The *ombra* topic, introduced by Ratner and discussed by Clive McClelland (2012), features tremolo effects and dotted rhythms that imitate trembling and irregular heartbeat as indexical signs of fear at the appearance of ghosts in *ombra* scenes. "Sigh" motives originate in imitation of sigh as an index of grief in vocal music but they turned into an attribute of the eighteenth-century culture of sensibility (*Empfindsamkeit*) in vocal and instrumental music. In each case, the signification of topics arises from their similarity to genres or styles rather than from direct musical imitation of nonmusical sounds. Although such styles were not clearly recognized in their own times, they can be included in the list of eighteenth-century topics, even if their topical status is different—and, admittedly, more fragile—than that of the sarabande, the minuet, or the march.

## 5. Topics and Rhetoric

As we have seen, the contrast between music and language was the hallmark of eighteenth-century aesthetics. But, as much as it emphasized the distinction between natural and arbitrary signs, the eighteenth century drew on the parallel between music and language. If the contrast was stressed by semiotics, the parallel was pursued by musical rhetoric.

After the surge of interest in rhetoric, its influence on eighteenth-century music theory and aesthetics came to be questioned by many authors. Some of them established an opposition between rhetoric and semiotics, but the main actors of my discussion so far—whether or not involved in the business of semiotics—were all committed to (p. 38) the rhetorical enterprise.<sup>61</sup> The most prominent champion of musical rhetoric was, of course, Mattheson. His discussion of the compositional process in terms of invention, disposition, elaboration, decoration, and execution draws on five stages of rhetoric—*inventio*,

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*dispositio, elocutio, memoria, and pronuntiatio*—and his division of musical composition into six parts—*exordium, narratio, propositio, confirmatio, and peroratio*—was based on its analogy to speech.<sup>62</sup> Analogies between music and rhetoric were commonplace in neoclassical aesthetics. Scheibe's *Critischer Musikus* (1745) was informed by Gottsched's *Versuch einer Critischen Dichtkunst* (1730) and *Ausführliche Redekunst* (1736), and Scheibe frequently refers to the “sister disciplines” of music, rhetoric, and poetry. Batteux distinguishes fine arts from eloquence but he compares poetry, music, and dance to rhetoric (Le Huray and Day 1981: 50) and encourages the union of these arts with Quintilian's remark about the unity of words (*verba*), voice (*vox*), and gesture (*gestus*) in the delivery of oration (Le Huray and Day 1981: 53–54). For Rousseau the common origins of music and language justify their parallel functions in the society, which are to speak, respectively, to heart and reason. In the *Essai sur l'origine des langues* he calls for the recovery of society through restoration of “the public rhetoric of oratory,” which is “the language of liberty”; and “the more private rhetoric of vocal melody,” which is “the language of feeling” (Barry 1987: 68). The function of music as the language of passions (*Sprache der Leidenschaften*) or sentiments (*Sprache der Empfindungen*) was reiterated by Sulzer, Koch, and Forkel, as was the connection of music with heart and language with reason. Sulzer and Koch turn back to the idea of musical rhetoric when they describe the process of composition in terms of invention, disposition, elaboration, and execution.<sup>63</sup> Forkel distinguishes between musical grammar and rhetoric, and his account of music history is predicated on the parallel development of music and language “from the very beginning until the highest perfection” (*vom ersten Anfang an bis zur höchsten Vollkommenheit*; 1788: 2).

The influence of rhetoric on eighteenth-century music theory and aesthetics extends to the concepts directly related to musical topics. The division of musical styles into high, middle, and low corresponds to three rhetorical styles (*tria modi dicendi*)—*sublimis, mediocris, and humilis*—to be selected by the orator so as to suit the occasion, the status of persons, and the importance of matters to be discussed in the oration (Scheibe 1745: 139–40). The division into the church, theatrical, and chamber styles—Mattheson's *genera stylosum*—corresponds to the division into three rhetorical genres (*tria genera dicendi*): *deliberativum, iuridiciale, and demonstrativum*. In the modern era these *genera* were further subdivided into different genres of oration. The classification of musical genres, undertaken by Mattheson in *Kern melodischer Wissenschaft* (1737) and *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* (1739), parallels Gottsched's classifications of rhetorical and poetic genres in *Versuch einer Critischen Dichtkunst* (1730) and *Ausführliche Redekunst* (1736).<sup>64</sup> The goal of music to move the listener is equivalent to one of three rhetorical functions (*tria officia dicendi*): *docere, movere, delectare*. The concept of affect (*pathos*), fundamental for the doctrine of affections, was derived from one of three methods of rhetorical persuasion: *ethos, pathos, and logos*. The requirement that music should imitate passionate accents of human voice, essential for the doctrine of mimesis, was based (p. 39) on the authority of Cicero, who asserted that “every motion of the soul has by nature a certain countenance, sound, and gesture” (*omnis motus animi sum quemdam a natura habet vultum, at sonum, at gestum*).<sup>65</sup>

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Given that Ratner defined topics as “subjects for musical discourse,” thus framing them with the metaphor of music as language, it is not surprising that he labeled them with a rhetorical concept. In Classical rhetoric topics—Greek *topoi* or Latin *loci communes* (common places)—were categories of arguments and thus methods of finding materials for speeches. As such, they were discussed by Aristotle and Cicero as tools of invention. Cicero’s discussion in *Topica* became canonical for later authors, and his list of sixteen topics persisted in rhetorical textbooks into the eighteenth century. It includes arguments from the whole and parts, from genus and species, from similarities and contraries, from adjuncts, and so on. Clearly, these categories can subsume any number of arguments, depending on circumstances of a given case: they are containers that can hold any content. As noted by Stephen Rumph, Ratner’s topics are not equivalent to rhetorical topics nor do they align with their applications to music in the eighteenth century. Rumph further points out that, as tools of invention, topics were disdained by eighteenth-century authors. He thus concludes that “Ratner’s types and styles violate both the letter and the spirit of the classical *ars topica*” (2012: 83).<sup>66</sup> Allanbrook retraces Rumph’s line of argument, revisits his sources, and confirms his conclusion. She suggests that Ratner may have adopted the concept of topics from *Music in the Baroque Era* published in 1947 by his mentor, Manfred Bukofzer. “Unfortunately, Bukofzer harbored a fundamental confusion about the nature of these *loci topici*, which he identified with the treasure house of the *Affektenlehre*” (2014: 91). Even more importantly, Allanbrook notes the similarity between Ratner’s musical topics and literary topics discussed by Ernst Robert Curtius in *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (1953) but she points out that Curtius’s topics are no “common places” but “commonplaces”—a collection of themes and plots for literary discourse. “Common places and commonplaces are not the same” (97).

Rumph and Allanbrook are right that Ratner’s musical topics are not equivalent to rhetorical topics, but it is worth reviewing the relation of the former to the latter in order to explain the role of topics in musical invention. In the era when composers were expected to compose new pieces on daily basis, the problem of invention was of enormous practical importance and was frequently raised in composition handbooks. Although their authors stress that invention is a matter of genius and thus cannot be learned,<sup>67</sup> they come up with advice on how to stimulate it. The most important tools of musical invention are *ars combinatoria* and *loci topici*.<sup>68</sup> These tools are first mentioned by Johann David Heinichen in the preface to *Gründliche Anweisung zur Erlernung des General-Basses* (1711). The former is treated by him with disdain. Changing the order of notes is of little use in finding materials for compositions because “the tenderness or the soul of music cannot be found in such wooden notes” (*die Tendresse oder Seele der Music unmöglich bey solchen hölzern Noten zu finden ist*; 12–13). By contrast, *loci topici* are the main source of invention because they pursue “the true goal of music” (*den wahren Endzweck der Musik*) which is “to move the listener’s affections” (*die Gemüther der* (p. 40) *Zuhörer zu bewegen*; 10). For Heinichen, this goal should be achieved through expression of affects contained in the text of vocal music. The prospect of inexhaustible riches awaiting composers in the domain of expression fills him with awe: “What an unfathomable sea we still have before us in the expression of words and the affects in music!”<sup>69</sup>

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Out of the sixteen *loci topici*, Heinichen uses only one, the *locus adjunctorum*, which he subdivides, after Cicero, into *antecedentia*, *concomitantia*, and *consequentia*. The “adjunct” to music is its text while the antecedents, concomitants, and consequents are the words of the text occurring before, during, and after a given musical passage. In his early treatise he applies this tool of invention to the aria “Bella donna e che non fá?” In the expanded and revised version of his preface from *Der General-Bass in der Composition* (1728), he takes four other texts and shows incipits of sixteen arias. Although his concept of topics is different from Ratner’s, Heinichen’s application of *loci topici* in these arias takes recourse to Ratner’s topics: the “heroic decision” (*heroische EntschlieÙung*; 39) of Metilde in the third aria is represented with the fanfare (Example 0.5a), the tenderness of Aminta for his shepherdess in the ninth aria with the siciliana (Example 0.5b), and their “sighing love” (*seuffzende Liebe*; 64) with *Seufzer* (sighs), emblems of *Empfindsamkeit* (Example 0.5c). Heinichen explicitly names the siciliana and describes it as a “kind of composition which has something languid to it,”<sup>70</sup> thus linking its affect to genre.



Example 0.5 Heinichen, *Der General-Bass in der Composition* (1728): (a) 39, fanfare; (b) 62, siciliano; (c) 64, *Seufzer*.

Mattheson’s discussion of *loci topici* in Part Two of *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* uses the full list of Cicero’s topics.<sup>71</sup> The “unfathomable sea of affects” (*Affektenmeer*) is just one of them but the most noble of all. For Mattheson musical representation of affects is “the richest source, indeed, in my humble opinion, the most reliable and essential guide to invention” (1739: 127; Harriss 1981: 290). Since he does not constrain them to (p. 41) affects of the text, he subsumes this source not under *locus adjunctorum*, as Heinichen, but under *locus descriptionis*, thus emphasizing the function of music to represent or “describe” affects. As he points out, “because of the very quantity and nature of such abundant and multifarious passions, this

description-locus cannot possibly be given as many clear and specific rules as the preceding [*locus notationis*]” (1739: 127; Harriss 1981: 290) but he sends the reader back to his discussion of affects in Part One, where he first broaches the idea of affects as tools of invention, employs Heinichen’s metaphor of the “sea of affects” and refers to the discussion of *loci topici* in Heinichen’s treatises.

The associations of affects with genres, which Mattheson discusses in the further course of *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, could have led him to the conclusion that (p. 42) representation of affects can be accomplished by emulation of small compositions. Consequently, he could have realized that specific rules of *locus descriptionis* can be derived from the study of dances and marches. This conclusion is not reached by Mattheson but it is drawn by Sulzer and Kirnberger. While Sulzer dismisses rhetorical *loci communes*, he approvingly refers to Mattheson’s discussion of musical invention in the



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article “Erfindung” (Sulzer 1792–94, 2: 90), and his remarks about invention in instrumental music, scattered in other articles, imply that invention of larger compositions is more challenging than invention of small ones. Apparently, the challenge is the greater, the greater the composer’s freedom in defining the character of a composition. From the fact that the overture and the symphony have more closely determined characters it follows that in these genres the composer has “something by which to base his invention, since his music must express the main character [*Hauptcharakter*] of the play,” but “the invention of a concerto, trio, solo, sonata, and the like...is left almost entirely to chance” (Sulzer 1792–94, 2: 678; Baker and Christensen 1995: 96). By contrast, invention of small compositions is facilitated by their characters, “and the composer has a plumb-line as to their character by which he may proceed in its composition” (Sulzer 1792–94, 2: 678; Baker and Christensen 1995: 96). Although Sulzer does not formulate any advices for composers, his advice for performers, quoted earlier, to practice dances in order to learn how to express characters of larger compositions is based on the assumption that larger compositions are made out of small compositions and it implies that small compositions can be used by composers as tools of musical invention outside their own genres.

The role of dances as tools of musical invention was explicitly noted by Kirnberger. In the preface to the second volume of *Die Kunst des reinen Satzes* (1776) he promises to “aim above all at determining the true character of the various commonly accepted dance melodies, since a thorough knowledge of them greatly facilitates the invention of melodies that have a definite expression of some sentiment or passion” (1982: 279). Kirnberger did not fulfill this promise due to his illness and death but filled this gap in his treatise with *Recueil d’airs de danse caractéristiques* (1777), whose aim, specified in the subtitle, was “to serve as models for young composers and exercises for those who play the keyboard.” Kirnberger’s unfulfilled promise sheds light on the relation between musical and rhetorical topics. The suggestion that small compositions facilitate invention and the fact that they form the source of Ratner’s topics indicates that musical topics—though not equivalent to rhetorical ones—are related to them. As islands of affective signification emerging from the sea of eighteenth-century music, they find their place in Heinichen’s *locus adjunctorum* and Mattheson’s *locus descriptionis*. If rhetorical topics are “common places” where one can find materials for speeches, musical topics are “commonplace” materials found at one “common place.”

One more peculiarity of musical topics should be noted. If the concept of topics is related to the first part of rhetoric (*inventio*), the definition of musical topics as “styles and genres taken out of their proper context and used in another one” suggests their relation to the third part of rhetoric (*elocutio*). This relation was discussed in section 1. It follows that, by contrast to rhetorical topics, musical topics are associated with two (p. 43) different parts of rhetoric—invention (*inventio*) and style (*elocutio*).<sup>72</sup> This is reflected in the remark by Kirnberger’s pupil, Peter Schulz, in the article “Schreibart; Styl” of Sulzer’s *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste*, that “it is difficult to decide what belongs to the ideas of a musical work and what to its style.”<sup>73</sup> The reason for this difficulty is that, unlike language, music lacks the distinction between the content of an

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utterance (*res*) and its expression (*verba*), on which the distinction between *inventio* and *elocutio* is founded. In language, which is a system of arbitrary signs, sign and object can be easily separated. In music, which consists of natural signs, similarity between sign and object means that they merge together. Even if topics are comparable to words, their associations with affects emerge from affective signification of music based on similarity between musical motion and emotion.<sup>74</sup> This brings us back from rhetoric to semiotics. Ultimately, the difference between musical and verbal rhetoric hinges on the semiotic difference between music and language.

## 6. Topics of This Volume

If it has not yet become clear from my discussion, it is time to explain that this volume is dedicated to eighteenth-century musical topics. The focus on one research field justifies its inclusion in the series of *Oxford Handbooks* but, unlike other *Oxford Handbooks*, this handbook does not summarize the state of art in the field but establishes it and lays foundations under its future development. Although the study of musical topics has been conducted for more than three decades, it has been wrought with discrepancies that have prevented it from displaying its full potential. The aim of this volume is to clear away these discrepancies in order to turn topic theory into an efficient tool of analysis and interpretation.

Section I, “Origins and Distinctions,” traces the origins of cross-references between styles and genres of eighteenth-century music to transformations of eighteenth-century musical life. The new function of music as entertainment stimulated the quest for popularity and the need for recognizable musical materials. The ease and enjoyment of their recognition and association with familiar styles and genres were conducive to commercial success of compositions. This reality of music production and consumption left its mark on the genre of opera buffa, examined by Mary Hunter (Chapter 1). The author considers the practice of mixing popular materials—derived from other contexts of musical life—in this genre and identifies buffa topics that consist of materials endemic to opera buffa, whether or not they were imported (or importable) to other styles and genres. The following chapters discuss the emergence of topical mixtures in instrumental genres. Elaine Sisman (Chapter 2) writes about the transfer of this phenomenon from operas to symphonies. Further transfer of this practice to chamber music, discussed by Dean Sutcliffe (Chapter 3), was fostered by keyboard transcriptions of operas and symphonies and by chamber performances of orchestral works. Given the function of symphonies to introduce theatrical plays and operas, it was only natural for them to borrow (p. 44) their materials from the world of theater. Sisman shows how stylistic contrasts were inscribed in eighteenth-century views of the genre and how the symphony developed its own repertoire of topical markers derived from orchestral sonority. Sutcliffe uses the concept of chamber music in its modern sense constrained to domestic genres for one player per part—solos, duos, trios, quartets, and so forth—which in the eighteenth century fell under the definition of sonata. While they did not develop topics of their own, Sutcliffe finds that these genres absorbed a wider spectrum of topics, combined them with a greater

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versatility, and changed them at a quicker rate than any other genres of eighteenth-century music.

Section II, “Contexts, Histories, Sources,” documents historical reality of individual topics or groups of topics on the basis of eighteenth-century sources to music theory, aesthetics, and criticism. The first two chapters are devoted to dance topics. Whereas minuets and new German dances reigned in the ballrooms of the late eighteenth-century Vienna, French Baroque dances were no longer danced but in ballets and operas. The distinction between current and historical dances is of consequence for signification of dance topics and their effects on listeners. If references to current dances aroused associations with familiar environments and relied on familiarity of their step patterns, historical dances were voices of the past coming from distant locations—be it Arcadia or Versailles. Differences between these groups of dances are elucidated by Lawrence Zbikowski (Chapter 4) and Eric McKee (Chapter 5). Zbikowski uses his concept of “sonic analog” to account for different degrees of correlation between music and dance. McKee supplements his earlier work on minuets (2005, 2012) with detailed discussion of less known but more popular repertoires of contredanses, *Ländler*, and *Waltzer*. Hunt, military, and pastoral topics were explored by Monelle (2006). If Monelle questioned Ratner’s sources, Monelle’s sources are questioned by Andrew Haringer (Chapter 6), who reveals a number of eighteenth-century documents not considered by Monelle and shows how they can enrich and refine Monelle’s discussion. Catherine Mayes (Chapter 7) discusses Turkish and Hungarian-Gypsy styles. While the labels *alla turca* and *all’ongherese* were interchangeable and the styles denoted by them have similar musical characteristics (signifiers), they carry different meanings (signifieds) and perform different functions in eighteenth-century musical repertoire. Sarah Day-O’Connell (Chapter 8) lays foundation under the future investigation of the singing style: a vast topical field with multifarious signifiers derived from an array of vocal genres and with complex signifieds including categories such as beauty, innocence, simplicity, and, especially, comprehensibility. Matthew Head (Chapter 9) reconsiders the stylistic categories of fantasia and *Empfindsamkeit*. Regarding the former, he problematizes the fantasia topic by demonstrating that eighteenth-century fantasias were characterized not by a single style but a mixture of styles. Regarding the latter, sensibility was not a style but a broad aesthetic category. Even if Head identifies materials of fantasia that can serve as signifiers of the fantasia topic and finds idiomatic musical expressions of sensibility, his account of both topics is far more restricted—and clearly defined—than Ratner’s. Another problematic topic is *Sturm und Drang*. The name, derived from a pre-Romantic trend in German literature, has been criticized as anachronistic in reference to music. Clive McClelland (p. 45) (Chapter 10) replaces it with *tempesta*, which hints at the origins of this topic in depictions of storms, earthquakes, and other devastations. Since such cataclysms were usually caused by wrath of gods, *tempesta* is a counterpart of *ombra*, a topic derived from scenes involving supernatural beings. The two topics have parallel psychological effects of terror and horror and parallel sets of musical characteristics. Keith Chapin (Chapter 11) delves into the complexities of the learned style. As he demonstrates, the aura of learnedness surrounded a high number of styles reaching from

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*stile antico* to galant counterpoint. Chapin reviews the various concepts that governed this stylistic field, along with their technical and aesthetic implications, examines the origins of learned styles in various source genres and styles, and discusses their functions and signification. He also considers the aesthetic ambivalence of these styles: representing dignity and elevation due to their associations with church music and an elite professional tradition, admired for the display of technical prowess yet despised for their scholastic pedantry and the air of classroom exercises. Roman Ivanovitch (Chapter 12) identifies the source of the brilliant style in display episodes of instrumental concerti. Such display easily turned into quasi-theatrical play of the performer in front of the audience and could be emulated by the composer persona in other musical works. Like *buffa* topics in opera *buffa* and symphonic topics in the symphony, the brilliant style is a concerto topic in the concerto but can be transferred to other styles and genres.

Section III, “Analyzing Topics,” relates topic theory to music analysis. The fact that Ratner subsumed topics under the rubric of expression encouraged his followers to use them as tools of interpretation, but their musical characteristics are imbricated in various dimensions of musical structure and therefore have implications for analysis. For the North-German critics, all dimensions of musical structure stood in service of expression, but the contributors to this section show that the interaction between structure and expression can take both directions. On the one hand, the choice of meter, key, rhythmic figures, melodic gestures, or harmonic progressions can be motivated by topics. On the other hand, selection and succession of topics can be governed by structural demands. Danuta Mirka (Chapter 13) concentrates on the relation of topics to meter. Given the expressive qualities of meters in the eighteenth century and their associations with genres, the choice of meter and its changes in the course of a given piece are frequently conditioned by topics. At the same time, eighteenth-century peculiarities of metric notation are of consequences for topical identification. Vasili Byros (Chapter 14) dwells on the relation between musical topics and harmonic schemata—two different types of eighteenth-century conventions. While schemata can be dressed in different topics, certain topics combine with some schemata more frequently than others. Analysis of the correlation between the *ombra* topic and the *le-sol-fi-sol* schema in Beethoven’s “Eroica” leads Byros to a fresh interpretation of this masterpiece in light of Beethoven’s troubled biography. William Caplin (Chapter 15) pursues a special case of a topic inextricably linked with a single schema: the lament. He examines the structure of the schema and, building on his earlier study (2005), surveys the full range of formal function enacted by the topic. Joel Galand (Chapter 16) explores the role of topics in tonal processes shaped by eighteenth-century composers. Given that some topics (p. 46) are associated with specific keys, the course of such processes can be influenced by topics. Galand establishes conditions under which an influence of topics on tonal processes can be asserted and considers cases when their coordination with tonal processes can be assumed, even if it cannot be proven. The enterprise of relating topics to form was first undertaken by Kofi Agawu (1991). In his contribution to this volume Agawu (Chapter 17) provides a close reading of the relation between musical topics and form in the first movement of Mozart’s String Quintet in E flat major, K. 614, surveyed by Ratner (1980:

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237–45). The analysis demonstrates how topics enhance our experience of the sonata form on the one hand and thematic contrasts or affinities on the other. Stephen Rumph (Chapter 18) starts off by comparing topics to words only to draw attention to what he calls topical *figurae*: musical characteristics of topics comparable to distinctive features of phonemes. Since *figurae* articulate multiple topics and forge structural links between them, figural analysis accounts for the succession of topics in terms of distinctive features running beneath the topical surface. Robert Hatten (Chapter 19) develops the concept of topical tropes introduced in his earlier books (1994, 2004). He proposes a set of criteria to evaluate the effect of tropes based on the compatibility of topics, their dominance or subordination, interaction with surrounding materials, and influence on the expressive trajectory of a given work. It is tempting to draw parallels between the last two analytical approaches and two most influential streams of eighteenth-century music aesthetics discussed in this introduction. Rumph's approach can be thought of as a modern version of the doctrine of affections in its final phase represented by Forkel, in which transitions between sentiments are engineered by reconfigurations of characteristics derived from different musical parameters. Hatten's approach has its origin in the doctrine of mimesis favored by neoclassical aesthetics: his references to an internal agent as the subject of expressive states evoked by topics recall the efforts of North-German critics to account for the variety of affects in terms of a unifying character.

Analysis remains the focus of attention in the last two sections of this volume, but the analytical perspective shifts from composers to performers and listeners of eighteenth-century music. Section IV, "Performing Topics," explores the potential of topical analysis for historically informed performance practice. The three chapters in this section are devoted to keyboard music, "a quintessential locale for the play of a topic" (Ratner 1991: 616). John Irving (Chapter 20) explains how topics can help performers to enliven their musical experience by detecting and enacting stylistic opportunities comprised in eighteenth-century repertoire. Tom Beghin (Chapter 21) draws the distinction and connections between topics and rhetorical figures. He examines the topical reading of the first movement of Mozart's Piano Sonata in F major, K. 332, by Allanbrook (1992) in light of the rhetorical reading by Friedrich August Kanne and the experience of performing this piece on historical keyboards. Sheila Guymer (Chapter 22) holds up for inspection the other Mozart sonata discussed by Allanbrook—K. 333—and recounts experiences of two other fortepianists, Robert Levin and Bart van Oort, which corroborate the relation between topics and characters established in this introduction.

Section V, "Listening to Topics," rounds off the volume by linking back to Section I. If the use of topics by eighteenth-century composers was motivated by demands (p. 47) of eighteenth-century listeners, what did the listeners make of them? Melanie Lowe (Chapter 23) argues that topics were the springboard for understanding of musical structure and the construction of meaning by amateurs (*Liebhaber*). Consequently, she speculates that the way of handling topics was an important factor in commercial success or failure of musical works. She illustrates this point with Mozart's, Haydn's, and Pleyel's string quartets, which make different demands on the topical competency of their consumers and differently fared in the musical marketplace. Elizabeth Hellmuth Margulis

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(Chapter 24) suggests that topics may be responsible for different affective responses to surprise. She conducts an empirical study in which the same surprising event—general pause—occurs in different topical contexts and finds that it causes momentary intensification of different affects. Her results indicate that topic theory may become an ally of expectancy theory in solving the problem of affective differentiation. Julian Horton (Chapter 25) takes the concept of topics into the nineteenth century. Although old topics acquire new meanings and new topics emerge, the way of handling them remains key to the apprehension of musical forms by both amateurs (*Liebhaber*) and connoisseurs (*Kenner*) and bold topical mixtures continue to offend musical critics. Max Kalbeck's comparison of Bruckner's Seventh Symphony to "an impromptu comedy with stock characters" echoes Hiller's complaints about Hans Wurst springing into the middle of eighteenth-century works. Stylistic cross-references remain important factors in twentieth-century music, but the spectrum of such references and complexity of their sociocultural meanings exponentially increases. In the last decade the study of musical topics has extended from the eighteenth to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but explanation of their place in changed aesthetic environments and investigation of their function in postclassical repertoires lies beyond the scope of this volume. It is to be hoped that further music theorists and historians will take up the gauntlet thrown by the volume's contributors and turn topic theory into a fruitful mode of inquiry into music of the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries.

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## Notes:

(1) . About the role of topics as means of communication between composers and listeners, see Mirka (2008).

(2) . It is not my intention to survey the development of topic theory in this introduction. For such surveys, see McKay (2007) and Agawu (2008).

(3) . Mattheson’s appropriation of Kircher’s categories is based on the entry “*Stilo*” from Sébastien de Brossard’s *Dictionnaire de musique* (1703), whose German translation is included by Mattheson in *Das beschützte Orchester* (1717). Brossard modifies Kircher’s system by dropping *stylus canonicus* and advancing *stylus choraicus* to the rank of a species. For Kircher this style, including social dances, was one of two subspecies of *stylus hyporchematicus*, the other being *stylus theatricus* including theatrical dances in operas and ballets. Mattheson undertakes further modifications: he reintroduces *stylus canonicus* and replaces *stylus ecclesiasticus* with one of its subspecies (*stylus ligatus*) including compositions with *cantus firmus*. The genesis and evolution of Mattheson’s stylistic classification is discussed by Katz (1926) and Palisca (1983).

(4) . “Man kann und muß also, so wohl zu Kirchenmusiken, als zu theatralischen oder Kammerstücken die hohe, die mittlere, oder die niedrige Schreibart anwenden” (Scheibe 1745: 388).

(5) . “Man könnte überhaupt den musikalischen Styl, in den *religiösen* und *profanen*, oder wie es die Alten zu thun pflegten, in den geistlichen und weltlichen Styl eintheilen” (Schubart 1806: 343).

(6) . The criticism of the Italian style of instrumental music in Germany is summarized by Hosler (1981: 1–30).

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(7) . “Die Großmuth, die Majestät, die Herrschsucht, die Pracht, der Hochmuth, das Erstaunen, der Zorn, das Schrecken, die Raserey, die Rache, die Wuth, die Verzweiflung... können in keiner andern Schreibart, als in der hohen, ausgedruckt werden” (Scheibe 1745: 127).

(8) . The debate is recounted by Schmidt (1981: 14–15), who illustrates it with the same quotations.

(9) . Mattheson (1739: 69; Harriss 1981: 191) emphasizes that the church, theatrical, and chamber styles retain their functions even if the music is performed in other venues. Ultimately, their affective implications are determined by functions—not by venues as such.

(10) . “Alles trägt zur Gemüthsart eines Menschen etwas bey; die Natur und ihr Urheber, das Land, da man gebohren ist, die Aeltern und Vorfahren, das Geschlecht und Alter, das Vermögen und der Stand, die Auferziehung, die Zeiten, darinn man lebt, die Glücks- und Unglücksfälle, die Personen, mit denen man umgeht, u. a. m.” (1751: 499).

(11) . “Ein widersprechender Character ist ein Ungeheuer, das in der Natur nicht vorkömmt: daher muß ein Geiziger geizig, ein Stolzer stolz, ein Hitziger hitzig, ein Verzagter verzagt seyn und bleiben” (Gottsched 1751: 619).

(12) . “Der Charakter der Personen mildert oder stärket die Leidenschaften. Die Freude, die Traurigkeit, das Schrecken, die Furcht, der Haß, die Liebe u. d. gl. sind nicht bey allen Personen gleich heftig, mittelmäßig, oder schwach. Wir haben gewisse Stufen, welche zu überschreiten, die Charaktere der Personen uns ausdrücklich verbieten” (Scheibe 1745: 94–95).

(13) . “Es ist dahero als ein Grundsatz anzumerken, daß, wenn ein Componist die Charaktere der Personen beobachtet, er nimmermehr wider die Gemüthsbewegungen verstoßen kann” (Scheibe 1745: 309).

(14) . “Es giebt Menschen, die in ihren Handlungen, und in ihrer Art zu denken, gar keinen bestimmten Charakter zeigen, die einigermaßen den Wendfahnen gleichen, die für jede Wendung und Stellung gleichgültig sind, und sich also nach allen Gegenden gleich herumtreiben lassen” (Sulzer 1792–94, 1: 455).

(15) . These ideas are reflected in Jérôme-Joseph de Momigny’s analysis of Mozart’s String Quartet in D minor, K. 421, from the *Cours complet d’harmonie et de composition* (1806), where Momigny provides the first movement with the text of Dido’s lament, thus turning it into a cantata (Irving 1998: 75–76). Grétry proposes to underlay Haydn’s symphonies with texts (1978: 183; see Geck 1995: 310 n. 14).

(16) . This conclusion is drawn by Allanbrook (2014). In this paragraph I follow Allanbrook’s discussion in Chapter 1 and make use of her quotations.

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(17) . “Nowadays we hear so many concertos, symphonies, etc., that in their measured and magnificent tones allow us to perceive the dignity of music; but before one suspects it, in springs Hans Wurst, right into the middle of things; and the more serious the emotion that had immediately preceded his arrival, the more he arouses our sympathy with his vulgar antics” (Sisman 1997: 22).

(18) . Luther’s views on music and their influence on eighteenth-century German music aesthetics are discussed by Hosler (1981: 36–42).

(19) . Mattheson applies the term *Affektenlehre* to affections as such, not to their emulation by music. For the criticism of this term and its problematic uses by modern authors, see Buelow (1983).

(20) . It has been taken for granted by several authors (Hosler 1981; Schmidt 1981; Buelow 1983; Neubauer 1986) that Mattheson’s discussion of affects relies on *Les passions de l’âme* by René Descartes (1649). In fact, Mattheson mentions Descartes’s treatise as a good read about the theory of temperaments (1739: 15) but he does not adopt the six elementary passions listed by Descartes (Wonder, Love, Hatred, Desire, Joy, and Sadness) and deviates from Descartes’s account of the motion of animal spirits. Apart from the reasons mentioned in the main text, my suggestion that Mattheson’s theory of affects comes from Kircher is supported by the fact that Kircher’s theory forms the basis of Christoph Raupach’s *Veritophili deutliche Beweis-Gründe* (1717), which Mattheson prepared for publication and mentions on the same page as the Descartes treatise.

(21) . Mattheson affirms that “the experiment is new” (1739: 161; Harriss 1981: 345), but in fact it is based on Friedrich Erhard Niedt’s experiment from the second volume of *Musikalische Handleitung*, edited and published by Mattheson in 1721, where Niedt changes the rhythm of the same bass line and harmonic progression, turning it into a series of dances: allemandes, courantes, sarabandes, minuets, and gigues.

(22) . A summary of affective qualities ascribed by Mattheson to musical parameters can be found in Schmidt (1981: 28–38). Neubauer (1986: 51–59) critically reviews Mattheson’s discussion.

(23) . “Die zeichnenden Künste scheinen die einzigen zu seyn, die aus Nachahmung der Natur entstanden sind. Aber Beredsamkeit, Dichtkunst, Musik und Tanz sind offenbar aus der Fülle lebhafter Empfindungen entstanden, und der Begierde, sie zu äußern, sich selbst und andere darin zu unterhalten. Die ersten Dichter, Sänger und Tänzer haben unstreitig wirkliche, in ihnen vorhandene, nicht nachgeahmte Empfindungen ausgedrückt” (Sulzer 1792–94, 3: 487–88).

(24) . This and other excerpts from Rousseau’s *Essai* in Victor Gourevitch’s translation appear in Thomas (1995).

(25) . In any case, the concepts of “imitation” and “expression” form a false dichotomy for music. As Hosler (1981: xiv–xviii) points out, the terms “expression,” “imitation,”

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“depiction,” “painting,” and “representation” were used interchangeably by eighteenth-century authors. See note 48.

(26) . “Die gute Wirkung der wichtigsten Werke des Geschmacks gründet sich auf die Eigenschaft des menschlichen Gemüthes, der zufolge wir gar oft von dem Guten und Bösen, das andern Menschen begegnet, wie von unserm eigenen gerührt werden, und deswegen einen wahren und herzlichen Antheil daran nehmen” (Sulzer 1792–94, 4: 531).

(27) . My discussion in this paragraph is indebted to Barker-Benfield (1992: 3–9).

(28) . “In dem Schalle kann Zärtlichkeit, Wohlwollen, Haß, Zorn, Verzweiflung und andre leidenschaftliche Äußerung einer gerührten Seele liegen. Darum kann durch den Schall eine Seele der andern empfindbar werden” (Sulzer 1792–94, 3: 91).

(29) . “Wir wollen hier nur noch einige besondere Beyspiele anführen, an denen man fühlen wird, wie ein und eben dieselbe Folge von Tönen, durch Verschiedenheit des Metrischen und Rhythmischen, ganz verschiedene Charaktere annimmt” (Sulzer 1792–94, 3: 378–79).

(30) . “Das wichtigste Werk über die Theorie wird ohne Zweifel das seyn, was der Berlinische Tonsetzer Hr. Kirnberger unternommen hat, wenn erst der zweyte Theil desselben wird an das Licht getreten seyn” (Sulzer 1792–94, 3: 439).

(31) . In fact, his demonstration that harmony changes expression of melody flies in the face of the superiority of melody over harmony, claimed (in defiance of Rameau) by Mattheson and endorsed (under Rousseau’s influence) by Sulzer. The “unresolved tension between (Sulzer’s) endorsement of melodic expressiveness and (Kirnberger’s) defense of harmony” in the article “Harmonie” is noted by Christensen (Baker and Christensen 1995: 14).

(32) . This is why the goal of music is not just to express sentiments but to maintain them. For Sulzer music is a sequence of tones “which have the power to maintain and strengthen the sentiment” (*die Kraft haben, die Empfindung zu unterhalten und zu stärken*; Sulzer 1792–94, 3: 424). Should music have no other goal than expression and arousal of sentiments, it would not differ from cries of fear or joy (3: 423).

(33) . A useful discussion of Sulzer’s concept of character is provided by Schmidt (1981: 46–50), but this author is unaware of the origins of this concept in Gottsched’s and Scheibe’s aesthetics.

(34) . Characters of these instrumental genres are discussed by Schmidt (1981: 51–54) and Hosler (1981: 163–68).

(35) . Connection between topics and characters is drawn by Agawu (1991: 26–27) but rejected by Matthew Pritchard (2012: 77): “Characters at this period were *not* topics—not limited associative nodes, activated and manipulated semiotically and thus publicly interchangeable with corresponding verbal signs.” The reason of Pritchard’s position is

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that he refers to the concept of character by Christian Gottfried Körner, who further develops Sulzer's distinction between character and sentiment. If for Sulzer musical representation of characters is possible insofar as they express themselves in sentiments, for Körner character cannot be directly represented by music. The character "could be read only by close and prolonged observation of the individual's moods or individual states of mind, states that music already had the means to depict" (71).

(36) . "Die Tanzstücke enthalten das mehreste, wo nicht alles, was unsere guten und schlechten Stücke aller Arten in sich erhalten: sie unterscheiden sich von jenen blos darin, daß sie aus vielen zusammengesetzte Tanzstücke sind, die in ein wol [sic] oder übel zusammenhängendes Ganze gebracht werden" (Sulzer 1792–94, 4: 711).

(37) . This passage is split into two parts and paraphrased by Allanbrook in her posthumous book (2014: 120, 123).

(38) . Although Allanbrook borrows the term "markedness" from Hatten (1994), her remark that topics "appear with varying degrees of markedness" indicates that she does not use this term in his sense. For Hatten "markedness" refers to asymmetrical relations between opposite musical characteristics such as major and minor mode. Thus it does not depend on "appearance" and has no "degrees"—a term of an opposition is either marked or unmarked. As Hatten explains, "markedness is not equivalent to salience" (this volume, note 4 on page 534).

(39) . Interestingly, Sulzer does not mention second-beat emphasis singled out by Allanbrook (1983: 38) as a distinctive feature of the sarabande.

(40) . This comparison is elaborated by Stephen Rumph (2012 and this volume) but his conclusions align with mine. The continuity of the linguistic analogy and the difference between the conclusions drawn from it by Allanbrook and Rumph are noted by Mirka (2014).

(41) . The first author to frame the concept of topics within Enlightenment semiotics was Stephen Rumph (2012). For a comprehensive assessment of Rumph's discussion, see Mirka (2014) and below.

(42) . The failure of Enlightenment semiotics to distinguish between indices and icons reflects an inherent property of iconic and indexical signs recognized by modern semiotics. Naomi Cumming explains that indices can be embedded in icons and illustrates this with a vocal expression of an emotional state: "Consider Peirce's further example of a shriek (CP 2), a sound that causes hearers to look immediately for the source of someone's pain or distress. It 'indexes' an intrusion on the body, or a confronting violation of someone's personal space and momentary expectations. At the same time it 'presents' (makes an aural icon of) distress...In both the 'live' and recorded settings, an 'index' to a physical state of the body (and indirectly to a confronting circumstance) may be heard within the sound, as an 'icon' of distress. In less extreme circumstances of vocal production, the indexing of a physical state in a quality of voice remains evident, but



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ceases to be of concern in itself, an interest is focused on the affective state alone” (Cumming 2000: 90). See note 47.

(43) . Chabanon’s ideas were echoed by Johann Gottfried Herder: “Music performs on the clavichord within us, which is our own inmost being” (Chua 1999: 118).

(44) . The development of Rousseau’s reaction against Rameau between the articles for *Encyclopédie*, their revised versions in the *Dictionnaire de musique* and the *Essai sur l’origine des langues* is discussed by Thomas (1995). As he concludes, the conceptions developed in the *Essai* “indicate a desire to formulate a coherent theory of music, constructed in opposition to Rameau” (126 n. 110).

(45) . In a footnote Sulzer refers to the article “Musique” from Rousseau’s *Dictionnaire* for an account of physical effects of sound.

(46) . To be honest, Mattheson’s doctrine of affections is not perfectly filtered through the sensualist epistemology. Apart from remarks on blood circulation, Sulzer includes references to animal spirits—ghosts of the old theory of emotions. His careful study of Mattheson’s writings was motivated by the insistence on music’s moral function, which Sulzer shared with Mattheson (Baker and Christensen 1995: 12 n. 20).

(47) . Far from being a regressive feature of Enlightenment semiotics, similarity between causes and effects has been observed in modern semiotics as a factor that blurs the distinction between iconic and indexical signs. “It is obvious that a photograph can be understood as similar to its subject or as caused by its subject” (Lidov 1999: 93). A recording of a shriek (see note 42) illustrates the same phenomenon in relation to an acoustic sign. In both examples, it is a physical reproduction of an object—based on causal relation and thus, in itself, an indexical sign—that enables the embedding of an index within an icon.

(48) . This is why theories of imitation cannot be cleanly distinguished from theories of expression (see note 25) and why the former tend to turn into the latter. In fact, the doctrine of mimesis is not annihilated by but, rather, embedded within theories of expression: “when considered historically, expression theories have their origin in mimetic theories” and “concepts of expression are seen to retain features of mimesis” (Paddison 2010: 127).

(49) . “Soll demnach die Instrumentalmusik...bestimmte Gefühle erwecken und unterhalten, so muß sie in solche politische, religiöse oder häusliche Umstände und Handlungen verflochten werden, die für uns von merklichem Interesse sind, und wobey unser Herz für den Ausdruck der Empfindungen, die sie erwecken und unterhalten soll, empfänglich ist” (Koch 1802: cols. 792–93).

(50) . “Bey der Vocalmusik hingegen bereitet der Text den Zuhörer vor, hilft ihm zu der beabsichtigten Stimmung, und giebt den ausdrückenden Empfindungen Interesse” (Koch 1802: col. 793).

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(51) . Daniel Chua (1999: 123) speculates that the idea of such communication, presented by Chabanon in France and assimilated by Herder in Germany, foreshadows the end of music semiotics proclaimed by Roland Barthes. In an essay about Schumann's *Kreisleriana*, Barthes declares that there should be "no more music semiology" (1986: 307) and takes the step from semiotics to "somatics" of music in which "the body passes into music without any relay but the signifier" (308).

(52) . The difference between topical signification and affective signification of music can be caught in terms of *ratio facilis* and *ratio difficilis* developed by Umberto Eco. "One could say that in cases of *ratio difficilis* the nature of the expression is motivated by the nature of the content" (Eco 1976: 183). This is the case of affective signification, which is determined by every nuance of each musical parameter. If, by contrast, expression relies on broad stylistic features replicable from one composition to another, as is the case with topical signification, it "can indeed almost take on the function of proper names" (240), which exemplify *ratio facilis*. The concepts of *ratio difficilis* and *ratio facilis* are used by Monelle (2000: 15–16), who observes the slippage from the former to the latter involved in the phenomenon of topics, but Eco himself refers to this phenomenon when he lists "musical types" (such as "march") as examples of *ratio facilis* side by side with "literary and artistic genres" (1976: 239).

(53) . Topics are described as "thesaurus" or "vocabulary" by Ratner (1980) and Allanbrook (1983, 2014). Their comparison to words is drawn by many authors. Agawu defines the topic as a musical sign that forms "the union of a signifier and a verbally mediated signified" (1991: 128). Monelle describes it as "a kind of musical term or word" (2006: 3). Powers calls topics "terminological tags" (1995: 29), and Rumph describes them as "lexical items" (2012: 95).

(54) . Eco's discussion makes clear that, rather than by a topic, a sample can be represented by "a musical quotation referring to a whole work (/play me 'ta-ta-ta-taaa'/ may mean «play me Beethoven's *Fifth*»)" (1976: 226).

(55) . Eco's critique of iconic signs leads him to get rid of them and complicates their status in the account of those who retain icons. The conventional character of icons and indices is recognized by Monelle, who admits that "the topic is essentially a symbol, its iconic or indexical features governed by convention and thus by rule" (Monelle 2000: 17).

(56) . Rumph adopts Monelle's indexical interpretation of topics and tries to justify it by proposing that iconic and indexical signs refer to different types of objects: "Whereas an icon represents a merely possible object, an index is dictated by a real object. Thus, Haydn's *Creation* depicts an imaginary Chaos (icon), while his symphonies and quartets replicate features of actual dances, marches, and vocal styles (indices)" (2012: 83). Unfortunately, this justification has no basis in Peirce's semiotics. For Peirce an icon is "a sign which refers to the Object that it denotes merely by virtue of characters of its own, and which it possesses, *just the same, whether any such Object actually exists or not*" (Cumming 2000: 87, my italics). In other words, icons may or may not have real objects. What distinguishes an icon from an index is not whether their object is imaginary

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or real but whether their relation to the object is based on similarity (*icon*) or causality (*index*).

(57) . Topics and pictorialism are distinguished by Hatten (1994: 75). The distinction is preserved by Powers (1995: 28–29).

(58) . Surely, waves, clouds, storms, and horses are no less real than dances. The fact that for Monelle their portrayals form “musical icons” further undermines Rumph’s distinction between indices and icons discussed in note 56.

(59) . My summary of Engel’s discussion is based on Neubauer (1986: 74–75).

(60) . The first sentence of this translation is taken from Ratner (1980: 25).

(61) . The interest in rhetoric, sparked by Buelow (1980), is reflected in Bonds (1991) and Sisman (1993). The scepticism was voiced, among others, by Neubauer (1986) and Hoyt (1994, 2001). Rumph (2012) correlates the opposition between rhetoric and semiotics with that between rationalism of René Descartes and sensualism of John Locke. He suggests that the decline of the rhetorical tradition was caused by the rise of sensualism, but the opposition between rhetoric and sensualism is historically unfounded. Writings of Mattheson and Forkel demonstrate that the tradition of rhetoric and the philosophy of sensualism could be embraced by one and the same author. Even the opposition between the neoclassical and sensualist aesthetics was not absolute, as pointed out by Christensen (Baker and Christensen 1995: 4).

(62) . For a summary of Mattheson’s project of musical rhetoric, see Dreyfus (1996: 5–8).

(63) . For a discussion of these categories, see Baker and Christensen (1995: 17–20, 119–30).

(64) . Bonds (1991: 83) suggests that Mattheson’s classification might have been inspired by Gottsched’s *Ausführliche Redekunst* (1736), but this seems unlikely in light of Mattheson’s conflict with Gottsched (Kross 1983).

(65) . This sentence was quoted or paraphrased by Du Bos (1719, 1: 674), Batteux (Le Huray and Day 1981: 50), Rousseau (1986: 243), Sulzer (1792–94, 3: 422), Forkel (1788: 3), and Koch (1802: col. 994). Some of these quotations are mentioned by Hosler (1981: 45), from whom I take the English translation.

(66) . Instead, he proposes that they reflect the idiosyncratic use of this concept by Giambattista Vico (2012: 90–94).

(67) . For a brief summary of Heinichen, Mattheson, and Scheibe on invention, see Bonds (1991: 81–82). Similar opinions were expressed by Sulzer (1792–94, 3: 379) and Kirnberger (1776: 152; 1982: 416).

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(68) . The term *loci topici*, derived from the Greek *topoi* and Latin *loci communes*, occurs in German sources since the seventeenth century (Buelow 1966: 162). The semantic problems of this linguistic amalgamate are criticized by Mattheson (1731: 1).

(69) . “Was haben wir nicht vor ein noch zur Zeit unergründliches Meer vor uns an der eintzigen Expression der Affecten und Worte in der Music?” (Heinichen 1711: 9).

(70) . “Über haupt [*sic*] könnte man erstlich auff die *Tendresse* des Affectes fallen, und da möchte sich unter andern in einer *Siciliana*, (welche Art der *Composition* gern etwas *lanquissantes* bey sich führet) folgende *Invention* angeben” (Heinichen 1728: 62).

(71) . Mattheson took his list of topics from Erdmann Neumeister, who presented it in a lecture given at the University of Leipzig in 1695. This list differs from Cicero’s in a few details, and Mattheson alters it further by substituting *locus descriptionis* for Neumeister’s *locus definitionis*. See Tatlow (1991: 117–18) and Allanbrook (2014: 92, 203–4 n. 39–40) for further details.

(72) . This conclusion, drawn from my discussion of topics throughout this introduction, answers the question raised by Sisman: “But what aspect of rhetoric subsumes topics?” (1993b: 69). She speculates that they may belong to invention (*inventio*), arrangement (*dispositio*), style (*elocutio*), or delivery (*pronuntiatio*). While there seems to be no reason to relate topics to *dispositio*, their relation to *pronuntiatio* is a consequence of their relation to style (*elocutio*). According to Scheibe (1745: 139–40), “style is a certain manner of musical performance and belongs mainly to execution” (*der Styl ist eine gewisse Manier des musikalischen Vortrags, und gehöret hauptsächlich zur Ausdrückung*).

(73) . “Es ist schwer, genau zu bestimmen, was in jedem Werk zu den Gedanken oder zur Schreibart gehöre” (Sulzer 1792–94, 4: 328).

(74) . This is the slippage from *ratio difficilis* to *ratio facilis* mentioned in note 52.

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