Dramatic Impulse: Diegetic Music in the Operas of Giacomo Puccini

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Music in the Graduate School of Duke University

2020
ABSTRACT

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Abstract

This dissertation examines diegetic music as a rationale for the juxtaposition of traditional and modern idioms in operas by Giacomo Puccini. Through this perspective, I consider the resulting unevenness of style in Puccini’s works as an expression of the music’s dramatic function, rather than a consequence of any compositional shortcoming. Originally proposed in relation to film, diegetic music identifies music that exists within a portrayed world and is therefore recognized by fictional characters as music. In these pages, I argue that Puccini regularly steps into the world of his operas, adopting the persona of a fictional entity to compose in an old-fashioned Classical style that is distinct from his usual late Romantic idiom. I also propose and employ a tripartite analytical methodology for identifying and assessing diegetic music in opera, complete with a new definition for diegetic music that is specific to this genre. Approached in stages, this methodology first considers textual analysis of the words characters sing and the stage directions published in the score to establish a hypothesis for the presence or absence of diegetic music in specific passages. Musical analysis then aims to confirm or refute this supposition through clearly defined Classical forms that are otherwise absent in Puccini’s musical texture. Finally, dramatic analysis seeks to resolve any discrepancies between the textual and musical evidence, as well as assess the music’s contribution toward the plot and/or themes of the opera.
Dedication

I am deeply grateful for all the guidance and support offered by many throughout my graduate studies. But I would be remiss were I to neglect the contribution of one person in particular. Therefore, I wish to dedicate this dissertation in grateful memory to Dr. Irna Priore, without whose intervention I would have given up before I had even begun.
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Introduction

In Act II of Giacomo Puccini’s Tosca (1900), after having suffered torture at the command of the police chief Baron Scarpia and betrayal through his beloved Floria Tosca’s attempt to stop the cruelty, Mario Cavaradossi finds the strength to express a rousing condemnation of tyranny at the news of Napoleon Bonaparte’s victory in the Battle of Marengo (“L’alba vindice appar”). This moment stands out for many reasons: For its effect upon Scarpia, who promptly condemns Cavaradossi to execution and thereby sets in motion the remainder of the opera’s plot. For Cavaradossi’s sudden and inexplicable choice to goad Scarpia to further violence when the information he had struggled to conceal has already been exposed. For Cavaradossi’s strong reaction to an historical and political aspect of the opera that is otherwise largely neglected throughout the libretto. For the music’s incongruous march-like tempo and heroic mood in full orchestration with heavy bass and timpani accents. And not least of all for the moment’s melodic, harmonic, and formal predictability that leads Julian Budden to describe it as “a patch of mechanical commonplace in an otherwise highly individual score.”¹ Nor is Budden alone in his assessment. Scholars routinely cite “L’alba vindice appar” as a moment of weakness, an example of Puccini’s failure to realize the dramatic and musical demands of his libretto and instead merely provide an opportunity for his lead tenor to

show off high notes. George Marek, however, in the midst of his criticism, inadvertently hints toward another explanation:

The news of Bonaparte’s victory and Melas’ defeat bursts upon Scarpia. And all of a sudden it seems as if Puccini has run out of ideas. The best he can do is have Cavaradossi shout, “Victory! Victory!” and to follow that with a patriotic hymn (the words are poor here, too) which is so bungling and so out of keeping with the rest of the scene as to prove almost embarrassing in performance.  

Budden notes that Puccini’s setting for Cavaradossi’s outburst is not his own and even ascribes its ineptitude within the scene to its true authorship by the composer’s brother Michele. But what if we apply that excuse of alternative authorship not only to the real-world figure of Giacomo Puccini, but also to the fictional character of Cavaradossi? What if we take Marek’s criticism at face value and interpret that moment as Cavaradossi singing a patriotic hymn, that his words and melody were written by someone else within the world portrayed on stage, a fictional composer, as it were? This notion not only reflects an ontological separation between the real world and the portrayed one, but also presumes that the passage’s disappointing predictability represents something other than Puccini’s incompetence. Analysis of the passage readily explicates Marek’s impression of the music’s incompatibility with the remainder of the

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4 Budden, 215.
scene, revealing two eight-measure phrases that exhibit the distinctive 2+2+4-measure structure of a Classical sentence (Ex. 1).\(^5\) Moreover, regular embellishments highlight this structure through their emphasis on the first, third, and fifth downbeats of each phrase, thus outlining the ascending thirds sequence that both produces its sentential structure and facilitates its modulation to the minor dominant. Each phrase’s conclusion with a perfect authentic cadence in F minor further supports Marek’s impression of the passage’s disparity with the rest of Puccini’s late-Romantic idiom, which is characterized by a highly chromatic, gesture-rich, impassioned texture with a dearth of clear cadences, defined structures, and regular basslines.

Rather than assuming the incongruity of this passage to represent an error or failing on Puccini’s part, I propose an alternative explanation: diegetic music. By following Marek’s surely unintentional lead, I attribute the fictional source of Cavaradossi’s triumphant outburst to an unknown composer, a fictional inhabitant of the world portrayed on the operatic stage who sought to write a war anthem in the tradition of “The Battle Hymn of the Republic.”\(^6\) Not only does such an interpretation

\(^5\) An extra measure connects the two parallel phrases, and a codetta extends the second phrase through three repetitions of Cavaradossi’s melodic cadence that highlights the relationship between B\(^\flat\) and F. The formal functions adhere to those described by William Caplin in *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 35–48. Although Caplin was not the first to describe sentential structures, I have chosen to align my readings of Classical forms with his work due to its comprehensive thoroughness in describing formal structures and their functions.

\(^6\) The lyrics by which this song is generally known—including its “Glory, glory, halleluiah” refrain—were written by Julia Ward Howe in support of the Union cause during the American Civil War in 1861, but the tune was first published in an 1807 Christian camp meeting hymnbook and likely extends further back
ease the awkwardness of Cavaradossi’s outburst by suggesting its broader context through the song’s association with an unarticulated political background, but it also renders the predictability of the musical passage itself entirely logical. After all, in direct contrast to late Romantic styles, hymns are known for their melodic, harmonic, textural, and formal clarity, of which “L’alba vindice appar” presents a fine example. While perhaps still “bungling” and certainly yet “commonplace,” the tune’s predictability now serves a specific dramatic purpose, connecting Cavaradossi to a wider cause through the

music itself, rather than merely expressing his thoughts. More specifically, though, this interpretation changes the status of the music from nondiegetic to diegetic.

Originally coined by Claudia Gorbman to describe music that originates within the portrayed world in film, diegetic music has most notably been applied to opera through Carolyn Abbate’s influential work in which she describes the same concept as “phenomenal music.” In this dissertation, I propose a refinement of the concept’s definition that applies solely to opera and focuses upon the notion of a fictional composer to differentiate between fictionally composed music and the music that otherwise dominates operatic scores. Specifically, I define diegetic music as music that is attributable to the work of two composers simultaneously: a real-world composer and a fictional one. Its conceptual counterpart of nondiegetic music, on the other hand, is music that may be attributed solely to the work of a real-world composer. Real-world composers are those with familiar names, not only Puccini, but also Wagner, Verdi, Massenet, and so on.

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7 Although Cavaradossi’s text in the first phrase is well suited to a well-known war anthem that supports his political sympathies (“The avenging dawn appears to make the wicked tremble! Liberty rises and tyrannies collapse!”), the second phrase undermines this interpretation through its reference to specific staged circumstances (“You see me rejoice at the torture suffered here. Your heart trembles, oh Scarpia, executioner!”). By virtue of the musical model provided in the first phrase, as well as the operatic environment in which characters routinely express themselves through singing, Cavaradossi’s second phrase represents the adaptation of new words to a familiar melody and thus preserves the music’s diegetic status. Characters spontaneously re-writing texts associated with established diegetic music is discussed further in Chapter 4.

Fictional composers, on the other hand, exist only within the diegesis of a particular work. In the case of “L’alba vindice appar,” although the fictional composer is not explicitly identified, the interpretation of the passage as a war hymn relies upon the idea that someone who is not Cavaradossi at some point composed the melody with its text praising liberty and condemning tyranny. Otherwise, the supposition of a broader context to Cavaradossi’s outburst collapses and the passage reacquires the dramatic difficulties for which Budden, Marek and others criticize it. To cite a quintessential example of diegetic music from Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s Le Nozze di Figaro, Cherubino is explicitly identified in the libretto as the fictional composer (and performer) of his aria, “Voi, che sapete.” We know through Susanna’s explanation to the Countess that Cherubino wrote the song, while at the same time we also know that, in reality, Mozart wrote the music and incorporated it into his opera. By contrast, Cherubino’s later aria, “Non so più,” provides a spontaneous expression of his frustration and confusion over his sudden infatuation with women, rather than presents the performance of a song he consciously and deliberately composed sometime in the past. In that case, the music has only one composer who exists in the real world (Mozart) and is therefore considered nondiegetic. These new definitions simultaneously broaden

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9 My focus on intentional composition by a fictional composer lies in contrast to Edward T. Cone’s notion in his essay “The World of Opera and Its Inhabitants” (in Music: A View from Delft: selected essays, Robert P. Morgan, ed. [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989]) of characters who unconsciously and spontaneously “compose” their thoughts as music. Thorough clarification of this distinction appears in Chapter 2.
and narrow the notion of diegetic music, both eliminating the concept’s reliance on whether or not characters “hear” the music as music, and associating it with the work of a fictional entity that exists inside the opera.¹⁰

In addition to rethinking diegetic music in a specifically operatic context, this dissertation seeks to assess how Puccini employs the concept within his works. Over the years since its conscription from film studies, diegetic music has garnered markedly less attention in operatic circles than in film. More often than not, music and opera scholars mention diegetic music in passing, as a notion easily understood and warranting little more comment than acknowledgment of its presence. Nevertheless, inquiries into the assessment of what diegetic music in opera is—especially by Robbert van der Lek and Luca Zoppelli—and what it does there—such as those by Andrew Pau and Philip Rupprecht—have demonstrated the great analytical complexity and interpretive utility of the concept.¹¹ This dissertation continues both these lines of inquiry, aiming to assess not only how diegetic music appears within Puccini’s libretti and scores, but also what it accomplishes within the plots of his operas. I contend that Puccini routinely steps into

¹⁰ Abbate is the most famous exponent of the position that characters “hear” music as music. Her perspective—as well as that of scholars who challenge her approach—is discussed further in Chapter 2.

the role of a character or entity within his operas when creating diegetic music, fulfilling an impulse to compose as if he were part of the drama he seeks to portray. This perspective explains the prevalent assessment of the composer’s works as inconsistent in compositional quality since it also assumes fictional characters to be less accomplished composers than Puccini himself. Furthermore, diegetic music’s formal and tonal clarity evokes a traditional style that frequently interrupts Puccini’s otherwise modernist idiom, prompting what Alexandra Wilson dubs the Puccini problem.\textsuperscript{12} Scholars’ inability to categorize Puccini as either a traditionalist or modernist is therefore understandable since his music is, actually, both at once. My perspective on diegetic music offers a rationalization for the resulting juxtaposition of contrasting idioms in Puccini’s music and advocates this duality, not as a failing of the composer, but as a manifestation of his dramatic impulse.

This emphasis on Puccini’s dramatic intentions reflects an effort to assess his music along paths that demonstrate his strengths, rather than focus on his deficiencies. Perhaps chief among the composer’s strengths is his sheer popularity in the world of opera. His success brought him much fame and wealth during his lifetime, and many of his works have never left the world’s opera stages since their premieres over a century ago.\textsuperscript{13} A statistical search for the most performed operas worldwide in the past decade


\textsuperscript{13} Only Puccini’s final opera \textit{Turandot} has not yet reached its centennial, which will occur in 2026.
places three of Puccini’s works among the top ten, a feat matched only by Mozart.\textsuperscript{14}

Prominence on the world’s opera stages, however, does not necessarily translate into academic viability. In fact, Alexandra Wilson’s analysis of a particularly scathing review by Fausto Torrefranca in 1912 finds that at least some portion of the author’s bias stems from a disdain for the commercialism of Italian opera that was designed to appeal to a broad range of classes.\textsuperscript{15} Adriana Guarnieri Corazzol likewise attributes a similar hostility toward Italian verismo by Wagnerian critics of the 1890s to an underlying bias against artists motivated by financial gain.\textsuperscript{16} By another perspective, Julian Budden and Roger Parker note that popularity breeds imitation whose poor quality tends to diminish the original by association, and the result is an academic bias that paints popularity as a sign of critical unworthiness.\textsuperscript{17}

While Puccini’s adherence to the operatic genre allowed him to escape the disdain attached to popular music forms such as rock-and-roll and hip-hop, his

\textsuperscript{14} A search of the database on Operabase.com for operas performed worldwide from 2009 to 2019 yields La bohème as #4, Tosca as #5, and Madama Butterfly as #7, together posing Puccini as the third most performed opera composer behind Verdi and Mozart. A parallel search limited to performances in the United States shifts La bohème to #1 and Madama Butterfly to #4 while Tosca remains at #5, thus moving Puccini ahead of both Verdi and Mozart as the most performed opera composer in the US from 2009 to 2019. The three Mozart operas that appear in both these rankings are Die Zauberflöte, Le Nozze di Figaro, and Don Giovanni. Verdi’s contributions to both lists are La Traviata and Rigoletto, while Bizet’s Carmen and Rossini’s Il barbiere di Siviglia round out the top ten.


\textsuperscript{17} Budden, 479; and Roger Parker, “Analysis: Act I In Perspective,” in Giacomo Puccini: Tosca, Mosco Carner ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 117.
enormous popularity and financial success yet tainted him in scholarly circles, as evidenced by Joseph Kerman’s famous castigations. However, Puccini has benefitted from the more recent shift in music scholarship that challenges the previous rejection of popular art forms and now recognizes them as legitimate subjects of scholarly inquiry. 

Always reasonably well represented in biographies, Puccini scholarship has experienced a recent turn toward more analytical approaches, most notably with full-length theoretical studies by Andrew Davis, Nicholas Baragwanath, and Deborah Burton. Whereas in the past it was easy to dismiss Puccini, now the work of understanding him has begun. Of these authors, Davis most explicitly addresses Wilson’s Puccini problem through his perspective on the composer’s stylistic plurality. Rather than merely blending traditional Italian styles with more progressive European trends, Davis argues that Puccini “systematically withholds until pivotal dramatic junctures the most traditional of his musical tokens in order to heighten their effect on his listening audience.” This perspective finds accordance with Wilson’s supposition that film music—with its deliberate objective of accessing audiences’ emotions—may prove a

18 Joseph Kerman, Opera as Drama (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1956). The most famous of these is his dismissal of Puccini’s Tosca as “that shabby little shocker” (Kerman, 205).
21 Davis, 2.
fruitful means of understanding Puccini’s musical choices. And both Davis’ alignment between traditional music and drama, as well as Wilson’s invocation of film, unite in Puccini’s diegetic music, which therefore provides another facet to the solution these and other authors have proposed to the Puccini problem.

My research into Puccini’s use and deployment of diegetic music is presented in five chapters that progress from the background of the topic, to my analytical methodology, and finally to the application of that methodology. Given diegetic music’s conscription from another academic field, the background encompasses two chapters, each one seeking to disentangle the numerous and overlapping threads that complicate the subject in both film and opera studies. In Chapter 1, “Tangled Roots: Diegetic Music in Film,” this includes not only an understanding of the concept of diegesis and its application in film, but also its confusion with an unrelated concept from ancient Greek philosophy that shares the same name. Focused primarily upon reviewing and sorting the scholarly literature pertaining to diegesis and diegetic music in film, this chapter concludes with an assessment of the concept’s limitations and how various authors propose to address those inadequacies. Chapter 2, “Dual Lives: Diegetic Music in Opera,” serves much the same function in relation to opera scholarship, but also investigates the ontology of operatic worlds and how diegetic music fits within it. This

22 Wilson, Problem, 225.
chapter culminates in a statement of my approach to diegetic music as it pertains specifically to opera, including the precepts upon which it is based as well as the advantages to this new model of understanding.

Each of the final three chapters focus upon one of Puccini’s operas. Chapter 3, “Identifying and Assessing Puccini’s Diegetic Music,” uses examples from *Manon Lescaut* to present my analytical methodology in a two-part process of first developing then challenging the correlation between Classical form and diegetic music in Puccini’s oeuvre. This chapter also includes a demonstration of how a focus upon diegetic music can complement and augment perspectives from Alessandra Campana and Deborah Burton on the same music.23 With the analytical methodology for identifying and assessing diegetic music in Puccini’s operas established, the remaining two chapters present case studies for its application to two of the composer’s most famous works. Chapter 4, “Public Space, Realism, and Diegetic Music in *La bohème,*” draws upon the work of Arman Schwartz to reveal a tripartite relationship between soundscape, diegetic music, and *verismo.*24 This chapter features two primary analyses, first to dissect the intricate soundscape that poses a significant feature of *La bohème’s* Act II, and second to trace the primary melody of Musetta’s Waltz and its impact upon the plot in its three

23 Alessandra Campana, “The Real of Opera: Puccini’s *Manon Lescaut,*” in *Opera and Modern Spectatorship in Late Nineteenth-Century Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 143–171; and Burton, 129–149.

diegetic appearances. This chapter also proposes the notion of realistic-diegetic music as a specific type of musical realism. Finally, Chapter 5, “Autonomous Accord: Diegetic/Nondiegetic Simultaneity in Tosca,” examines two scenes to perceive how Puccini differentiates between their diegetic and nondiegetic elements while at the same time drawing them together into a musical whole. The primary analysis of this chapter focuses on the opera’s Act I Finale and introduces the notion of a double formal complex that not only explicates the contradictory objectives of its diegetic/nondiegetic simultaneity, but also reflects the opera’s themes of sacred and secular power.

In defining the parameters of my project, I have chosen to limit my focus not only to Puccini’s oeuvre, but also to published sources. The rationale behind this is twofold. One, since the perception of diegetic music can be substantially influenced by the staging of any given production, and both La bohème and Tosca are among the most frequently produced operas worldwide, taking the visual parameters of individual productions into account yields the potential for an unwieldy amount of data with infinite variety. That is not to say, however, that the visual element has no place in this study. As a live medium that is intended to be performed on stage with characters, costumes, and sets, to eliminate the visual entirely would be to deny a significant aspect of both the operatic genre and its use of diegetic music. Therefore, I have chosen to limit my consideration of the visual dimension to the stage directions published with Puccini’s vocal scores, which leads to my second rational for this choice: Puccini’s direct
influence. After careful consideration of the information presented in Dieter Schickling’s catalog of Puccini’s works, I have chosen to work primarily with the second Italian vocal-piano editions, each published by Casa Ricordi of Milan in the following years: *Manon Lescaut*, 1893 (plate number 95567); *La bohème*, 1896 (plate number 99000); and *Tosca*, 1899 (plate number 103050).\(^{25}\) In each case, Schickling’s summaries and notes indicate these to be the editions produced following the operas’ premieres and therefore most likely to represent direct input on both the staging and score from Puccini himself. All musical examples, references to the score, and published stage directions are therefore drawn directly from these editions or from scores that present identical information in the cited passages.

1. Tangled Roots: Diegetic Music in Film

Astute readers may have noticed that the first chapter of this dissertation on Puccini is not about opera at all, but rather film. The easy explanation for this is simply that the angle from which I have chosen to conduct my inquiry into Puccini—that is, diegetic music—comes from film studies. As will be revealed in this chapter, however, that answer is vastly oversimplified. Nevertheless, the state of scholarship on diegetic music in film is considerably deeper than in opera. Furthermore, on both sides of the academic coin, there are significant objections and challenges to the very concept of diegetic music. A careful and thorough disentangling of the scholarly discourse as it pertains to film therefore becomes essential before accomplishing the same for opera.

Conceptual precedent, however, is not the only explanation for why an opera dissertation should open with a chapter on film. Though it may not appear so on the surface, the two genres closely align through their mutual expression of a portrayed plot.¹ For this reason, the concept of diegetic music—that is, music that exists within a portrayed world and can therefore be heard by inhabitants of that world—applies equally to both film and opera. Beyond this core element, however, the two differ in significant ways, chief among them the primary means by which they express their plot.

¹ There are exceptions, of course, but most of the time when we think of film, we think of enacted fiction. Theater is therefore yet another genre that suits this core feature. It is excluded here to avoid unnecessary complications, but much this chapter on diegetic music in film could also be applied to staged theater.
Both genres possess a visual aspect, but the majority of plot development is achieved through characters and their interactions with one another. In film, they speak; in opera, they sing—a distinction that is particularly impactful with regard to diegetic music. While characters can and often do break into song in both media, the transition is far more apparent in film where they also transition between speaking and singing. In opera, however, both speaking and singing are portrayed through song, thereby obscuring the moment of transition and, on occasion, even the very presence of diegetic music. Film therefore offers a straightforward means of discerning and discussing the concept, absent the complicating factors that arise with opera.

Yet another reason why film should be the preferred medium for embarking upon a study of diegetic music lies in its greater accessibility. Part of this is practical, since film is ubiquitous in modern Western cultures and universally obtainable. Not only is film more appealing from a financial perspective since opera is more expensive on a per-use basis, but opera’s traditional live medium makes its consumption considerably more complicated. Whereas opera requires planning and forethought in term of identifying a desired performance, acquiring tickets, traveling to the auditorium, and negotiating first the exterior then the interior of the venue before being able to indulge, watching a film is increasingly as simple as choosing an option on a home live-streaming service and pushing PLAY on the remote. On the other hand, film’s greater accessibility is also experiential, since its conversational medium far more closely
mirrors our everyday lives than opera’s sung communication. Even when watching
films set in outlandish environments that in no way conform to our experience of reality,
the basic premise of how characters communicate is nevertheless easily grasped since
the speech and conversation by which they interact is intimately familiar to most of us.
Who, on the other hand, goes about town singing out their every thought and word? For
this reason if no other, opera is inherently unrealistic and perhaps a central reason why
many who have never even seen an opera purport to despise the genre.

Ultimately, we may assume a level of universal familiarity with film that we
cannot with opera, which makes it a better choice for the initial discovery and
exploration of diegetic music. But even that is misleading since the story of diegetic
music does not begin with film. This chapter delves into the surface simplicity of an idea
that obscures a deep complexity, carefully separating the twisted threads and
overlapping voices that constitute current scholarship on diegetic music in film. With a
goal of clearly articulating both scholars’ perceived problems with the notion of diegetic
music and how they propose to address its deficiencies, we first examine the concept’s
ancient origins and modern evolution. This background not only reveals the hidden
depths of diegetic music, but also establishes a firm foundation upon which to
comprehend its application to opera.

1.1 Ancient Greek Poetry: Truth Versus Drama

The story of diegetic music in film begins with a prologue in ancient Greece. Like
any good narrative prologue, its pertinence to the succeeding tale is not immediately apparent. While filmic diegesis refers to the fictional world portrayed on screen, ancient Grecian diegesis means something else entirely. Examination of the term’s original meaning, as well as the conceptual adjustments applied to it centuries before the invention of moving pictures, reveals a precedent for a parallel occurrence during the modern era. Discussion opens with Plato and his classification of diegesis and mimesis as poetic narrative styles. Focus then turns toward Aristotle, whose dismantling and reconstruction of his teacher’s ideas not only fundamentally changes Plato’s notion of mimesis, but also suppresses the concept of diegesis altogether.

1.1.1 Platonic Mimesis: “the art of imitation is a far cry from truth”

From its very inception in the fourth century BC, diegesis has been a loaded term. First appearing in the third book of Plato’s Republic, it describes one of two forms of poetic narration. Plato chose as his example the opening passages from Book I of Homer’s The Iliad, noting that that the narrating poet speaks as himself, making no attempt to adopt another persona or character. In contrast, the succeeding lines assume a different narrative tone, one in which the poet seeks to inhabit the words of a character

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3 Plato, 81 (§393a–b). Although Plato’s text is conveyed as a dialogue in which Socrates educates others on his viewpoints regarding various aspects of culture and society, I have chosen to cite Plato as the author and originator of all concepts conveyed in The Republic.
who figures in the portrayed scene. Plato describes the first lines as pure narration (diēgēsis, Greek: διήγησις), from which the terms diegesis and its adjectival version diegetic derive. The second form, however, rather than seeking to narrate a scene, aims to imitate (mímēsis, Greek: µίµησις) the speech of the characters portrayed, hence the terms mimesis and mimetic.

Two features of the text itself provide clues toward identifying and tracing these narrative forms, the first being its grammatical point of view. Diegesis, as a method of purely narrating a scene without directly engaging in its events, employs the third person, a perspective that distances the narrator from the action. Mimesis, on the other hand, engages the narrator directly, requiring him to adopt the speech of the represented character including first- and second-person pronouns. The following excerpt from The Iliad illustrates the shift in point of view as well as its corresponding narrative form. Here, each grammatical subject is underlined according to its first- (one narrow line), second- (two narrow lines), or third-person (one thick line) perspective.

Then all the rest of the Achaeans shouted their approval, that they should be in awe of the priest and accept the splendid ransom, but this found no favour in the heart of Atreus’ son Agamemnon; he sent Chryses roughly away, and added a harsh command:

“Let me not discover you, old man, beside our hollow ships, either dawdling here now or returning again later, in case your staff and the god’s bands prove no help to you.”

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4 Plato, 81 (§393a–b).
This excerpt also illustrates the second textual feature that indicates narrative form: punctuation. The presence of quotation marks surrounding Agamemnon’s speech identifies these lines as direct quotation, visually signifying that the poet assumes the character’s exact words. As such, direct quotation represents mimesis, while indirect quotation maintains the narrative distance inherent to diegesis. Employing both these textual cues of grammatical perspective and quotation marks, the same passage rendered with each sentence in its opposite narrative form could appear thus: “The Achaeans shouted, ‘We should be in awe of the priest and accept his splendid ransom!’ Agamemnon, however, sent Chryses roughly away, adding a harsh command that the priest should not loiter about the Achaeans’ ships or return later, lest his weapons provide insufficient protection.”6 While both versions accomplish the same narrative goals of contrasting Agamemnon’s response with that of his fellow Achaeans’, they do so to very different effect.

In modern literature, the choice between indirect and direct quotation—and, thus, between diegetic and mimetic narration—reflects the author’s stylistic aim. To Plato, however, the stakes were much higher since the distinction between the two narrative forms was not so much a matter of style, but a question of personal integrity.

6 Plato himself offered an alternative rendering of this passage, wherein Homer’s narrative is delivered in the complete absence of mimetic narration: “When [the priest] had finished, the rest of the Achaeans showed him respect, and would have agreed to his request, but Agamemnon lost his temper, telling him to depart immediately, and not come back again…” (Plato, 82 [§393e]).
The first hint of this attitude arises when Plato characterizes mimetic narration as one in which “the poet conceal[s] his own person.” Indeed, it is not much further in the text before Plato asks the question outright: “Shall we permit poets [of our utopian city] to use imitation in their works?”

Plato’s objection to mimesis is two-fold, pertaining both to the quality of the work a narrator produces as well as to the quality of the narrator himself. Proceeding from the premise that, in attempting multiple tasks, an individual runs the risk of becoming “jack of all trades, master of none,” Plato argues that a poet cannot attain equal levels of achievement in both diegetic recitation and mimetic acting. But the danger of a poet’s inferior acting ability is of relatively minor concern, overshadowed by the potential danger imitation poses to one’s nature. Specifically, Plato condemns the imitation of any shameful behavior lest “enjoyment of the imitation [give] rise to enjoyment of the reality.”

Ultimately, Plato does not outright condemn imitation as a whole, but rather the imitation of undesirable behavior. A decent man may imitate the speech and action of a good man without shame, but he should refuse the direct imitation of any behaviors

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7 Plato, 81 (§393c).
8 Plato, 83 (§394d).
9 Plato, 83 (§394e, §395a). Plato also reveals his preference for pure narration through his characterization of diegetic recitation as “one of the worthwhile occupations” (Plato, 83, [§395a]).
10 Plato, 84 (§395c). In particular, Plato warns against the imitation of women, slaves, and cowards in order to avoid imitation of behaviors contrary to the virtues that are worthy of imitation, such as bravery and self-discipline.
beneath the quality of his own nature. A less scrupulous man, however, will readily imitate anything and everything in pursuit of his storytelling. While Plato acknowledges that the latter may be more entertaining, particularly to children, he argues that an ideal society should not harbor such an individual long term. Rather, he advocates that citizens delight in such a man’s stories and reward him accordingly before sending him on his way to another city. Plato concludes, “For our own good, we would content ourselves with a simpler, if less enjoyable, poet and storyteller, who can imitate the decent man’s way of speaking…”

But the matter is not yet settled for Plato since he raises another category of concern regarding mimetic narration: its destructive impact upon its audience. In this regard, Plato’s grudging acceptance of mimetic poets for the sake of entertainment meets a more substantial obstacle in imitation’s rejection of truth and the potential for an observer’s failure to recognize the distinction. To put this idea into modern terms, an actor may learn the fundamental skills of a pianist in order to portray a role, but his primary concern is with achieving an excellent visual representation—or imitation—of an accomplished musician within a short span of time. Through a combination of the actor’s preparation, the cinematographer’s angling of camera shots to obscure his hands

11 Plato, 84–85 (§395d–396e).
12 Plato, 87 (§398a).
13 Plato, 87 (§398b).
14 Plato, 313 (§595b).
15 Plato, 317 (§598d).
on the keyboard, and the editor’s careful choice of takes that best synchronize with the professionally-recorded audio, a film’s portrayal may fool audiences into believing the actor truly is an accomplished pianist. In this case, then, Plato’s fear becomes manifest, the film having led to viewers who cannot distinguish between imitation and truth. In the end, Plato claims all artists “are imitators of images of goodness and the other things they create, without having any grasp of the truth.”

Despite his outlining of two narrative forms, Plato’s reservations with regard to mimesis are emphatic and clear, rendering diegetic representation his apparent preference. In the introduction to his work on modernist anti-theatricality, Martin Puchner notes that Plato’s description of two different forms of narration outline “the original quarrel between verbal diegesis and theatrical mimesis.” Equating Plato’s pejorative view of mimesis as concealment with the act of donning a mask, Puchner argues further that Plato’s term for actor (hypokritēs, Greek: ὑποκριτής) slowly absorbed enough of his anti-theatricalist underpinnings that it eventually acquired its modern derogatory meaning: hypocrite. With so much vehement anti-mimetic sentiment from such a renowned source, it is fortunate for the future of theater that Plato was not the last ancient Greek philosopher to record his thoughts on the matter.

16 Plato, 317 (§598d).
17 Plato, 320 (§600e).
18 Martin Puchner, Stage Fright: Modernism, Anti-Theatricality, and Drama (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 22.
19 Puchner, 22–23.
1.1.2 Aristotelian Mimesis: “all poetry aspires to the condition of drama”

In responding to his teacher’s philosophies on the performance of poetry, Aristotle makes significant departures. The starkest of these changes is his omission of diegesis as a counterpart to mimesis, but he also provides a more thorough scaffolding upon which to comprehend various forms of art. Furthermore, he evokes the collaborative nature of drama through his advocacy for multiple participants in the narrative process. Once these various changes are accounted for, there appears to be little correspondence remaining between student and teacher.

In the Aristotelian view, variety in compositional form derives from the three categories by which imitative processes vary: medium, object, and mode. Medium, or genre, arises from various combinations of rhythm, speech, and melody. For example, poetry employs a mixture of rhythm and speech, lute music uses rhythm and melody, and songs incorporate all three elements. The object refers to that which is imitated, whether people, nature, emotions, or events. Specifically, Aristotle is concerned with the quality of those objects and the people imitating them, and whether they exhibit the qualities of people better or worse than the average. As for the mode of imitation,

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22 Aristotle, 16–17.
23 Aristotle, 17–18. This category addresses Plato’s concerns with regard to mimetic narration.
Aristotle defines three possibilities: a single narrating individual (straight narrative), various persons dramatizing the imitation (straight dramatic mode), or a combination of the two (mixed mode). Students of Plato will quickly recognize his dichotomy of diegetic narration and mimetic imitation within Aristotle’s modes of imitation, though he departs from Plato in his scrupulous avoidance of the term diegesis. Instead, Aristotle subsumes his teacher’s concept into his own tripartite definition of mimesis.

Where Aristotle truly distinguishes himself from his predecessor, however, is through the inclusion of multiple individuals. While Plato focuses on the sole entity of the narrator and the dangers inherent in his attempt to acquire the voice, behavior, and manner of his characters, Aristotle readily and explicitly concedes the multiplicity of bodies involved in the dramatic mode. Classicist Gerald Else conceives the distinction between straight narrative and dramatic modes as a change of cast from the narrative poet alone to a variety of actors, each portraying a distinct character. To apply this idea to more recent terminology, Aristotle’s dramatic mode provides characters with narrative agency, shifting the responsibility for conveying the story from a solitary narrator to the actors themselves.

Although Aristotle’s penchant for theater is clear, he nevertheless concedes the

24 Aristotle, 18.
25 In extrapolating from Plato’s terms for diegesis as “pure narration” and mimesis as “imitation,” one may conceive of Aristotle’s dramatic emphasis for mimesis as “pure imitation.”
26 Else, 84.
utility of the narrative mode, particularly in epic poetry of Homer’s ilk. Since detached narration achieves the expression of events without the burden of physical portrayal onstage, Aristotle argues the narrative mode more easily accommodates the irrational. For example, “the pursuit of Hector [in Homer’s *Iliad*] would appear absurd on stage—the Achaeans standing there, not joining in the chase, and Achilles motioning them to stay back—whereas in the [narrated] epic one does not notice it.” On the other hand, Aristotle also offers the perspective that poetic narrators should strive to employ the narrative mode as little as possible since, at such moments, one fails to engage in the imitation that defines all art. Thus, while Aristotle’s viewpoint echoes some elements of Plato’s, he effectively counters his teacher’s anti-theatrical bent with his own pro-dramatic conception. In fact, Puchner credits the effectiveness of Aristotle’s position with the extinction of Plato’s term *diegesis* from modern scholarly discourse on theater and drama.

In today’s scholarly environment, both *diegesis* and *mimesis* in the ancient Grecian sense are found primarily in literary theory, specifically within the discipline of narratology, which studies the nature, form, and function of narratives. Gerald Prince’s *A Dictionary of Narratology* directly contrasts these terms and cross-references their

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27 Elise, 82.
28 Aristotle, 65.
29 Aristotle, 65.
30 Aristotle, 65.
31 Puchner, 24.
meanings, defining them respectively as “telling, recounting, as opposed to showing, enacting” and “showing, enacting (as opposed to telling, recounting).” All these gerunds relate primarily to Platonic diegesis and mimesis, although the Aristotelian emphasis on drama is clearly reflected in the inclusion of the word enacting. However, while the English-language equivalents of telling and showing enjoy some uniformity among authors, the underlying inclination toward either the Platonic or Aristotelian perspective varies. Gérard Genette, for example, inclines toward Plato through his assertion that literature can achieve no more than the illusion of mimesis since language only “signifies without imitating.” Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, on the other hand, is more equitable, explicitly aligning diegesis with (Platonic) narration and mimesis with (Aristotelian) drama. Furthermore, she offers a second set of English equivalents—summary and scene—that also imply Platonic and Aristotelian viewpoints, respectively.

Aristotle’s suppression of the term diegesis in his response to Plato would seem to challenge the elder’s presence in this study of diegetic music, but his conscription of his teacher’s concept of mimesis for his own purposes ensures his relevance. To draw the most direct comparison possible between these ancient perspectives, Platonic mimesis

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32 Gerald Prince, *A Dictionary of Narratology* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 20 and 52. The cited definition for diegesis appears in Prince as the secondary definition, subsidiary to the primary definition, which is discussed in the following section.


obscures direct narration while Aristotelian mimesis reveals direct imitation. Though failing to achieve a state of true and absolute opposition, the function (obscuring or revealing), objective (direct narration or imitation), and underlying bias (toward Platonic diegesis or Aristotelian mimesis) of each philosophy lie in direct contrast to that of the other. Else lays the responsibility for this discrepancy at Aristotle’s feet, but speculates upon two factors that may have led to this peculiarity in ancient Greek texts. First is the missing context of which fellow members of the academy would have been aware, which may have included not only Aristotle’s intent in challenging his teacher’s views, but also further public discussion of these and related matters. Secondly, Else considers a student’s impulse to minimize criticism of his mentor’s views out of respect.\textsuperscript{35} Regardless of his reasons, Aristotle’s application of new, even contradictory meanings to an existing term remains, establishing a precedent that will be pushed to the extreme in the modern era.

1.2 The Fractured Reality of Modern Diegesis

In spite of the discrepancy between Plato and Aristotle’s conceptions of diegesis, both relate to the same general idea of how poetry presents itself to an audience, whether through the Platonic ideal of a lone storyteller or an Aristotelian cast of dramatic characters. The next step in the evolution toward diegetic music, however,

\textsuperscript{35} Else, 74.
bears no such continuity. The term *diegesis* was left in peace—perhaps even neglect—for hundreds of years before French film scholars of the mid-twentieth century chose this word to represent a new and wholly unrelated concept. In 1953, the preface to a collection of essays on the emerging field of film studies featured a definitive statement codifying the new definition for *diegesis*: “everything that belongs ‘logically’… to the narrated story, to the world assumed or proposed by the fiction of the film.” The author, French philosopher and film scholar Étienne Souriau, also offered three examples to illustrate how the fictional world of the diegesis contrasts with that of the real world: two adjacent scenes in a film can indicate the passage of hours or years, two adjoining cinematic sets can represent widely spaced locations, and two individuals—such as a child and an adult, or an actor and a stunt-double—can play the same character. This mid-century passage demonstrates that a film’s diegesis encompasses its own physical and temporal logic that is entirely distinct from reality.

The idea that a story operates by its own rules of time and space is a powerful

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36 In actuality, French scholars chose a new word (*diégèse*) for the new concept; however, due to its close similarity to the existing word for narrative poetry (*diégésis*) both words are translated into English as *diegesis*. Details and implications of this matter are discussed below in Section 1.3.


38 Souriau, 7.
catalyst for the analysis of any plot-driven genre. For that reason, the new conceptualization of diegesis was quick to venture beyond film, requiring only a couple decades rather than as many millennia. Gérard Genette facilitated the term’s initial excursion to literature in 1972 with Discours du récit (translated and published as Narrative Discourse in 1980), where he expands upon Tzvetan Todorov’s differentiation between “narrative as discourse” (i.e. ancient Greek diegesis) and “narrative as story” (i.e. modern diegesis) and combines it with terminology from film scholars.³⁹ His approach to narrative discourse examines how authors manipulate order, duration, frequency, mood, and voice within the stories they create, and diegesis figures within an expanded hierarchy of narrative levels, including metadiegesis and intradiegesis.⁴⁰ Genette defines diegesis as “the universe in which the story takes place.”⁴¹

Soon enough, diegesis returned to film studies in 1987 with Claudia Gorbman’s influential book, Unheard Melodies. Citing Souriau, Genette, and others as originating the concept, Gorbman does not so much redefine diegesis as adapt its meaning to her focus on music.⁴² First, she rewords her predecessors’ definitions of diegesis as “the narratively implied spatiotemporal world of the actions and characters,” then goes on to define

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³⁹ Genette, Discourse, 27n.
⁴⁰ Genette, Discourse, 228.
⁴² Claudia Gorbman, Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 20. Gorbman credits Gilbert Cohen-Séat with codifying the concepts and terminology that first facilitated narrative analysis in film, and Russian Formalists with differentiating between the “fable” as a formless representation of a story and the “subject” as its narrated, literary form (Gorbman, Unheard, 20).
diegetic music as “music that (apparently) issues from a source within the narrative.”

The parenthetical qualifier within her definition suggests that diegetic music requires the interpretation of visual and aural events in order to determine whether or not specific examples meet the required criteria. The subjective nature of such interpretation thus poses the potential for a substantial gray area in that respect. In addition to this new application of the concept, Gorbman coins its modern counterpart: nondiegetic music.

Table 1 outlines the concept’s various twists and turns over time, summarizing each contributing author by his or her broad definition of the term and field of inquiry. Of course, the missing conclusion to this conceptual journey is the adaptation of diegesis to musicology and opera. The tangled perspectives and unique issues that arise as a result of that final shift encompass the whole of Chapter 2. For now, however, I shall limit my current discussion to the sufficiently complex matter of diegetic music in film. Despite the incongruous leap from ancient Greece to its modern meaning, diegesis is easy enough to understand. Diegetic music is even simpler yet, especially when considering the common colloquial definition (i.e. it is the music that characters hear within their fictional world) and perhaps an example or two. But that ease of understanding masks a deeply complex concept, one that splits and divides reality itself. Central to the notion

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43 Gorbman, Unheard, 22.
44 My personal favorite is the Star Wars (1977, directed by George Lucas) cantina band (diegetic) versus John Williams’s background score (nondiegetic).
Table 1: *Diegesis* over time by definition, author, and field

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Diegesis</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Field</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>c380 BC</td>
<td>a descriptive mode of storytelling</td>
<td>Plato</td>
<td>poetry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c335 BC</td>
<td></td>
<td>Aristotle</td>
<td>drama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>the world portrayed within a story</td>
<td>Souriau</td>
<td>film</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td></td>
<td>Genette</td>
<td>literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gorbman</td>
<td>film music</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

of diegetic music is the concept of *fictional reality*, which we may define as *all that inhabitants of a fictional world experience as real*. The contrast is *actual reality*, or *all that human inhabitants of our physical world experience as real*. In even simpler terms, *fictional reality* is defined by the experience of the characters, while *actual reality* is defined by the experience of the audience. Discussion in this section begins with the parameters that define a filmic diegesis, including how its reality differs from our own. The literary concept of narrative levels then complicates the matter when fictional realities are fractured into multiplicity, before discourse focuses on aural elements to theorize how we make sense of diegetic sound in film.

### 1.2.1 Diegetic Parameters

Gorbman’s use of the word “source” in her definition of *diegetic music* is a significant choice, echoing the film industry’s term for the parallel concept: *source music*. Motivated strictly by economic necessity, this language exists in order to quantify

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45 This question of “what is real” can quickly become deeply philosophical, which is not my purpose here. Rather than delving into existential questions that are beyond the scope of this study, I intend this statement at face value, accepting some logical consensus regarding what the average audience member would consider “real.”
musicians’ rates of pay specifically according to whether or not they appear onscreen.\footnote{James Buhler, “Analytical and Interpretive Approaches to Film Music (II): Analysing Interactions of Music and Film” in \textit{Film Music: Critical Approaches}, K. J. Donnelly, ed. (New York: Consortium International Publishing Group, 2001), 40.}

Gorbman’s redefinition, however, liberates the concept from its visual constraints, acknowledging that diegetic music can also exist offscreen. As a result, the concept becomes associated directly with the diegesis of the film, \textit{diegetic} and \textit{nondiegetic music} now indicating whether or not the music originates from within the portrayed fictional world.

Whether couched in terms of source or diegesis, this notion of music emanating from within a portrayed world leads some authors to invoke realism. Alessandro Cecchi notes that the inductive reasoning inherent in the very concept of \textit{diegesis} suggests the potential for a far more comprehensive understanding of a fictional world than is possible through visual input alone.\footnote{Alessandro Cecchi, “Diegetic Versus Nondiegetic: A Reconsideration of the Conceptual Opposition as a Contribution to the Theory of Audiovision,” Worlds of Audiovision, http://www-5.unipv.it/wav/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=71&lang=en (accessed May 24, 2017), §5.} Similarly, Christian Metz’s notion of spatial anchoring—which maintains that the aural elements of film are less rooted to physical space than are its visual elements—can be applied in the quest for realism by noting the extent to which any filmic sound corresponds with the visual representation of its source.\footnote{Christian Metz, “Aural Objects” in \textit{Film Sound: Theory and Practice}, Elisabeth Weis and John Belton, eds. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 29–30; and Jeff Smith, “Bridging the Gap: Reconsidering the Border Between Diegetic and Nondiegetic Music,” \textit{Music and the Moving Image} 2, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 4.} However, the concept of diegesis can only correlate directly with reality under
the special circumstances of documentary or historically accurate film since to some extent it otherwise defines an imaginary world. Even stories based in the real world contain some measure of fiction since the characters and/or events they depict are not real.

In the vast majority of cases, then, a portrayed world—that is, its diegesis—equates with fictional reality.

Along with the recognition of two ontological levels—reality and fictional reality—comes the need to differentiate between them. One method by which scholars achieve this goal is the distinction between a story and the form it takes. In the opening paragraphs of his introduction, Genette outlines three different uses of the word narration: a text in which a tale is told, the logical sequence of events that result in the tale being told, and the act of telling a tale. In order to distinguish between these three, he employs the terms narrative, story, and narrating, respectively. The last of these recalls the diegesis of Plato and Aristotle, while the first two echo the distinction made by Russian Formalists of the 1920s. For them, the fabula references the chain of events that constitutes a story’s causal and temporal flow, while the syuzhet reflects the form taken in the retelling of those events. Whether labeled story or fabula, this concept identifies a sequence of events as characters within the diegesis of a story would experience it, and thus equates with fictional reality. Narrative and syuzhet, on the other hand, specify the form in which the audience experiences those events, thereby relating

49 Even stories based in the real world contain some measure of fiction since the characters and/or events they depict are not real.

50 Genette, Discourse, 25–27. A discursive footnote indicates that Genette uses the terms story and diegesis interchangeably (Genette, Discourse, 27n).

to actual reality. In summary:

\[
\text{story} = \text{fabula} = \text{fictional sequence of ordered events} = \text{fictional reality} \\
\text{narrative} = \text{syuzhet} = \text{events as communicated to an audience} = \text{reality}
\]

For example, Orson Welles’s *Citizen Kane* (1941) opens with the death of Charles Foster Kane (Orson Welles) then proceeds in a series of flashbacks. In the film as experienced by the audience (i.e. the narrative, *syuzhet*, and actual reality), Kane’s death occurs first; however, in the sequence of portrayed events (i.e. the story, *fabula*, and fictional reality), Kane’s death occurs in the middle, after all the events of his life but before any of the interviews intended to discover the meaning behind his final word, “Rosebud.”

To understand any particular diegesis, characters are key. Through their perspective, we interpret any person, place, thing, event, or idea as existing within a story’s diegesis. Often, this fictional viewpoint aligns with our own knowledge and understanding of reality since many films and stories are set in the real world. In such cases, a character-based viewpoint becomes essential in differentiating between fiction and reality. Gorbman acknowledges this idea when she claims that Genette and Souriau would agree “*diegesis* means the space-time universe and its inhabitants referred to by the principal filmic narration,” but Ben Winters seems to challenge the centrality of characters by his proposal that *diegesis* “indicates the existence of a unique filmic

\[52\] For this reason, it is often easier to perceive the diegesis of science fiction and fantasy genres, whose faster-than-light space travel, alien species, and magic, for example, possess no counterpart within the real world.
universe, peculiar to each movie.” In the case of sequels and multi-film franchises that share characters and diegeses, character perspective sustains Winters’s assertion toward each film’s diegetic individuality since their experiences and choices will differ from the first film in a series to the last. Edward Branigan highlights the importance of fictional perspective by defining *diegesis* as “those aspects of the fictional world which are accessible to the characters” and “the label by which we understand the relation of character to sound/space…” As the inhabitants of their fictional world, characters are the authority on that world and, through them, we can more accurately comprehend their diegesis.

Shed of its dependence on visual correspondence, located within the fictional reality of a story, and mediated through the perceptions of fictional characters, *diegesis* describes both the physical and theoretical space that exists within a fictional plot. Now, having reduced the concept to its simplest terms, we may delve into matters that complicate fictional realities.

### 1.2.2 Narrative Levels

A cornerstone of the literary discipline of narratology, the concept of narrative levels remains consistent across many authors, though their terms vary. In order to more

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clearly render the definition, purpose, and function of each level, the following
discussion first divides three authors’ conceptions into two distinct matters: levels of
existence, and levels of narration. Focus then turns toward a specific configuration of
narrative structures before discovering how these structures overlap with diegetic
music.

Figure 1 provides a graphic representation of the three levels of existence and the
terms by which I refer to each. Resembling a fried egg, the egg white (with lighter
shading) represents the diegetic space, or the world in which the main story takes place.
The egg yolk (with darker shading) represents intradiegetic space, where a story told
inside the diegetic space exists. Outside the egg entirely (with no shading) is the
extradiegetic space that encapsulates the primary story. Often in literature and film, the
diegetic space is referred to as a frame story, such as Scheherezade telling stories in One
Thousand and One Nights to amuse the sultan and delay her execution, or the grandfather
reading a story to his sick grandson in The Princess Bride. In these examples, the stories
these characters tell occupy intradiegetic space and the frame story is regarded as the
primary fiction. However, we can also shift this understanding by regarding the tales

My terminology of diegetic, intradiegetic, and extradiegetic space is consistent with the preceding
discussion of diegesis as the physical and conceptual space that exists within a fictional plot. Rimmon-
Kenan terms diegetic space as “first narrative” or “story”, and intradiegetic space as “hypodiegetic.” (Rimmon-
Kenan, 92–93). Genette at times refers to diegetic space as “intradiegetic,” and intradiegetic space as
“metadiegetic.” His acknowledged confusion regarding the opposition in meaning between his use of the
prefix “meta-” and linguistics’ use of the same is a considerable portion of my rationale behind using the
terms found in Figure 2. (Genette, Discourse, 228). As for Gorbman, though she adopts Genette’s
terminology for “metadiegetic,” she also shifts from extradiegetic to “nondiegetic.” (Gorbman, Unheard, 22).
these characters tell—rather than they, themselves—as the primary fiction. For instance, in *The Princess Bride*, if we consider Westley and Buttercup’s story to be the main one, then they and all those with whom they interact exist in diegetic space, and the grandfather and his sick grandson therefore occupy extradiegetic space. Furthermore, Westley tells Buttercup the story of how he, a simple farmboy, became the Dread Pirate Roberts. That story, which relates a character’s past and is therefore fully encapsulated by diegetic space, exists in intradiegetic space. In this conception of narrative levels, each space represents a separate diegesis, and the configuration of these existential spaces addresses how each relates to the others.

Closely intertwined with these levels of existence are levels of narration. As a rule, characters do not narrate their own story since they lack the broader perspective that comes with temporal distance from the lives they are currently leading. For
example, while I can narrate the sequence of events that led me to writing this dissertation, narrating the actual writing of this text would be pointless and quite boring. If, however, as I type this sentence, a bird flies into the window and causes me to spill a glass of water over my keyboard, destroying my computer and causing me to lose my entire dissertation, I could not narrate that event in real time without taking that same span of time to do so. Only after the event has concluded does the telling of it become possible.\textsuperscript{56} Though they do so in differing terms, Genette and Rimmon-Kenan agree that narration can only occur in an inward direction.\textsuperscript{57} That is, a narrator who exists in diegetic space can only tell stories that occupy \textit{intradiegetic} space. Likewise, the events of diegetic space can only be narrated by an \textit{extradiegetic} entity, such as an author or filmmaker. Therefore, an extradiegetic narrator tells a diegetic story, a diegetic narrator tells an intradiegetic story, an intradiegetic narrator tells an intra-intradiegetic

\textsuperscript{56} While it is tempting to qualify this statement with present-tense narration as an exception, this is in fact a false perception. When literature uses present tense (e.g. “She drinks from the cup,” rather than “She drank from the cup.”), the grammatical structure is adjusted to present tense, but the narration of the events is actually unchanged since the story is still told from a temporal distance. This is especially evident through such narrative comments as, “Little did she know what was to happen next.” Film, however, has the power to make a true exception to this rule, to pause a story and allow characters extra time to comment on events as they occur. \textit{Ferris Bueller’s Day Off} (John Hughes, 1986) and \textit{Deadpool} (Tim Miller, 2016), for example, use this capacity to comedic effect. Furthermore, this same effect is ubiquitous in opera, where the forward temporal motion of a plot routinely pauses in order to provide extra time for an aria that reflects upon the action.

\textsuperscript{57} Genette, \textit{Discourse}, 228; and Rimmon-Kenan, 93. Both authors use the word “higher” to indicate an adjacent level, but in differing directions. Genette claims a diegetic story is “higher” than the level at which it is narrated, but Rimmon-Kenan declares the opposite, that the narration occurs at a “higher” level than the story it narrates. Thus, their hierarchies are flipped, with Genette specifying “higher” indicates outward motion from diegetic to extradiegetic, and Rimmon-Kenan interpreting “higher” as inward motion from diegetic to intradiegetic. I have therefore avoided quoting either of these passages and instead employed the trajectories as illustrated by Figure 1.
story, and so forth *ad infinitum*. Figure 2 summarizes the various levels of narration found in *The Princess Bride*, for example, identifying both the story that occupies each existential space and the narrator who tells the story of the next inward level.58

**Figure 2: Levels of narration within *The Princess Bride***

Extradiegenic story: *The Princess Bride*

William Goldman (author) and Rob Reiner (filmmaker) narrate:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diegetic story: A grandfather visits his sick grandson.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The grandfather narrates:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Intradiegenic story: Westley rescues Buttercup.

Westley narrates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intra-intradiegenic story: Westley becomes a pirate.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Westley quotes the Dread Pirate Roberts, who narrates:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Intra-intra-intradiegenic story: The Dread Pirate Roberts inherits his ship and name. |

Figure 3 reconfigures the narrative levels of *The Princess Bride*, with its three distinct intradiegenic spaces, in a new layout. Here, each level sustains while the space of that level’s narration appears below. Narrative time progresses throughout the entirety of the diagram from left to right, such that each lower level begins and ends within the time span of its upwardly adjacent narrating level. In this configuration, the five

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58 Westley poses special complexity with regard to narrative levels. Coming from this character who exists in intradiegenic space, the following dialogue narrates a story from intra-intradiegenic space (unformatted text), which in turn quotes a character existing in that space, who narrates another story from intra-intra-intradiegenic space (italics): “Roberts had grown so rich, he wanted to retire. He took me to his cabin, told me a secret. ‘I am not the Dread Pirate Roberts,’ he said. ‘My name is Ryan. I inherited the ship from the previous Dread Pirate Roberts, just as you will inherit it from me. The man I inherited it from was not the real Dread Pirate Roberts either. His name was Cummerbund. The real Roberts has been retired fifteen years and living like a king in Patagonia.’ Then he explained the name was the important thing for inspiring the necessary fear. You see, no one would surrender to the Dread Pirate Westley.”
narrative levels visually represent the film’s story-within-a-story-within-a-story structure, commonly called *mise en abyme*. Meaning “placed into abyss,” the term originated in relation to French heraldry with André Gide in 1893, and was subsequently brought to the attention of literary criticism in 1977 by Lucien Dällenbach.59 For Dällenbach, the abyss is a self-reflexive image repeated *ad infinitum*, as when looking into a mirror with another mirror directly behind. The quintessential example of *mise en abyme* is “The Murder of Gonzago,” the play within Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* that replicates the Danish king’s murder.60 Play-within-a-play, story-within-a-story, film-within-a-film: all are examples of *mise en abyme*.

In his study, Dällenbach makes two primary distinctions essential to categorizing

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all mises en abyme into elementary types. The first distinction differentiates between the structure’s object and subject, the nested object being a reflection of the subject within which it is embedded.61 In the case of Dällenbach’s paradigmatic example, “The Murder of Gonzago” is the object of the mise en abyme while the subject it reflects is Shakespeare’s Hamlet. Dällenbach’s second distinction examines whether the mise en abyme reflects the object’s utterance or its enunciation. A reflection of the utterance draws a correlation between the subject and object’s content, as when characters within “The Murder of Gonzago” mimic Claudius’s murder of Hamlet’s father.62 A reflection of the enunciation, however, focuses on the medium through which the mise en abyme is expressed.63 In this respect, what matters in “The Murder of Gonzago” is not its plot, but the fact that it is a play represented within the confines of another play, Hamlet. Any genre that mimics itself from within itself—including a play-within-a-play, a painting-within-a-painting, an opera-within-an-opera, etc.—qualifies as a reflection of the enunciation. Finally, in a reflection of the whole code, the object reflects both the utterance (i.e. content) and the enunciation (i.e. medium) of the subject.64 Since “The Murder of Gonzago” reflects both Hamlet’s content and its medium, it is, in fact, a reflection of the whole code. The three elementary types of mises en abyme may be

61 Dällenbach, 43.
62 Dällenbach, 55.
63 Dällenbach, 75.
64 Dällenbach, 94.
summarized thus:

A *mise en abyme* of the *utterance* reflects the subject’s *content*.

A *mise en abyme* of the *enunciation* reflects the subject’s *medium*.

A *mise en abyme* of the *whole code* reflects the subject’s *content and medium*.

As theorized by Dällenbach, *mise en abyme* describes a specific kind of narrative relationship that requires certain criteria to qualify as such. But, if we map *mise en abyme* onto the existential levels of Figure 1 by equating its subject with the egg white (the lighter shading) and its object with the yolk (the darker shading), does it follow logically that diegetic music must also represent a reflection of the film within which it appears? Certainly, in cases where the diegetic music reflects the content of the film—such as when a portrayed wedding is accompanied by a diegetic performance of Wagner’s Bridal Chorus from *Lohengrin*—a *mise en abyme* of the utterance is indeed realized.

Likewise, when a film features diegetic music arising from the portrayal of another film—that is, a film-within-a-film—the common medium reveals a *mise en abyme* of the enunciation. But what of Holly Golightly (Audrey Hepburn) singing Henry Mancini’s “Moon River” from her window sill in *Breakfast at Tiffany’s* (1961)? Here, neither the content of the song nor its medium directly reflects Blake Edwards’s film; however, we may yet perceive a *mise en abyme* of the enunciation if we broaden our perspective. In the film, Audrey Hepburn gives a performance as Holly Golightly. Similarly, Holly gives a performance of Mancini’s song. In this way, the diegetic music presents a performance-within-a-performance and therefore qualifies as a *mise en abyme* of the enunciation. On
the other hand, when Andrew Beckett (Tom Hanks) narrates a recording of Maria Callas singing “La mamma morta” in *Philadelphia* (Jonathan Demme, 1993), the recorded medium of both the opera aria and the film makes the diegetic music a recording-within-a-recording and, thus, another *mise en abyme* of the enunciation. By this reasoning, diegetic music in film always represents at the least a *mise en abyme* of the enunciation, every example reflecting either a performance or a recording, depending on how it is presented within the film.65

Narrative levels begin to illustrate the complexity lurking within the notion of *diegesis*. While the idea that inhabitants of the real world exist entirely outside a story’s *diegesis* is quite straightforward, the same is true of diegetic characters in relation to any intradiegetic level. Figure 3 illustrates *mise en abyme* as its eponymous abyss, real-world audiences looking down into each deeper level of existence from outside the fiction. The characters of the diegetic space, however, can only see further down into the abyss, the grandfather in *The Princess Bride*, for example, able to perceive Westley and the Dread Pirate Roberts but not the story’s author or filmmaker inhabiting the level above him. Films that encompass more than one level of *mise en abyme* build an existential hierarchy upon the splitting of fictional realities, thereby complicating the conceptualization of

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65 By the same rationale, diegetic music in opera also consistently fulfills the criteria for *mise en abyme* of the enunciation as a performance-within-a-performance, if not an opera-within-an-opera.
diegesis that in other films is quite simple.\textsuperscript{66} While narrative levels focus upon story as a means of differentiating between various realities, however, aural agency achieves the same objective via sound.

1.2.3 Aural Agency

The concept of agency addresses the notion of who does what for whom. In the case of film, for example, characters often act as agents of the narrative, advancing the plot directly through their speech and actions rather than relying upon a narrator, in which case they are said to possess narrative agency. This distinction parallels the ancient Greek meanings of mimesis and diegesis, with characters’ narrative agency demonstrating mimetic narration, while a narrating voice-over produces its diegetic counterpart. In practice, these two types of agency frequently alternate, as in Rob Reiner’s The Princess Bride (1987), wherein the Grandfather’s (Peter Falk) diegetic narrative alternates with Westley (Cary Elwes) and Buttercup’s (Robin Wright) mimetic version.\textsuperscript{67}

With regard to diegetic music, characters act less as a narrative agent and instead assume another form of agency. Robynn Stilwell notes that the single point of divergence between diegetic and nondiegetic music lies in “the point-of-

\textsuperscript{66} Perhaps no film illustrates the complexity that can arise from the fracturing of fictional realities better than Inception (Christopher Nolan, 2010).

\textsuperscript{67} Actually, the Grandfather’s scenes also shift fluidly between diegetic and mimetic narration as the scene shifts between him reading Westley and Buttercup’s story from the book (diegetic) and conversing with his grandson (mimetic).
view/audition/feeling of a character in the diegesis.”68 David Neumeyer draws a relationship between characters and sound through the observation that “a character is an object in which sound can potentially be anchored.”69 And Daniel Percheron’s perspective further refines this relationship by identifying a character as “the privileged receiver of sound in the diegetic space.”70 Whether in terms of point-of-view, anchoring, or receiving, each of these authors describes a conceptual paradigm in which film characters function as aural agents for the audience, filtering the meaning of aural events through their privileged position as the direct auditor of diegetic sounds. As such, aural agency is the process by which audiences apply meaning to all diegetic sounds, including music.

The concept of aural agency encompasses three properties. The first two describe the parameters by which audiences apply meaning to sound through diegetic characters, and the third removes any limitation that could be inferred from the first two. The first property of aural agency dictates that the audience’s understanding of any diegetic sound is dependent upon characters’ context within the plot. As an illustration of this property, consider the girl in the red coat (Oliwia Dabrowska) who hides from the Nazi


soldiers under a bed during the liquidation of the Krakow ghetto scene in Steven Spielberg’s *Schindler’s List* (1993). She covers her ears as the sound of marching boots rises, thereby marking that sound as diegetic. Both the audience and the girl having witnessed various scenes of violence outside in the streets, the meaning evoked by the sound of the footsteps is one of fear. However, if we imagine for a moment that the girl under the bed is transported into an entirely different context, that same sound of approaching footsteps could bear a vastly different meaning, such as delighted anticipation as she plays a game of hide-and-seek with her friends, or relief as her mother’s arrival means she can request help in locating a toy she has lost.

The beach picnic scene from Orson Welles’ *Citizen Kane* (1941), poses a second example of how character context can impact the meaning audiences derive from diegetic sounds. In this scene, a band and singer perform “It Can’t Be Love” for the guests out on the beach while Kane (Orson Welles) and his second wife Susan (Dorothy Comingore) argue inside a nearby tent. As the scene progresses with alternating shots on the beach and inside the tent, the band’s song continues throughout until a sole female voice is heard screaming. Building slowly in volume, the scream’s diegetic origin is never identified, either by visual correspondence or dialogic reference. Since close-up shots demonstrate that neither Kane nor Susan is screaming, the sound must come from outside on the beach. Furthermore, an abrupt end to the band’s song shortly after the screaming starts seems to confirm this supposition. But, beyond this, no context for the
scream is ever made evident and the film progresses onto the next scene without ever having explained its presence. In this case, the absence of context leaves the audience uncertain how to make sense of the inexplicable screaming. However, one visual context is available: the marital argument that culminates in Kane slapping his wife. In the absence of any other context, the meaning for that scream can be applied to the slap, as though it belongs to Susan’s emotions or thoughts. Through this interpretation, the scream becomes an interior monologue made audible, expressing Susan’s frustration, anger, and resentment as she argues with her husband. In this way, aural agency not only exposes the dramatic shortcomings of this unexplained sound, but also enables audiences to make sense of it in light of what context is there.

The same scene from Citizen Kane also illustrates the second property of aural agency: that the audience’s understanding of any diegetic sound is dependent upon characters’ individual perspectives and therefore prone to simultaneous multiplicity. The band’s performance is actually an excerpt from the 1939 song “In a Mizz” by Charlie Barnet and Haven Johnson:

> It can’t be love
> For there is no true love.
> I know I’ve played at the game
> Like a moth at a flame
> Lost in the end of the same.
>
> All these years
> My heart’s been floating ’round in a puddle of tears.
I wonder what it is…

The excerpt’s first line is increasingly indicative of Kane and Susan’s deteriorating marriage as the scene progresses, thereby immediately suggesting these characters as an appropriate diegetic perspective for the song. However, its meaning can also be assessed through the point-of-view of various characters. By grouping all present characters, three perspectives emerge: that of the musicians who view the song as a performance, of the picnic guests who view it as entertainment, and of Kane and Susan who likely view it as a distraction if they bother to notice it at all. But even this tripartite meaning can be further multiplied when we consider various individual perspectives. Perhaps the singer hates this song but performs it to honor a request, while another member of the band loves it and is thrilled to play it, in which case the same song at the same time indicates both annoyance and delight. As for Susan, she might regard the song with resentment since it represents the carefree fun she could be having out on the beach, rather than being confined to the tent, arguing with her husband. The possibilities are endless and audience members can choose to examine any diegetic sound through any character using any conjecture they like, bounded only by their willingness and

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71 Recorded by the author as heard in the film.
72 The director’s camera choices further emphasize this initial line—“It can’t be love”—through its prominent visual context with a close-up shot of the singer at the opening of the scene.
73 While highly speculative and responding to no specific implications from the film, such subtext produces deeper, more well-rounded performances and is therefore routinely considered by actors as part of their art.
their imagination. Such potential for an endless multiplicity of meanings applied to a single diegetic sound presents the broad potential and scope of aural agency’s second property.

The third property of aural agency argues that the meaning audiences apply to diegetic sounds is not dependent upon the characters’ awareness of that meaning. As mentioned above, the choice of song for the beach picnic scene in *Citizen Kane* may have been intended to express dramatic irony, juxtaposing “It Can’t Be Love” with the argument that precedes Susan leaving her husband. Assuming for a moment both that Kane and Susan are too engaged in their argument inside the tent to be aware of what song accompanies them out on the beach, and that the picnic guests are too preoccupied by their entertainment out on the beach to be aware of the argument taking place inside the tent, then no character could possibly be aware of the irony evoked by the song’s text. However, this possibility changes nothing for the audience’s perception of irony. Regardless of how many or which characters might be conscious of that meaning, it remains, thus illustrating aural agency’s independence from characters’ awareness.

While the notion of audiences hearing some sounds through characters’ perspectives is not without precedent, this new concept of aural agency outlines the properties by which such a process is accomplished.\textsuperscript{74} Through the context and

\textsuperscript{74} Daniel Percheron, for example, distinguishes between “diegetic transmission,” by which sound filters through characters to the audience, and “extradiegetic transmission,” by which sound bypasses characters to reach the audience directly (Percheron, 18–19).
perspective of one or more characters, audiences acquire the meaning necessary to make sense of diegetic sounds, whether or not those characters are aware of such meanings. Through these properties of context, perspective, and awareness, we gain analytical insight not only into the dramatic lives of characters, but also into the audience’s relationship with them.

1.3 Challenges and Solutions

Contrary to its appellation, silent film was anything but silent. Even in its heyday, silent film’s distinction between music that originated within the diegesis and that which does not was recognized, often by the necessity of matching live or gramophone-recorded music to the onscreen image. Once sound films arrived, diegetic music quickly became a means of justifying the very existence of a musical soundtrack. After all, denizens of the early twentieth-century did not typically enjoy the mood-enhancing effects of background music in their everyday lives. They did, however, on occasion enjoy live performances: an event that could be reproduced in film without requiring any further justification for music’s presence. The lure of self-justified music proved so great in the quest for filmic realism that nondiegetic music fell out of fashion almost entirely in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

76 Cooke, 45.
77 Cooke, 56.
Through the decades since, diegetic music has come to be associated with certain features that stand in direct contrast to those of its nondiegetic counterpart, particularly pertaining to expressive function and musical form. Separated by definition from the objects and actions portrayed in a film, nondiegetic background scores are typically viewed as possessing a greater capacity for subjective expressivity. Critics and analysts perceive diegetic music, on the other hand, as entirely independent from efforts to define moods or emotions pertinent to the plot.\(^78\) In addition to this subjective/objective dichotomy, a second pairing of high art versus low art arises. While nondiegetic music is traditionally aligned with orchestral music of the nineteenth-century Romantic aesthetic, diegetic music is primarily perceived as taking the form of popular song.\(^79\) Of course, both these generalizations have experienced considerable disintegration over the years, such as through nondiegetic popular songs that supplement the mood or dramatic situation.\(^80\) In modern filmmaking, the traditional separation in function and form between diegetic and nondiegetic music can no longer be sustained as absolute, if indeed it ever could. Analysts must therefore assess each musical moment on the circumstances of its specific presentation, rather than relying upon clichéd dichotomies.

When considering the basic distinction between filmic elements that originate

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78 Gorbman, *Unheard*, 23.
79 Buhler, 43.
80 One such example is Simon and Garfunkel’s “The Sound of Silence” in *The Graduate* (Mike Nichols, 1967).
within or without a diegesis, the aural aspect holds a distinct advantage over the visual. While both can present in either diegetic or nondiegetic forms, only aural elements—and, at that, only music—appear just as frequently in nondiegetic contexts as diegetic.\[^{81}\]

Furthermore, the visual aspect only presents nondiegetically in very specific cases—such as flashbacks or narrated tales—and nondiegetic nonmusical sounds generally only accompany such visuals.\[^{82}\] Music, on the other hand, not only appears routinely in both diegetic and nondiegetic contexts, but also crosses the boundary between them freely. Common examples of this crossing include apparently nondiegetic music being revealed as diegetic when a character turns off a car radio, or clearly diegetic music shifting into the nondiegetic realm when it continues despite the film’s action moving well beyond the aural reach of the music’s visual origin. As Gorbman notes, such flexibility lends music not only the potential to participate in a great variety of functions relating to time, space, drama, and structure, but also the power to “free the image from strict realism.”\[^{83}\]

Despite these advantages and developments throughout the history of film, the concept of diegetic music is beset with problems and no end to the opinions regarding how to address its shortcomings. As a summary to this current state of affairs regarding diegetic music in film, this section opens with a discussion of various concerns

\[^{81}\] Gorbman, *Unheard*, 22.
\[^{82}\] An example of nondiegetic visuals and accompanying nondiegetic sounds is the background history of the Ring of Power, narrated by Galadriel (Cate Blanchett), at the opening of Peter Jackson’s *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* (2001).
pertaining both to the term itself and to its implementation. Attention then turns toward the solutions authors propose to address such challenges, disentangling the numerous perspectives by grouping their approaches into three categories.

1.3.1 What's Wrong with Diegetic Music in Film...

The primary challenge to Gorbman’s application of *diegesis* to film music reflects a peculiar feature that has figured prominently in this chapter so far. Although she stood on the work of Souriau and Genette, many scholars nevertheless regard the jargon as erroneous due to its departure from the original ancient Greek meaning. Focused on the terminology itself, the problem is two-fold. First, the foundational element that the word describes in its two contexts is vastly different. Plato and Aristotle use *diegesis* and *mimesis* to discuss the matter of how stories are expressed, whether by separate narration or direct portrayal, respectively. Souriau and Genette, on the other hand, use *diegesis* to indicate the world of a story’s characters and everything they do or may encounter within that world. In an oblique sense, these divergent meanings can be reconciled if one regards modern *diegesis* as the visual means by which filmmakers narrate a story.84 This potential resolution, however, accomplishes little for the second problem: that *diegesis* in the modern sense designates the very opposite of its ancient Greek meaning. Specifically, in the case of music, the portrayal of music-making in a

84 David Neumeyer makes a similar observation, equating modern *diegesis* in film with *mise en scène* and characterizing *diegesis* as “narration of the visual.” (Neumeyer, “Diegetic,” 36).
film—which constitutes diegetic music in the modern sense—is actually mimetic in the ancient Greek sense since it “shows” rather than merely “tells” of the act. In this respect, there is no chance for reconciliation between the ancient Greek and modern meanings of diegesis, and one must therefore actively ignore the cognitive dissonance between them.

To some extent, the current state of confusion regarding these two divergent meanings of diegesis can be attributed to language. Both Souriau and Genette originally published their treatises in French, which proves quite equal to the task of differentiating between the ancient Greek concept of narration (diégésis) and the new modern designation for a fictional world (diégèse). In his return to his theories on narrative discourse a decade after his initial publication, Genette explicitly acknowledges this essential distinction, claiming that diégèse and diégésis are not at all interchangeable and that diégétique (English diegetic) always derives from diégèse. The real problem is therefore not the concept of diegesis at all but the inadequacy of the English language to clearly differentiate between its two meanings. This issue presents little problem for authors such as David Neumeyer and Alessandro Cecchi, who advocate simply acknowledging the discrepancy or ignoring it altogether. For others, though, the incompatibility of the two meanings proves sufficient to avoid using the

85 Genette, Revisited, 18.
86 Neumeyer, “Diegetic,” 27; and Cecchi, §2.
term diegetic music at all.\textsuperscript{87}

Another source of conflict arises with regard to definition. Citing Souriau and Genette, Gorbman is careful to explicitly define diegesis before extending that concept to film music; however, she proves considerably less perspicuous in defining its counterpart.\textsuperscript{88} The nearest approximation of a definition occurs with an example of the paired concepts in her introduction: “Music…can be diegetic (musicians can play in the story, a radio can be on)…or nondiegetic (an orchestra plays as cowboys chase Indians on the desert).”\textsuperscript{89} The lack of an explicit definition leaves readers to supply their own and, depending on how they choose to do that, can lead to conclusions Gorbman herself may have never intended. For example, Ben Winters objects to Gorbman’s model since “it creates a situation in which characters are cut off from the very [nondiegetic] music that defines them...[since] this music is not, and often cannot be, heard by the characters.”\textsuperscript{90} This reduction of Gorbman’s concept to the matter of characters’ aural perception not only promotes a common understanding of diegetic music as that which the characters hear, but also proves especially cumbersome to scholars like Winters who

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{87} For example, Stefano Castelvecchi, “On ‘Diegesis’ and ‘Diegetic’: Words and Concepts,” in \textit{Journal of the American Musicological Society} 73, No. 1 (March 2020), 163. In general, such avoidance is more prominent in opera studies than film, as evidenced by the wide variety of terms used to designate the same foundational concept in opera. See Chapter 2, Section 2.2.1: Terminological Discord.\textsuperscript{88} Gorbman, \textit{Unheard}, 21 and 22.\textsuperscript{89} Gorbman, \textit{Unheard}, 3. The indexical entry that refers to this page (“Nondiegetic music: definition, 3”) confirms the author’s intent for this passage to serve as the definition of nondiegetic music. (Gorbman \textit{Unheard}, 189).\textsuperscript{90} Ben Winters, \textit{Music, Performance, and the Realities of Film: Shared Concert Experiences in Screen Fiction} (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2014), 181.}
wish to explore the correlation between a film’s content and its underscoring.

In the years following Gorbman’s publication, the binary opposition of diegetic and nondiegetic music was so well received and proved so useful that few questioned the idea.\textsuperscript{91} Over time, however, the perception of two spheres of music that never interact with one another came to be regarded as unduly restrictive. The limiting parameters of this view negate the possibility of music that exhibits a hybrid of both diegetic and nondiegetic elements simultaneously, a conceptual blending of which more recent discussion in film music scholarship has argued repeatedly.\textsuperscript{92} Absolute segregation also eliminates the possibility of music that begins as diegetic and traverses the conceptual divide to align more fruitfully with a nondiegetic designation by the end of the scene, which is an especially common occurrence in filmed musicals.\textsuperscript{93} As more and more scholars focus on examples that violate its perceived precepts, the simple dichotomy of diegetic and nondiegetic music becomes inadequate, too simplistic for its own complex implications.

From the terminological, to the definitional, to the conceptual, objections to Gorbman’s conscription of \textit{diegesis} to describe film music returns to the first, though this time in relation to its new opposition. Her choice of the word \textit{nondiegetic} leaves one with

\textsuperscript{91} Winters, \textit{Realities}, 180. Cecchi goes so far as to claim that the distinction between diegetic and nondiegetic music has assumed “such a central position in considerations of narrative cinema as to suggest their intrinsic validity.” (Cecchi, §1).
\textsuperscript{92} Stilwell, 184.
\textsuperscript{93} Buhler, 41.
the sense that background music exists entirely outside the bubble of a diegesis. Lacking an alternative definition, the word itself therefore fosters the notion that, just as much as characters within the diegesis cannot hear the music that exists outside its existential bubble, neither can such external music influence characters or events inside it. Ben Winters explicitly addresses Gorbman’s fault, noting her failure to consider nondiegetic music might constitute an integral part of the narrative, rather than merely intruding upon it. Similarly, Anahid Kassabian argues that, since music and sound contribute to the articulation of the diegesis itself, these aural elements cannot retroactively be allocated a conceptual space either inside or outside it. While approaching the matter from varying perspectives, both authors challenge the assumption that nondiegetic music poses no influence on an audience’s perception of characters and events within the diegesis.

Further qualms with the notion of diegetic and nondiegetic music arise concerning matters of subjectivity and realism, the properties of sound, and the applicability of narratology to film. Cecchi objects to the subjective process required to differentiate between what exists in the diegesis and what does not, a fact that, in his estimation, places any results in the realm of the “merely hypothetical.” Similarly,

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96 Cecchi, §11.
Winters extends an argument in favor of nondiegetic music’s narrative agency in order to advocate for “a non-realist conception of cinematic reality” to replace Gorbman’s realist approach. On a more fundamental level, Barbara Flueckiger points to the “invasive and ubiquitous” nature of sound—for example, its ability to penetrate walls and round corners—to argue that the reliance upon a visible or imagined source for diegetic music too severely restricts analysis. And Winters challenges the adaptation that presages the whole concept, questioning the adequacy of an idea from text-based narratology to address the distinctly visual and aural elements of film.

Whereas Souriau and Genette had the advantage not only of avoiding the English language’s deficiency with respect to diegesis, but also of not being called upon to identify a polar opposite to their concept, Gorbman is afflicted by both these issues. Film scholars’ objections to her notion of diegetic music reflects the difficulties inherent in such circumstances. Whether refuting the use of an identical word for an opposite concept, inferring definitions within a vacuum left by the absence of the same, or highlighting complicating factors that belie a surface simplicity, authors have articulated many reasons to challenge the notion of diegetic music. Even more telling, however, are the means by which they propose to resolve that conflict.

97 Winters, Realities, 13.
99 Winters, Realities, 180.
1.3.2 …And How to Fix It

While numerous film scholars agree on the need to address the problems and limitations arising from Gorbman’s conceptualization of diegetic and nondiegetic music, there are as many ideas regarding how to accomplish this common goal as there are inquiring minds. Some authors prefer to retain Gorbman’s terminology, though in conjunction with an expansion of her original parameters. Others advocate for entirely new terminology and, in the process, a shift in the central focus inherent to the underlying concept. Still others turn to pluralistic ontology in their quest to theorize music in film and espouse theories that further define actual and fictional realities, as well as how they interact. Although no one approach yet rises above the rest to declare itself the definitive solution, it is through these overlapping and at times contradictory viewpoints that the dormant complexity of Gorbman’s construct comes into its full maturity.

Retaining Terminology

One of the earliest scholars to offer an alternative to Gorbman’s simple dichotomy incorporates the basic distinction between diegetic and nondiegetic music within the broader concept of film sound in general. Daniel Percheron’s approach, as summarized in Figure 4, begins with the matter of sound’s visual representation, labeling the highest-level dichotomy as “on” or “off” screen. Diegetic and extradiegetic
Figure 4: Percheron’s conceptualization of all sound in film\textsuperscript{100}

appear as the highest-level distinction within “off” screen sounds.\textsuperscript{101} The prominent branching in Percheron’s diagram below diegetic “off” screen sounds—as well as the corresponding lack of branching under both “on” screen and extradiegetic “off” screen—demonstrates that the bulk of his concern lies here. Efforts to reconcile this view with Gorbman’s suggest that Percheron views all “on” screen sounds as diegetic. While this is often the case, it is not exclusively true since nondiegetic visuals and the sounds associated with them do occasionally arise.

Like Percheron, Neumeyer also presents a theory for analyzing and assessing film music that incorporates the distinction between diegetic and nondiegetic sounds.

\textsuperscript{100} Percheron, 23.

\textsuperscript{101} Percheron explicitly states his shift from Gorbman’s nondiegetic to extradiegetic is meant “more in the sense of something added rather than from the outside.” (Percheron, 18).
Rather than a hierarchical diagram, however, this author presents a network of ten distinct criteria that provide information about music in film, within which diegetic and nondiegetic is merely one parameter:

1. Diegetic/nondiegetic (or source/background).
2. Onscreen/offscreen.
5. Sound Levels: “Realistic”/unrealistic (for diegetic music); loud/soft (for nondiegetic music).
7. Musically closed/open.
9. Motivation, or narrative plausibility: yes/no.
10. “Pure”/culturally or cinematically coded.

Neumeyer avoids the criticism of restrictive binaries leveled against Gorbman by noting each of these pairs represents “endpoints on a continuum” rather than “absolute categories.” Furthermore, he notes that each of these oppositions can contribute toward the assessment of music’s function at any given moment in a film.

Yet another of the authors who explicitly advocates for the retention of Gorbman’s diegetic/nondiegetic terminology does so through very different means. Noting the abundance of cases that prove difficult to categorize as one or the other, Robynn J. Stilwell focuses on the transitional space between them. Dubbing this border region the “fantastical gap,” Stilwell argues that traversal of the boundary “always

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104 Neumeyer, “Performances,” 46.
mean[s],” that the liminal space itself is one of “power and transition,” and that a trajectory from diegetic to nondiegetic or vice versa “takes on great narrative and experiential import.” Citing the very existence of so many examples that problematize the diegetic/nondiegetic divide, Stilwell claims that the crossing of the fantastical gap does not invalidate the basic dichotomy but rather certifies it by calling attention to it. Stilwell goes further to claim that such transitions “are important moments of revelation, of symbolism, and of emotional engagement within the film and without.”

Revising Terminology

While Percheron, Neumeyer, and Stilwell all advocate an expansion of Gorbman’s original theory of diegetic and nondiegetic music, other authors go further by calling for the replacement of the terms themselves. Each of the authors highlighted here brings a new conceptual focus along with their replacement terminology, whether practical, visual, or—with a new angle—narrative. Whereas those who retain Gorbman’s terms seek to remedy the perceived limitations of her concept, these authors seek to adjust its very foundation.

Anahid Kassabian advocates a practical approach to the labeling of different types of music in film, one derived from those individuals who compose that music. She

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105 Stilwell, 187, 200.
106 Stilwell, 184.
107 Stilwell, 200.
argues not only that Gorbman’s two classifications of diegetic and nondiegetic music leaves a third, hybrid category unaccounted for, but also that the ontological question of whether music exists inside or outside the diegesis is the wrong question to ask. Rather than reinvent the wheel, Kassabian points toward film score composers and the language they use both among themselves and with filmmakers. *Source music*, which Kassabian defines as “music whose production is within the narrative world of the film,” replaces *diegetic music*.108 *Dramatic scoring* provides the opposing classification as music that “is not produced within the narrative world of the film.”109 Where Kassabian truly departs from her predecessors and peers, however, is in the designation of a third category that combines dramatic scoring and its “relationship to the film’s narrative world” with source music, which she deems *source scoring*.110 The benefit of this new classification is music’s separation from its visual or diegetic source, freeing it from the perceived constraints of Gorbman’s approach. In addition, Kassabian’s definitions provide a subtle but significant change that reorients the conversation. No longer is the specific source of the music important, but instead that source’s location as either within the narrative world of the film or outside it.

109 Kassabian, *Hearing*, 44.
110 Kassabian, *Hearing*, 45. A significant example of *source scoring* is cartoon music, which derives from sources outside the narrative (its nondiegetic element) and yet closely corresponds with visual onscreen events (the diegetic aspect).
In contrast to Kassabian’s approach, Michel Chion turns toward a visual focus through his espousal of the *acousmatic*, simultaneously shifting the pertinent question from where the sound *is* to where the sound comes *from*. Referring to a sound whose source is not seen, acousmatic music can function as either diegetic or nondiegetic in Gorbman’s sense, and Chion uses the term in an overlapping construct along with *onscreen* and *offscreen* sound. Gorbman’s concept of diegetic music can align in any given cinematic shot with either Chion’s onscreen or offscreen designations. Nondiegetic music, however, thanks to its unseen nature, is acousmatic by definition and therefore only ever conforms to Chion’s notion of offscreen sound. With Figure 5, I present a Venn diagram as a visual reconciliation of these two authors’ concepts. The left-hand circle represents Chion’s notion of acousmatic music (all of which is, by definition, offscreen), and the right one Gorbman’s diegetic music (which can be on- or offscreen). The overlapping space between them therefore represents acousmatic diegetic music, or music that exists within the diegetic space of the film but is not represented visually onscreen. The labels within the diagram therefore combine Chion’s and Gorbman’s terminology to achieve a new level of specificity that takes both these authors’ perspectives into account.

In addition to his conceptual focus on acousmatic sound, Chion also suggests an

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112 Chion, *Audio-Vision*, 71 and 73.
expanded constellation of terms as an alternative to Gorbman’s diegetic/nondiegetic dichotomy. *Ambient* or, alternatively, *territory sound* describes sounds such as birdsong and church bells that inhabit a scene without requiring a visual source.\(^\text{113}\) An *internal sound* refers to sounds associated with a character’s physical and/or mental interior, including objective sounds such as heartbeats and subjective ones like memories.\(^\text{114}\) Regarding music specifically, Chion advocates a pair of terms that map neatly and precisely onto diegetic and nondiegetic, respectively: *screen music* that originates either explicitly or implicitly from a source within the diegesis, and *pit music* that “accompanies the image from a nondiegetic position.”\(^\text{115}\)

David Bordwell’s proposal for revising the terminology of diegetic and nondiegetic music returns to a familiar focus on narrative, but now through the perspective of the viewing audience. Borrowing terminology from Russian literary

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\(^{113}\) Chion, *Audio-Vision*, 75.

\(^{114}\) Chion, *Audio-Vision*, 76.

\(^{115}\) Chion, *Audio-Vision*, 80.
Formalists of the early twentieth century, Bordwell draws a distinction between the *fabula* as the “imaginary construct” of cause and effect that members of the audience create mentally while viewing a film, and the *syuzhet* as “the actual arrangement and presentation of the fabula in the film.”\(^\text{116}\) To reorient the Russian terms in more familiar language, *syuzhet* equates to the film’s discourse with its sequence of events governed by real-world time as perceived by members of the audience, while *fabula* represents its *story* and the succession of events as the characters would perceive it: that is, in diegetic time. Bordwell points toward these concepts as foundational elements in his definition of narration as a process by which a film’s *syuzhet* constructs the *fabula* for the audience.\(^\text{117}\) In bringing these concepts of Russian formalism into the realm of film music, Jeff Smith argues that nondiegetic music “belongs solely to the *syuzhet*,” while diegetic music “is part of both the *fabula* and *syuzhet*.”\(^\text{118}\) Thus, diegetic music exists in the temporal space of both characters and audience, but nondiegetic music exists only in the latter.

**Defining Realities**

The final group of authors advocate a more explicit conceptualization of the


\(^\text{117}\) Bordwell, 53. A useful example is Orson Welles’ *Citizen Kane*, in which the film’s discourse (or *syuzhet*) begins with an event (Kane’s death) that occurs midway through its story (or *fabula*). The film then progresses in alternating scenes of the reporter interviewing prominent figures in Kane’s life and flashbacks that depict the memories they share with him, the film’s linear progression therefore constantly skipping around in diegetic time.

\(^\text{118}\) Smith, 2.
multiple realities implied by Gorbman’s description of diegetic music. Rather than arguing for the retention or replacement of terminology and thereby retreading old ground, David Neumeyer and Ben Winters both examine the interaction of the real and the imaginative, of the audience’s world and the characters’. Neumeyer’s approach entails a reexamination of Gorbman’s diegetic/nondiegetic dichotomy that results in a clarification of how sounds represent each existential sphere and how we as members of a viewing audience distinguish between them. Winters, on the other hand, not only fills a conceptual gap by examining the role of nondiegetic music in film, but also identifies a contradiction that challenges the very notion of filmic realism. Through their widely differing approaches, these authors achieve a further division of reality from fiction that also illuminates the key role music plays in that process.

In the first of these approaches, David Neumeyer places Gorbman’s conceptualization in the middle of a tripartite model that describes how viewers make sense of all sound encountered during a film: anchoring → diegesis → narration. First, Neumeyer claims individuals must anchor each specific sound in fiction or reality, belonging either to the film world or the real world. One may accomplish this in relation to the onscreen visuals, the physical source of the sound, or even the quality of the sound itself. For example, the orchestral music that plays during the opening credits

119 Neumeyer derives his concept of anchoring from Christian Metz (Metz, 158).
of Alfred Hitchcock’s 1954 *Rear Window* is easily attributed to the film world since it emanates from the speakers that also supply the rest of the film’s sounds. However, if the music instead comes from elsewhere—perhaps the row behind a filmgoer, or another room beyond the viewer’s home theater—we anchor it in the real world where it may be attributed to an unsilenced cellphone at the cinema or another occupant of the home.

With a sound successfully anchored in fiction or reality, Neumeyer then maps the same distinction onto the film and its portrayed reality, although here the terms are *diegetic* and *nondiegetic*. Through long precedence, we may assume the opening music of *Rear Window* to be nondiegetic until the music abruptly ends and a voice questions, “Men, are you over forty?” To confirm our burgeoning suspicions that the music we have heard since the film’s beginning may actually be diegetic, a character in the film interrupts his shaving to tune his radio to a new station, interrupting the unwelcome advertisement and quickly settling into new music. If, however, the music had faded to silence, or merely continued with no visual confirmation of its presence within characters’ reality, our assumption of its presence within nondiegetic space would remain unchallenged. In these stages of Neumeyer’s paradigm, the viewing audience engages simultaneously in two distinct methods of hearing: first by distinguishing

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between the physical space of the viewer versus that of the character (anchoring stage), then by distinguishing between the physical space of the character versus that of the narrator (diegesis stage). The recognition and differentiation between real and imagined space—whether real or imagined from the perspective of first the audience then the characters—poses the essential key to these stages of Neumeyer’s model. Here, the nondiegetic space (i.e. characters’ imagined space) proves the more complex since it requires not only a clear understanding of fictional reality but also the analysis of each individual sound’s meaning within the context of the film.

The last stage of Neumeyer’s model focuses on the narration of the film in an attempt to understand how both diegetic and nondiegetic sounds contribute to the telling of the story. Here, he recognizes multiple nuances toward understanding these concepts, from Gorbman’s fixed binary opposition, to a more mutable version that conceives the same pairing on a continuum from one extreme to the other, to Stilwell’s approach that theorizes the complex fantastical gap between them. In this stage of the model, the pertinent question is not where the sound belongs, but what it accomplishes: whether it serves merely an environmental function or bears narrative significance. In our example of the opening music of Rear Window, that question is not easily resolved.

since its shift from apparently nondiegetic to confirmed diegetic suggests that it indeed serves both functions. Environmentally, the music establishes the shared ambiance of the apartment dwellers and how their open windows enable each of their lives to intrude upon the main character, L. B. “Jeff” Jeffries (James Stewart). Narratively, the music along with its commercial interruption demonstrates the shaving character’s impatience with the interruption and his keen interest in music. This is further corroborated by the prominent presence of a grand piano in his apartment and his activities throughout the film, including composing at his piano and conducting vocal lessons. Since the narrative significance of the music bears primarily upon a minor character, however, we may recognize that its function within the film is primarily environmental, a conclusion that is further supported by the music’s initially nondiegetic interpretation. Thus, Neumeyer’s tripartite model demonstrates that a single sound can be situated in three distinct paradigms: real versus fiction, diegetic versus nondiegetic, and environmental versus narrative. Figure 6 summarizes Neumeyer’s anchoring → diegesis → narration model in a format similar to Percheron’s above (Fig. 4).

Whereas Neumeyer quite neglects nondiegetic sound in his approach to addressing deficiencies in Gorbman’s original paradigm, Ben Winters seeks to fill this gap by turning the whole matter on its head. For him, the core of the issue is not whether characters hear nondiegetic music, but whether it exists in the present time and
space of the diegesis or instead seems to "narrate" from a distance. Motivated by dissatisfaction with the prevailing notion that nondiegetic music is wholly inaccessible to fictional characters, he proposes splitting nondiegetic music into two distinct concepts: extra- and intra-diegetic. Immediately, Winters’ approach is complicated by the recycling of already-problematic terms, but he uses them in a wholly unique manner. Rather than mapping extra-diegetic neatly onto Gorbman’s term nondiegetic, Winters begins with an understanding that all the music he discusses can readily be interpreted as nondiegetic via previously established definitions. From here, his application of these terms specifies the role of such music within a film. In other words, his work seeks to

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expand upon the right-most branches of both Percheron (Fig. 4) and Neumeyer’s (Fig. 6) models, as shown in Figure 7.

**Figure 7:** Detail from Percheron and Neumeyer’s flowcharts, with new contributions from Winters (in gray boxes)

Winters defines *extra-diegetic* as “music or sound whose logic is not dictated by events within the narrative space” and offers a paradigmatic example in Oliver Stone’s use of Samuel Barber’s *Adagio for Strings* to accompany a violent, war-time death in the 1986 film *Platoon.*\(^{127}\) The alternative is *intra-diegetic,* which identifies “music or sound [that] exists in the film’s everyday narrative space and time.”\(^ {128}\) For example, in contrast to *Platoon,* the nondiegetic musical fabric of Barry Levinson’s *Good Morning, Vietnam* (1987) consists primarily of songs drawn directly from 1960s American popular music.

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\(^{127}\) Winters, “Fallacy,” 237.

\(^{128}\) Winters, “Fallacy,” 237.
In this respect, Winters’s notion of *intra-diegetic* music neatly parallels Neumeyer’s concept of an environmental function for diegetic music, just as *extra-diegetic* likewise parallels a narrative function. Winters also notes that intra-diegetic music need not merely align with the physical space portrayed in a film, but can also reflect a character’s emotional state or even represent a particular character as a “musical calling-card.” While Winters’ reconceptualization does not change the status of nondiegetic music as unheard by the inhabitants of a film’s world, its separation into *extra-* and *intra-* varieties both complicates and clarifies the divide between actual and fictional realities. Not only does *intra-diegetic* permit characters access to the environmental and/or emotional information contained within nondiegetic music, but it also allows the music to impact narration through the effect it has upon a viewer’s understanding of the diegesis.

In his later work, Winters examines the role of portrayed concert experiences in film as a means of further exploring the shared space between actual and fictional realities. Here, he begins with the premise that film is “essentially musical,” pointing primarily toward music’s function in distinguishing film from reality and noting that

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129 In this film, songs are generally implied to have a diegetic context due to the primary character’s position as a radio disc jockey, but they often serve a nondiegetic function as they accompany various scenes of life in 1960s Vietnam. Here, the songs—whether technically diegetic or nondiegetic—promote the film’s setting.
130 Winters, “Fallacy,” 237.
132 Winters, *Realities*. 

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“music is inherent to film’s unreality or, more properly perhaps, inherent to its film reality.” By this, he references the ubiquity of music—either diegetic or nondiegetic—throughout the medium of film, and the extent to which the nature of music in film cannot be replicated in reality. That is not to suggest, of course, that we cannot create a musical background by which to go about our lives. Indeed, the numbers of young people who are never far from their ear buds or headphones suggests quite the opposite. We can even, should we feel so inclined, take the extra step to create musical accompaniments for ourselves that highlight events or themes of which we may be conscious in our everyday lives. The difference, however, is that film characters (generally) do not do this. Instead, their background scores and diegetic selections are made for them by unperceived forces that do not even exist within their own reality. I am speaking, of course, of filmmakers and film composers. Through this quality of persistent music throughout the course of a film, we are distinctly and wholly separated from filmic reality by the limitations of our own reality, even if no other feature of the film in question manages to achieve such a measure of alienation. Furthermore, by embracing the potential for intra-diegetic music to both influence and be influenced by

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133 Winters, Realities, 4.

134 Daniel Frampton offers a diegetic substitute for nondiegetic filmmaker(s) with his concept of the filmind: the self-governing agent of an individual film that serves as both the originator of characters’ actions and a story’s events, as well as the diegetic chooser of all music. Frampton notes, “The filmind is not an ‘external’ force, nor is it a mystical being or invisible other, it is ‘in’ the film itself, it is the film that is steering its own (dis)course. The filmind is ‘the film itself.’” [Daniel Frampton, Filmosophy (New York: Wallflower Press, 2006), 7.]
filmic events, Winters effectively abandons the notion that film in any way mirrors actual reality. Even more notably, he suggests that music represents the aural aspect of filmic *mise en scène*, and that perceiving diegesis as a narrative space rather than a layer aligns it more clearly with film than literature. Through such ideas, Winters carves a new niche for film music that is quite independent of Gorbman’s literary influences.

Every time we take our place as a member of an audience for any telling of a story—be it film or opera, their smaller siblings of television or song, or even theater or literature—we engage in a simultaneity of realities: our physical reality within a darkened theater or a comfy chair at home, and our imaginative reality within which our senses are engaged through the screen, stage, or page. Above all, these realities are not subject to the same ontological rules. Physical laws dictate that a human being cannot travel in time or converse with animals. Circumstances dictate our own individual realities, for example that I will never travel in space or discover the cure for the common cold. And nature dictates that none of us will ever meet a dinosaur or a wizard. But all of this and more is possible in our imaginations.

Through imagination, individuals are able to enter the fictional reality posed by a story, whether in film, opera, television, theater, or literature. To do so means to imagine oneself a part of that reality, to suppose for however long the story lasts that the laws,

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135 Winters, *Realities*, 182.
dictates, and conventions of that fictional reality supersede our own, at least insofar as the portrayed characters are concerned. It is through such imaginative projection that one may consider what it is like to exist in that reality and speak of the music a character hears, for example. Even more crucial with regard to diegetic music in opera is being able to translate from one reality to another since this permits us not only to ascertain the nature of circumstances within the fictional reality, but also to imagine how what we observe on screen, stage, or page would change and/or remain the same if transplanted into the actual reality of our everyday lives. While this perhaps seems a tall order, such imaginative transference is something in which audience members engage every time we are presented with a story in any medium, whether or not we are aware we do so. This is what leads us to weep in response to sad stories, to hold our breath during tense ones, or perhaps even to decide that opera’s convention of communication through singing is simply too alien to be borne.

With Winters’s claim that film is “essentially musical,” we come at last to opera. After all, while the author must qualify such a statement with regards to film, no such requirement emerges for the same to be said of opera. To Winters’s statement I add that, if film is essentially musical, then opera is blatantly musical. The ubiquitous nature of music in opera is what distinguishes it from all other forms of staged fiction, and to lose its intrinsic musicality would be to dismantle the artform entirely. While opera’s musical nature has certainly served as a source of delight for operagoers throughout history, it
poses particular challenges when it comes to the differentiation between diegetic and nondiegetic music. In film, the basic standard to which music may be added is the absence of music. But in opera, there is no absence of music. What becomes the standard, then, by which diegetic and nondiegetic music are judged? And how are we to recognize a shift from one to the other if the music never halts? These are, of course, the questions that will occupy us in the next chapter.
2. Dual Lives: Diegetic Music in Opera

Music is a living, breathing artform, one that leaves no trace in its wake, except in memory. Scores provide poor imitations of the art they represent, a roadmap that describes only the most obvious of landmarks and through inexact terms. Even recordings merely preserve what was once alive, an artistic fossil of sorts. A truly ephemeral experience, music cannot exist without the bodies that breathe life into each note. While all musicians embody their craft to some extent, singers experience this effect on a different level with their physical forms both generating and expressing their performance without the aid of an external instrument. But something especially peculiar occurs when a singer engages in opera, when her physical embodiment of the music acquires a second function as she also embodies a character. Such dualism results in the illusion required of all mimetic representations: the acceptance that an actor is the character, and that the audience observes a fictional character’s life, rather than that of the actor’s.¹ In film and other theatrical genres, the point of unification between real-world actors and fictional characters is both the body and the voice they share. In opera, however, the voice becomes the primary focus, its aural nature elevated in importance over the visual by virtue of the medium’s essential musicality.

As performers, opera singers experience a second form of dualism since they

step one foot simultaneously in two different worlds. In order to convey the story, an opera singer must engage with the fictional world: interacting with other characters, expressing pertinent emotions, and recognizing the existence and influence of people, ideas, and events that are not necessarily present either physically or imaginatively. At the same time, however, he must also remain within the real world: remembering pertinent details of the score and libretto, hitting specified staging marks, and properly engaging his vocal mechanism to produce the best quality of singing possible. My own operatic stage experience has demonstrated that getting too absorbed in either the physical or imaginative reality of a performance spells disaster, resulting in an unconvincing portrayal of a character on the one hand, or a lackluster vocal showing on the other, either of which will not win further engagements. Instead, a delicate balance is required between the imaginative and the physical in order to simultaneously convey the drama of the opera and to do so in good voice.²

Diegetic music adds yet another layer of dualism to this paradigm since it highlights the multiplicity of a character’s dramatic functions. The correlation observed between narrative levels and diegetic music in film sustains in opera.³ For example, when Cherubino sings a song for the Countess in Mozart’s *Le nozze di Figaro* (1786), he

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² A parallel argument can be made for film, but I contend that its recorded medium changes matters considerably by facilitating not only performances by trial-and-error, but also joining together multiple takes to create a performative ideal through post-production editing.  
³ See Chapter 1, Section 1.2.2: *Narrative Levels.*
serves simultaneously as a mimetic character in his own right and as the narrator of his
song to the Countess, both within the same narrative level of the opera as a whole. At
the same time, however, the first-person perspective of his song suggests he also
functions as the mimetic character at the level of the song, which exists within the opera.
In this way, diegetic music provides a moment in which narrative levels collide, the
same character appearing at the same time as both a mimetic performer at one level and
a narrative speaker at another. Furthermore, such moments constitute another means of
blending realities since the notion of diegetic music always representing mise en abyme in
film is doubly true in opera. In addition to a performance-within-a-performance,
diegetic music in opera represents singing-within-singing—more specifically, the
character’s singing as portrayed by the actor’s singing. While philosophical accounts of
opera often comment upon the operatic voice’s ability to hover between worlds,
passages of diegetic music foreground this effect, thereby emphasizing the artform’s

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4 “Diegetic” is used here in the modern sense to indicate a performative act within an opera. “Mimetic,”
on the other hand, is used in the Aristotelian sense and is therefore synonymous with “dramatic” or
“performed.” Thus, Cherubino is a mimetic character (i.e. a character performed by an actor) engaged in a
diegetic performance (i.e. taking place within the diegesis). To avoid confusion, I have not used “diegetic” in
a Platonic sense, instead employing the word “narrative” to convey that meaning (e.g. mimetic performer
versus narrative speaker).

5 Both Carolyn Abbate and Philip Rupprecht touch upon this blending of fictional and actual realities
when referencing an oscillation with respect to mise en abyme. [Carolyn Abbate, Unsung Voices: Opera and
Rupprecht, “The Turn of the Screw: Innocent Performance,” in Britten’s Musical Language (New York:
Cambridge University Press, 2001), 166.]

6 Stanley Cavell indirectly summarizes this idea when he answers, “Who sings, the actor, the
character?” by responding that both the actor and the character sing simultaneously. [Stanley Cavell,
University Press, 1994), 135.]
existential dualism.\(^7\)

Embodied, ontological, and narrative dualism offer some sense of what distinguishes opera from other performative genres, but diegetic music highlights yet another duality: operatic reality and operatic fiction. Rather than recognizing our real-world perception of physical and imaginative realities, this dualism focuses upon the perspective held by inhabitants of a fictional world. For opera characters, the fictional reality within which they exist equates with nondiegetic music. When they engage in performance, however, they delve into operatic fiction, an imaginative world that exists within their imaginative world. My use of language so reminiscent of *mise en abyme* further emphasizes the direct correlation between operatic fiction and diegetic music. Such fiction-based dualism yields the structure for this chapter, which parallels the first in its goal of exploring and disentangling scholars’ overlapping and contradictory perspectives on both the nature of opera as a whole and diegetic music within that genre. Discussion begins with *Operatic Reality*, an exploration of the fictional realm within which opera’s diegetic music exists, focusing primarily on the most influential and often opposing voices of Edward T. Cone and Carolyn Abbate. *Operatic Fiction* then concentrates on diegetic music, both examining the terminological confusion that thrives within opera scholarship as well as creating a taxonomic system for clarifying various

scholars’ perspectives. This section also includes a brief overview and assessment of two approaches that provide differing theoretical frameworks for diegetic music in opera. Finally, the concluding section of this chapter offers *A New Perspective*, my own synthesis of the scholarship that precedes me and a statement of the assumptions and biases that inform my approach to the remainder of this study.

### 2.1 Operatic Reality

Opera is not realistic. To convince anyone of that fact, all we need do is sit down to watch an opera—any opera—because the fundamental criteria that qualifies it as opera in the first place is what also defines it as unrealistic. Nowhere else in the real world do we expect to come across people who routinely sing every utterance that leaves their mouth. Nowhere else in life does the sound of a full orchestra accompany our every action. No, opera is not realistic, and that is perhaps to its detriment. If we think too long and deeply about just what differentiates opera from reality, we run the risk of recognizing its absurdity. After all, where else can we expect someone dying of severe respiratory illness to sing in a full voice capable of carrying across an intervening orchestra? Opera is not realistic. In fact, the sooner an opera novice jettisons the notion that opera should be realistic, the more likely they are to enjoy it. Of course, that is not an option for the music scholar. In fact, it is our job to think about such matters so others do not have to. And, the more we can find ways for opera to relate to familiar premises of reality, the more accessible it will be to a broader audience. Whether or not this line of
logic reflects the thought processes of my scholarly predecessors, I cannot say, but I can say that the results of their ponderings give us plenty to decipher.

Diegetic music is part of opera. I hope we can agree on at least this much, though the precise nature of what that means is certainly a topic ripe for debate. Another tenet of logic to which I might assume we may concur is that, since diegetic music is part of the operatic landscape, it would behoove us to understand opera as a whole with some clarity before venturing forth to understand diegetic music’s place within it. To that end, this section presents three matters intrinsic to operatic diegeses: what characters perceive there, from whence their words and music originate, and how they relate to their musical environment. Much, though not all, of this discussion will revolve primarily around two authors and their highly influential works: Edward T. Cone’s *The Composer’s Voice* and Carolyn Abbate’s *Unsung Voices*. Often seen as conflicting in their views, an underlying current of this section will be to demonstrate how these authors’ perspectives are not really as incompatible as they may at first seem. The titles for the first two sub-sections—*Awareness and Deafness*, and *Authorship and Authority*—pertain to each of their viewpoints, respectively. Although the topic of the third sub-section—*The Musical Environment*—is implied throughout the others, attention which has heretofore been focused directly upon the characters turns more toward the orchestra and its position within an operatic diegesis. Likewise, while diegetic music may rear its head from time to time, the primary focus of this section is to establish a foundational
understanding of the ontology that exists within opera’s fictional reality.

### 2.1.1 Awareness and Deafness

The human voice is of special importance in a film’s aural landscape, bearing primary responsibility for the means by which the film’s plot is conveyed. Even more profoundly, Michel Chion notes film’s *vococentric* quality derives from the same primacy of the voice inherent to human experience overall, thereby arguing that film only extends the hierarchy of listening that governs our everyday lives.⁸ Chion also points out that film audiences routinely conflate the human voice with the act of speaking, often recognizing no distinction between what is said and how it is said.⁹ In this respect, Chion regards the human voice as an object, its timbre and aural qualities a source of interest and study entirely independent from the words that it expresses.¹⁰ Such objectification of the voice leads some scholars to argue that the voice itself lends greater meaning to its utterances. Theo van Leeuwen, for example, aligns the embodied with the experiential elements of speech in film, which enable audience members to gather meaning from a voice’s register, volume, tension, and other features simply by virtue of his or her experience as an inhabitant of the real world.¹¹

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Although focus on the voice in absentia its words may be a mode of hearing and understanding that is not commonly recognized in the genre of film, the same cannot be said of opera. Constantly attended to, the quality of the human voice is of primary consideration in judging the overall effectiveness of an operatic production. This is true to such an extent that often the voices themselves influence the choice of which productions to attend or which recordings to enjoy. In this sense, the objectification of the voice is much more present in opera than film. In language reminiscent of Chion despite being written more than two decades earlier, Edward T. Cone notes that, “As human beings, we recognize the voice as belonging to one of us, and we accord it special attention… When it sings, it is clearly supreme. The fact that only the human voice can adequately embody a protagonist or character is due to this natural supremacy, more than to its ability to verbalize.”

Michal Grover-Friedlander goes so far as to suggest that “opera is essentially about the wish for the autonomization of voice or an attempt to approach voice as detached object. Opera’s essence lies in moments of pure voice.” And Carolyn Abbate notes the delicate balance between the audience’s perception of a fictional character and a real-world performance in moments where the voice-object emerges without any fictional context. The staccato passages in the Queen of the

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12 Cone, Voice, 79.
14 Abbate, Unsung, 10.
Night’s aria “Der Hölle Rache” from Mozart’s *Die Zauberflöte* (1791) poses a prominent example of this effect, wherein audiences eagerly anticipate and judge a soprano’s singing entirely independent of the character’s expression of fury and vengeance. These are only a few examples of how authors express the primacy of the voice-object in opera.

The logical consequence of focusing on the voice-object in opera is to consider its musical expression to the exclusion of its text. While some authors argue for analytical methodologies that separate these two elements, others feel such a split violates the very heart of the operatic medium.¹⁵ Nina Penner recalls the binary nature of song as the fusion of text and voice, thereby arguing that opera characters’ ability to understand their own and each other’s utterances requires access to both elements.¹⁶ Fictional characters within an opera may indeed be more aware of their text than their music—that is, more aware of *what* they say than *how* they say it—but the music nevertheless forms an essential part of their self-expression. Likewise, audiences may at times be more aware of an opera singer’s music than his or her text, but modern operatic productions still commonly feature translations projected above the stage in order to ensure access to the latter as well. For all concerned, then—characters and audience

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¹⁵ For example, Michelle Duncan argues for attention to the means by which voices in opera contribute toward or disrupt meaning, thereby seeking to extend consideration beyond the text-based approach that dominates analytical discourse. Michelle Duncan, “The Operatic Scandal of the Singing Body: Voice, Presence, Performativity,” in “Performance Studies and Opera,” special issue of *Cambridge Opera Journal* 16, no. 3 (November 2004): 284.

alike—a reciprocal relationship emerges in which the music informs the text as well as the text informs the music.

The perception and use of the human voice in opera garners so much attention because it serves as the focal point of what differentiates the artform from reality. Established over centuries of composition and practice, opera’s two foundational conventions set it firmly apart from our everyday experience: music as the primary mode of expression and singing as representative of speech. These two customs are closely related in that the first renders the second quite logical and necessary, and together they highlight opera’s distinct ontology. After all, in real life, we typically do not sing every word we say. The inherent cognitive dissonance between stage and life is even more evident in musical theater, where characters going about their plot in the familiar spoken manner suddenly burst into perfectly choreographed song and dance. The only real-life parallel to this effect are flash mobs, where individuals within a crowd initiate a performance that results in a public display of music and/or dance. However, despite the unawareness of those caught among the participants of the flash mob, such events are carefully planned and coordinated, not at all the spontaneous eruption of artistry they appear to be. The consistent and evident spontaneity of sung conversation within an operatic world thus definitively divides the medium from our own reality. One common attempt to reconcile opera with reality arises when we ask such questions as, “How do characters know when to break into song, or what words and
melodies to use?” Or, from an alternative perspective, “How do multiple characters manage to perfectly harmonize and blend musically on the same text if their singing is truly spontaneous?” Such questions arise from a desire to apply the logic of the world in which we live to that of opera, which promptly proves a futile exercise since opera is simply not realistic. In our world, performative efforts require coordination and practice; all evidence suggests that, in operatic worlds, they do not. Rather than pondering the musical logistics of text, melody, and harmony, the more productive question—as well as the one that implicitly underlies these others—is this: “Are opera characters aware they are singing?”

Among the earliest to address this matter is Edward T. Cone, whose notion of a triumvirate of musical personae not only assesses the interactions inherent to vocal music but also echoes Platonic and Aristotelian diegesis and mimesis. Working primarily with the smaller genre of song, he identifies the vocal persona as residing in the singer’s voice, whose expression relies on both text and melody. By contrast, the instrumental persona, which is the accompaniment, describes rather than participates in the events or concepts related by the vocal persona. And the complete musical persona, through its joining of voice and accompaniment, provides a full expression of the composer’s voice.17 Throughout his discussion, Cone relates each persona to the type of

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17 Cone, Voice, 9–18.
voice it expresses as well as the literary function it fulfills, as summarized in Table 2. In addition to clarifying the textual and musical interactions between the voice and the accompaniment, Cone’s discussion of each persona’s function also reconciles ancient Greek perspectives on poetry. His explanation suggests that the complete musical persona expresses both Aristotelian drama and Platonic narration in its unification of the vocal and instrumental personae.

**Table 2: Cone’s musical personae with Aristotelian and Platonic connections**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persona</th>
<th>Voice Type</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>vocal</td>
<td>embodied</td>
<td>dramatic (i.e. Aristotelian mimesis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>instrumental</td>
<td>virtual</td>
<td>narrative (i.e. Platonic diegesis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>complete musical</td>
<td>implicit</td>
<td>mixture of both</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Beyond defining these musical entities, Cone also distinguishes between the singer and the vocal persona through the notion of musical awareness. Although the real-world artist who works to learn and perfect the musical presentation of her art clearly must know she is singing, the case for the vocal persona she portrays is less clear. In the course of an opera, the vocal persona expresses thoughts, emotions, and actions through song. But, were the character transplanted to a non-musical medium, such as film or spoken theater, speech would suffice to express the content of the text. By this standard, the vocal persona does not perceive herself as engaging in a musical act. However, this construct is sometimes disrupted when the plot calls for a character to perform a song for other characters. In such cases, the vocal persona must indeed be aware she sings, and transplanting the character to another medium would yet retain
the music or otherwise risk derailing the text’s meaning. Thus, using neither the terminology nor the narrative concepts presented in Chapter 1 of this study, Cone defines the fundamental distinction between diegetic and nondiegetic music in opera as a function of whether or not the vocal persona is aware of her singing.

Ultimately, the question of vocal personae and characters’ awareness of singing boils down to what is meant by singing. In the real world, singing constitutes control of the human voice in terms of pitch, rhythm, and breath. In operatic worlds, however, what we the denizens of the real world designate as singing is simply the standard form of communication. Thus, for opera characters, singing is not singing as we think of it but merely communicating. By contrast, here in the real world, we describe our standard form of communication as speaking. However, what of the performative moments in which Cone argues a vocal persona is aware she sings, as in the case of diegetic music? Since opera characters use the same vocal mechanism for both diegetic and nondiegetic singing, the distinction is not actually one of singing versus speaking—or even singing-as-singing versus singing-as-speaking—but rather performing versus conversing. By shifting to a pair of words that carry the same meaning in both operatic and real worlds, we achieve a subtly different conceptualization of the matter that both eliminates confusion and poses more direct relevance to the discussion of opera.

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In addition to providing a partial answer to the matter of whether or not opera characters are aware of their singing, the performing versus conversing paradigm allows us to speak of the performative diegetic and conversational nondiegetic modes of singing. Just as we know within our own lives whether we are performing or conversing, we may assume opera characters within their fictional worlds also recognize this distinction. As such, opera characters’ awareness of their performative singing becomes a fundamental criterion for establishing the presence of diegetic music; however, the question yet remains regarding whether or not opera characters are aware of their nondiegetic singing.

One of the most prominent scholarly voices to address this question specifically, as well as operatic ontology generally, belongs to Carolyn Abbate. Her highly regarded study, *Unsung Voices* (1991), proposes a viewpoint that regards musical narration in all genres as a rare happenstance, occurring in moments wherein we can sense the voices being expressed even through non-vocal music.19 In opera, such moments of musical narration most reliably coincide with the concept of diegetic music, which she calls phenomenal music. Through this shift in terminology, Abbate raises the related question of what opera characters hear and to what extent they are aware of events as instances of musical performance.20 Her focus on aural input recalls a common colloquial definition

19 Abbate, *Unsung*, xii.
of diegetic music that applies equally well to both film and opera: music that characters hear as music. Additionally, her perspective raises a broader question since, if diegetic or phenomenal music may be perceived as a rare instance of musical narration, then who narrates the rest of the time? Abbate’s conclusion to this matter is the egalitarian concept of multiple, decentered voices that arise through the participation of invisible bodies, the unsung voices of her title.\textsuperscript{21} Since her broader thesis relates to applying the operatic concept of staged performance to other musical genres, downplaying the frequency of musical narration suits her purposes. In opera, however, narration must occur at all times, if for no other reason than because the opera’s plot relates a story.

Motivated in part by a rejection of Cone’s implicit person and his autocratic view of the composer, Abbate’s work centers on whether or not opera characters hear the music.\textsuperscript{22} Her answer elevates Cone’s question of awareness to a new level, arguing that opera characters are deaf to the music that surrounds them. By virtue of this deafness theory, opera’s music becomes a creation meant exclusively for real-world audiences, rather than an aural product produced by, within, and for the fictional entities on stage.\textsuperscript{23} One important caveat to this claim arises when opera characters temporarily shed their deafness in order to create and/or perceive musical performance. This notion leads to Abbate’s conceptualization of opera as being in constant oscillation between

\textsuperscript{21} Abbate, \textit{Unsung}, 13.
\textsuperscript{22} Abbate, \textit{Unsung}, 11 & 13.
\textsuperscript{23} Abbate, \textit{Unsung}, 119.
such moments of characters’ musical awareness, which she dubs *phenomenal music*, and their standard condition of deafness, occurring in *noumenal music*.\(^\text{24}\) Despite the differing terminology, her examples of songs, marches, and fanfares clarify that she does indeed refer to the same concepts as diegetic and nondiegetic music.\(^\text{25}\) Furthermore, Abbate’s phenomenal and noumenal music can also be understood to reflect Aristotelian mimesis and Platonic diegesis, respectively.

As might be expected, Abbate’s work has met with some resistance, especially with respect to her notion of opera characters’ deafness. While generally complimentary, Richard Taruskin refutes this particular point in his review of *Unsung Voices*, noting, “stage characters do not merely hear [noumenal music]; they live it. That is precisely what makes the music ‘ambient’; its locus is not ‘without’, but in a supremely literal sense within.”\(^\text{26}\) Taruskin’s perspective echoes the complaint within film studies that the term *nondiegetic* implies characters’ inaccessibility to the information such music provides.\(^\text{27}\) On the opera side of scholarship, Nina Penner likewise objects to the denial of characters’ access to their music as a consequence of Abbate’s notion of operatic deafness. Specifically, Penner argues that such a lack of awareness seems to isolate external authors as the only remaining option for opera’s narrators, a choice that Abbate

\(^{24}\) Abbate, *Unsung*, 123.

\(^{25}\) Abbate, *Unsung*, 120. This discrepancy of terminology is discussed further below.


\(^{27}\) See Chapter 1, Section 1.3.1: What’s Wrong with Diegetic Music in Film…
explicitly and paradoxically rejects along with Cone’s implicit persona.\textsuperscript{28}

Part of the difficulty with Abbate’s approach lies in her reliance on hearing, rather than awareness, as the means by which she discusses opera characters’ relationship to their music. The distinction lies in that hearing limits perception to only one human sense, while awareness bears no limits on how a particular understanding may be achieved, even by such uncanny means as intuition. Decades prior to Abbate’s publication, Cone anticipated this very shortcoming and took steps to address it. Characterizing the problem as a tension between the realistic and musical aspects of a vocal persona, Cone posed the question of how to reconcile the paradox between the realistic unawareness of singing and the concurrent musical awareness of the same. His solution was to consider each aspect in relation to conscious and subconscious levels of awareness.\textsuperscript{29} However, since subconscious recognition is, by definition, beyond the direct control of any individual, a guiding entity becomes essential in order to give the character access to the information provided by the orchestra. In Cone’s words: “By placing the voice in a larger formal context…[the accompaniment] symbolically suggests both the impingement of the outer world on the individual represented by the vocal persona, and the subconscious reaction of the individual to this impingement.”\textsuperscript{30} Thus, while an operatic character may yet be unaware on a conscious level either that he sings

\textsuperscript{28} Penner, 82.
\textsuperscript{29} Cone, \textit{Voice}, 32–33.
\textsuperscript{30} Cone, \textit{Voice}, 35–36.
or that music accompanies him, he may yet respond to subconscious stimuli provided through the music of the orchestra or other characters.

2.1.2 Authorship and Authority

In our everyday lives, we are the authors of our own words. We may, on occasion, speak words authored by others, such as when we read a news article aloud or recite Shakespeare, but the majority of what we say on a daily basis derives directly from our own thoughts. So, too, can we think of opera characters as the authors of their conversational, nondiegetic words. True, the words within an opera are actually composed and authored by a librettist, but that fact indicates the intrusion of a real-world perspective. From a strictly fictional perspective, authorship yields a second means of distinguishing between diegetic and nondiegetic music since conversational text is generated by the characters themselves. Performative text, on the other hand, is more complex and may originate with another fictional source altogether.

If we can uphold this notion that much of an opera character’s words stem from their own individual minds, can we not therefore also assume that their music derives from the same origin? After all, the melodic and harmonic content of an aria often carries as much meaning and emotional weight as the words, the musical aspect posing less an expression of what characters think than how they feel about it. Dynamics, timbre, range, tempo, and intensity therefore become the opera character’s means of self-expression, of conveying the nuances in the meaning of their words in a parallel manner.
to how those same elements achieve such results in our everyday speech. This logical bridge between fiction and reality leads Cone to suggest that opera characters actually compose all their own musical utterances, making them character-composers.\textsuperscript{31}

Cone’s notion of operatic character-composers is problematic, to say the least.\textsuperscript{32}

The core difficulty lies in his use of the word \textit{composer}, which must necessarily signify something quite different in this context. In the real world, a composer is one who arranges sound within a temporal framework to create a work of aural art. A character-composer, on the other hand, is one who uses music to express his thoughts or ideas in order to communicate with others. To draw a parallel with text, the distinction is between an author who carefully arranges the flow of words in order to produce literary, poetic, or other textual forms, and a speaker whose primary concern is the expression of thoughts, rather than the form that expression takes. In short:

\[
\text{composer} : \text{author} :: \text{character-composer} : \text{speaker}
\]

Further difficulty arises in that one individual can engage in both activities. For example, right now, I am carefully choosing and arranging words in order to express ideas and develop an argument in a textual form, but later I will simply speak my thoughts as I

\textsuperscript{31} Cone, \textit{Voice}, 23.
order my lunch. If I were suddenly transported into an operatic world where music is the standard form of communication, I would be equally responsible for the creation of this paragraph and the content of my lunch order, though both would be expressed through singing. To use Cone’s terminology, I am the *composer* of both.

To reconcile this viewpoint with that of diegetic music within operatic worlds, one must likewise distinguish between self-expression and intentional composition. Aligned with nondiegetic passages, self-expression would be the equivalent of my lunch order in the above example, or conversational singing. Diegetic music, on the other hand, would indicate an active effort toward composition similar to how I compose this paragraph, which therefore equates to performative singing. The remaining factor, though, is who composes. In the above example, my writing of this paragraph within an operatic context would be an example of *self-composition*, in which I am responsible both for the creation of the music and its performance. However, were I to compose this paragraph for someone else’s performance, my efforts would constitute a more traditional sort of composition. In both cases, though, the singing would still be performative and therefore qualify as diegetic music. Thus, in considering both function and authorship, we now distinguish between three types of singing: conversational nondiegetic self-expression, performative diegetic self-composition, and performative diegetic traditional composition.

Cherubino’s two arias in Mozart’s *Le Nozze di Figaro* (1786) offer an apt example
of these concepts and how they manifest within an opera. In Act I, the young man
confides in Susanna, revealing his newfound infatuation with women and love through
the aria “Non so più.” As a moment in which Cherubino expresses his thoughts, “Non
so più” functions as self-expressive conversation and therefore constitutes nondiegetic
music. Indeed, the text of this aria would be spoken were the character to find himself
transplanted to a medium in which music is not pervasive, such as a spoken play, a film,
or even the real world. His Act II aria “Voi, che sapete,” on the other hand, represents a
moment of intentional composition as evidenced by the preceding recitative that reveals
Cherubino composed the song and now performs it for the Countess. Imagining the
character’s transplantation to film, or even the real world, would therefore result in
“Voi, che sapete” still being sung, thus aligning the aria with diegetic music.33 As a
character-composer, Cherubino serves as both the author of his words and the composer
of his music for both these arias, whether through nondiegetic self-expression in “Non
so più” or diegetic performance in “Voi, che sapete.”

The matter yet remains, however, that Cherubino is actually no more the author
of his words or music than any other stage character, whether operatic or theatrical.

From a real-world perspective, he and all inhabitants of fictional worlds are more like

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33 Luca Zoppelli characterizes this difference as conventional versus intrinsic musicality: opera’s
presentation of singing in the place of speech illustrates the conventional musicality of nondiegetic music in
that genre, while diegetic music, with its parallel musical expression in both opera and theater, posits
intrinsic musicality. [Luca Zoppelli, “Stage Music” in Early Nineteenth-Century Italian Opera,” Arthur
pawns, maneuvered and directed within a broader context that a strictly fictional perspective obscures. Just like we, the inhabitants of the real world, are often not capable of perceiving the broader path and direction of our lives until after a new status has been achieved, so fictional characters lack the prescience to fully anticipate the consequences of their actions. Were this not the case, fiction would be boring, indeed. Instead, the lives of fictional characters are guided by some governing force that dictates both their actions and their environment. From a real-world perspective, this is quite simply the author or composer. From within a fictional world, however, that identity is not so easily defined.

In opera, the need for a governing force is multiplied since not only the plot but also the music requires structure and form in order to create a unified work. Cone’s solution to this matter appears within his tripartite construct, relying upon the complete musical persona to function as an implicit coordinating force for the vocal and instrumental personae. He begins with the logic that no character or group of characters can be held responsible for such coordination, then deduces the presence of a “wider intelligence” or “a single musical persona.”34 Cone characterizes this persona’s content as a mixture of the vocal and the instrumental—thus blending the functions of the mimetic and the diegetic in the ancient Greek sense—and attributes the creative

34 Cone, Voice, 13-14.
authority for the opera’s complete message to the composer.\(^{35}\) Of important note is Cone’s clarification that the implicit persona’s concentration on the figure of the composer does not correspond with the *person* of the work’s composer.\(^{36}\) In other words, Giacomo Puccini the man does not represent the implicit persona of, for example, his opera *Tosca*, but instead Puccini created a compositional persona when he wrote that work. Likewise, he created *different* compositional personae when he wrote *Madama Butterfly* and *Turandot*. It is this supreme authority over the operatic medium as a whole—not the composer himself—that governs both the vocal and the instrumental personae within the opera, as well as the coordination of the two. Thus, the composer’s voice of Cone’s title functions rather as a god ruling over the entirety of a particular work.

Although Abbate frames the motivation for her study as a rejection of Cone’s autocratic composer, the greater focus of her work centers on narration, which corresponds more directly with his instrumental persona.\(^{37}\) Since operatic accompaniments are most commonly produced by multiple musicians and coordinated by a conductor, Cone’s solitary instrumental persona fulfills the same narrative function.

\(^{35}\) Cone, *Voice*, 18.

\(^{36}\) Cone, *Voice*, 18. Cone makes this distinction by specifying that “the [implicit] persona is by no means identical with the composer: it is a projection of his musical intelligence, constituting the mind, so to speak, of the composition in question.” [Cone, *Voice*, 57.] This language parallels Daniel Frampton’s notion of the *filmind* as “the theoretical originator of the images and sounds we experience [in a particular film]…” [Daniel Frampton, *Filmosophy* (New York: Wallflower Press, 2006), 6.]

\(^{37}\) See Table 2 in Chapter 2, Section 2.1.1: *Awareness and Deafness.*
as the multiplicity of behind-the-scenes voices that animate Abbate’s theory.

Furthermore, Cone reflects Abbate’s notion of opera characters’ deafness to their music when he notes that the accompanying instrumental persona is fully aware of its vocal counterpart, though the same cannot be said of the reverse.\(^\text{38}\) Finally, Cone ascribes a position of power to the instrumental persona, unifying disparate musical contributions through three important capabilities: uniting the vocal efforts of all characters involved in an ensemble, providing the supportive framework within which Wagnerian leitmotifs emerge, and negotiating the juggling of melodies between singers and orchestra.\(^\text{39}\) In this sense, Cone’s instrumental persona serves as a singular representation of Abbate’s multiple unsung voices.

Thanks to the presence of a single plot portrayed by fictionally autonomous characters, the egalitarian concept of multiple voices toiling as one toward a common goal doesn’t work nearly as well for opera as for instrumental genres. As far as the characters are concerned from within the confines of their diegesis, fictional autonomy works just fine, each character going about his or her life within their music-saturated world. However, from the perspective of the real-world audience, the opera is still a work of art with a story crafted and narrated by a creative entity that must therefore


\(^{39}\) Edward T. Cone, “Poet’s Love or Composer’s Love?” in *Music and Text: Critical Inquiries* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 180. The first of these capabilities also addresses the shortcomings of Cone’s character-composer thesis as it relates to ensembles.
maintain narrative control over the characters’ words and actions. Cone’s solution to this
enigma is to symbolize such an authoritarian entity in the person of the composer
despite the fact that the composer is rarely if ever the sole contributor to the opera’s final
form. To this point, Abbate would be more comfortable with the recognition that an
opera’s controlling entity is actually a conglomeration of several real-world individuals:
the composer and his librettists, the author of the source material, and even the
conductor and stage director of each individual production. Thus, despite their surface
appearance of lying in direct opposition to one another, Cone and Abbate’s theories
reveal close similarities upon closer inspection.

Reconciling Cone and Abbate’s perspectives on the authority that governs
operatic worlds is ultimately not as challenging as it may initially seem. Abbate makes
clear her preference for approaching opera as a living performance of its music, a
performance that is animated through multiple voices rather than dictated by a single,
isolated voice.40 However, her rejection of Cone’s perspective suggests she has missed
his references to the interactive nature of his three personae, including the vocal persona
as a “living personification” of the complete musical persona that quotes the composer’s
will rather than speaks its own.41 Furthermore, while a character may generally remain
oblivious to the musical nature of his own and others’ utterances—including that of the

40 Abbate, Un sung, 12.
41 Cone, Voice, 5 and 13.
orchestra—Cone notes that the singing actor who portrays the character is conscious of all. When performing, opera singers must attend to the text, subtext, emotion, melody, accompaniment, fellow singers, staging, conductor, composer, audience, and on and on. For this reason, Cone perceives the real-world singer as the embodiment of the composer’s voice, while the fictional character he portrays represents the vocal persona.\(^{42}\) This duality of representation within a single body not only illustrates the intricate intermingling of Cone’s personae, but also reflects Abbate’s multiplicity of voices, thereby challenging her impression of Cone’s implicit persona as originating within an individual consciousness.\(^{43}\) In the end, Abbate’s rejection of a solitary controlling entity represents not a rejection of Cone’s theories, but rather a rejection of operatic analysis that fails to consider dimensions beyond the notation found in the score, that neglects music’s nature as a living, breathing artform.

### 2.1.3 The Musical Environment

Whether pertaining to perception or origin, Cone’s theories of operatic ontology share one significant limitation: reliance on individualized input. When applied to solitary characters, both Cone’s character-composer and his subconscious theorem work exceedingly well; however, upon the first intrusion of other fictional entities, the foundation shifts. After all, if three characters are singing at once, how can the audience

\(^{42}\) Cone, *Voice*, 58.

\(^{43}\) Abbate, *Unsung*, 11–12.
keep track of which one’s subconscious is currently producing the orchestral music that accompanies them all? What’s more, if it is possible to attribute the orchestra’s participation to one character or another, should we also infer that solitary character alone can hear the music while the others cannot? And what of the moments in which orchestras sound their wares entirely independently of vocal contributors? It is both true and comforting to recognize that text often tends to recede in such moments, the overlapping of words and musical layers obfuscating their meaning to such an extent that the musical whole—rather than the individual contributors—becomes the focus. 

But surely that alone cannot be the extent of the orchestra’s involvement in operatic diegeses. If it can be declared with finality that the nondiegetic music of a film score contributes to the emotional, temporal, and atmospheric setting of a scene, how can the same be any less true for opera? Since both orchestral accompaniment and multi-voice ensembles are integral and often highly anticipated features in operas of all varieties and eras, a satisfactory theory of operatic ontology must not neglect such constructs.

An early attempt to remedy its faults appears with Peter Kivy and his “phantasie” expanding upon Cone’s notion of character-composers. Though generally supportive of Cone’s ideas, Kivy is not reticent in his criticisms, including a rejection of Cone’s attempt to retract his decades-old distinction between realistic and operatic

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singing (i.e. diegetic and nondiegetic music) as well as a challenge to the individualized nature of Cone’s approach. Kivy augments Cone’s theory primarily through two avenues: borrowing and adapting concepts from R. G. Collingwood’s philosophy of art to further support the notion of character-composers, and identifying a new real-world parallel to account for the operatic orchestra. In the latter case, Kivy clarifies Cone’s notion of the orchestra as a manifestation of characters’ subconscious by proposing expressive gestures and body movements as an apt analogy. He asserts that such visual expression of inner emotions in the real world translates into the music that envelops characters in operatic worlds, providing the means by which private thoughts and unknown secrets become aural. He concludes by noting the remarkable nature of operatic worlds, where characters “speak in song and move as disembodied orchestral sound.”

Perhaps responding to Kivy’s explicit invitation to critique his ideas, David Rosen issues a blistering article in the very same journal in which Kivy published. Taking issue with both Cone and Kivy’s methods, Rosen argues that the question of

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45 Kivy, “Talk,” 73. Cone’s rationale for rejecting the distinction is the ability of a single melody to shift between diegetic and nondiegetic functions, which he calls “realistic” and “operatic” singing. While Cone finds such flexibility a hindrance to the fundamental dichotomy (Cone, “World,” 126–128), it actually highlights the malleability of the concept to various dramatic purposes.

46 Kivy, “Talk,” 67–70. The previous example regarding my dissertation writing versus my lunch order roughly mirrors Kivy’s implementation of Collingwood’s philosophy, culled from both this source as well as a second, clarifying article published in the same journal a year later. [Kivy, “Response,” 179–186.]


compositional authorship is inherently less important than the dramatic relevance of the character’s utterance itself.\textsuperscript{50} Overall, he objects not so much to the notion of characters having some sort of compositional input into their orchestral accompaniment, but to the universal applicability of such an idea within a genre boasting as much historic and dramatic depth as does opera.\textsuperscript{51} Nina Penner concurs with this assessment, explicitly rejecting the universality of the character-composer concept and viewing the theory as an exception rather than the norm. In passages where vocal ensembles share an accompaniment, Penner proposes that the orchestra’s contribution emerges through the characters’ collective imagination.\textsuperscript{52}

Despite all his cautionary language against aligning opera too closely with the real world, Rosen nevertheless manages to achieve precisely that.\textsuperscript{53} Never directly voiced, his assumptions regarding how music is conceived and produced in operatic worlds betray an alignment with our own world in the very ways it is least likely to do so. Rather than only one individual being responsible for a given passage of music, perhaps opera characters have the ability to telepathically communicate musical intent

\textsuperscript{50} Rosen, 65. One point on which he agrees with Kivy, however, is their mutual support of Cone’s original distinction between realistic and operatic singing (Rosen, 74).

\textsuperscript{51} Rosen, 66-67.

\textsuperscript{52} Penner, 84.

\textsuperscript{53} “I would not want to fall into the trap of claiming that every moment of every opera represents—or can be mapped on to—the real world.” [Rosen, 66.] “Similarly, at some point...I believe that most of us will say ‘that’s absurd: that world has little or nothing to do with the world in which I live.’” [Rosen, 68.] “The world of opera is treacherous ground even for the most surefooted and pragmatic critic; it may be uninhabitable for those who seek to impose on it the consistency of the real world.” [Rosen, 74.]
in a manner similar to Penner’s collective imagination. Or, whereas a successful performance here requires some measure of advance rehearsal, perhaps such tasks require no conscious effort in operatic worlds, voices simply emerging in perfectly balanced harmony as a matter of course. Either of these possibilities—while outlandish and fantastical to our real-world sensibilities—could be accurate, though there is no way to reach a definitive conclusion since all are speculations on a speculative existence. In that respect, Rosen is entirely correct when he opines that these are ultimately worthless questions that contribute little to the understanding of opera. But abandoning the effort to correlate operatic uniqueness with everyday reality means conceding that there are those who will never be able to accept the unrealistic world of operatic existence enough to enjoy the artform. Rosen seems to recognize this need since he proposes characters’ emotions as the originating point for orchestral music, a shared feature that aligns fictional and real worlds.

Whether we regard the orchestral music of an opera from Cone’s perspective as the conscious or subconscious product of characters’ existence, from Kivy’s as an analogy to physical gesture, or from Rosen’s as an expression of a scene’s collective emotions, the possibility remains that none of these theories are incorrect; that they are all, in fact, simultaneously true. This is the stance adopted by Matt BaileyShea when he

54 Rosen, 69.
55 Rosen, 73.
espouses a “fully diegetic” interpretation of the orchestra’s role in Wagnerian opera.\textsuperscript{56} In his estimation, the orchestra provides an aural manifestation of a constant presence, like air or water. While essentially passive, reacting to the vicissitudes of characters’ interactions and environments, such a musical presence is also susceptible to characters’ occasional efforts to control it in order to persuade or otherwise affect other characters and, by extension, the plot.\textsuperscript{57} BaileyShea is careful to articulate that characters are at all times aware of the orchestra’s presence—hence the label \textit{fully diegetic}—thereby emphasizing the full access of bidirectional knowledge and function between characters and the music.\textsuperscript{58} On the other hand, he also notes that, merely because characters can access the music and the information it carries at all times, does not mean they do. In fact, he goes so far as to suggest that “characters \textit{rarely} pay attention to the orchestra’s presence, despite its ubiquity (or, perhaps, because of its ubiquity).”\textsuperscript{59} Invoking BaileyShea’s own analogy with air, this effect closely parallels how we in the real world typically do not think about or acknowledge the air that surrounds and sustains us, although that neglect on our part never negates its presence.

This concept bears significant consequences for our basic understanding of diegetic versus nondiegetic music, eliminating the opportunity for an oscillation

\textsuperscript{57} BaileyShea, 8.
\textsuperscript{58} BaileyShea, 9.
\textsuperscript{59} BaileyShea, 10.
between the two modes as a means of understanding music’s contribution to the plot. The problem—quite similar to the initial issue and lingering confusion between the ancient Greek meaning of diegesis versus its modern definition—arises in the fact that the same word *diegetic* is being employed to express two different ideas. BaileyShea accommodates this by interpreting instances of staged performance within an operatic plot as simply examples of a “more direct” means by which characters exert control over the orchestral presence.60 But a simpler solution to this dilemma is to rework the labels required for the concept. Deferring to the broader understanding of *diegetic* music as moments in which characters perform onstage for one another, BaileyShea’s notion of the orchestra as bearing potential accessibility to all characters at all times simply becomes how it *is*, how the world of an operatic diegesis functions. In other words, the orchestral music is as fundamental, ubiquitous, ignorable, and malleable in operatic worlds as is air in our real world. Thus, orchestral music is capable of expressing both physical and nonphysical elements of the operatic world, including physical conditions of the environment and its characters, as well as the mental states relative to their inner thoughts and emotions.61

As BaileyShea’s fully diegetic view of the operatic orchestra attests, that entity’s function is broad and varied. These theories by Cone, Kivy, Penner, Rosen, and

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60 BaileyShea, 10.
61 BaileyShea, 7.
BaileyShea all aim to explicate the orchestra’s role in opera, though none manage to do so with complete autonomy. Even BaileyShea’s ell-encompassing notion falls short with regard to diegetic music that may as likely represent a traditional accompanimental pattern as any hidden meaning.\textsuperscript{62} The individualistic nature of several approaches raises significant issues when departing from the realm of solo arias, and Rosen’s notion of orchestral music as representative of characters’ emotions, while indeed more intuitive, also proves less revealing. But the fault in each of these approaches is that they attempt to ascribe a single explanation to a body of music that serves a wide variety of functions. Rather than aligning my own opinion with one of these approaches, I prefer an inclusive approach that embraces them all. At specific moments within an opera, one of Cone’s theories may fit best, while Rosen or BaileyShea’s approach might perhaps prove more apt in the following passage. In the end, the disparate structures and functions arising from the roles of the orchestra and ensembles comprise the environment in which operatic diegeses dwell. Should any remaining doubt linger as to the validity of the simultaneous application of all these ideas to the operatic landscape, none might phrase it more aptly than Cone: “the musical environment of those who habitually express

\textsuperscript{62} It is also important to note that BaileyShea’s approach specifically references Wagnerian opera, which also tends to present diegetic and nondiegetic distinctions with far less clarity than Italian opera contemporary to it. Classical-era accompanimental patterns that appear with some regularity in diegetic passages in Italian opera may be equally as rare in Wagnerian opera. See Chapter 3 for further discussion of the musical character of diegetic passages.
themselves in song must be vivid indeed.”

2.2 Operatic Fiction

As the preceding discussion demonstrates, opera presents a world of great complexity and contradictions, of fictional realities that simultaneously embrace and reject its real-world counterpart. Whether a matter of awareness and authorship as Cone sees it, or of deafness and authority from Abbate’s perspective, moments of fictional fiction, however, offer clarity. Regardless of whether or not characters hear the music that surrounds them ordinarily, they certainly hear diegetic music. Despite the unsolvable question of who or what directs most of an opera’s plot, diegetic music provides moments in which characters themselves narrate their own stories. While a performance-within-a-performance imposes a recognizable element of realism from everyday life, it also suggests a self-reflexive quality through its mise en abyme construct. Like two sides of the same coin, Cone and Abbate consider different aspects of the same concept. Although on the surface they appear to contradict one another—Cone focusing on how diegetic music reflects real-world singing while Abbate demonstrates that it reflects the performative nature of opera—both contribute to a more complete impression of diegetic music in this genre.

Cone and Abbate also establish a precedent of agreeing while disagreeing that

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sustains throughout the subject as a whole. Although some film scholars advocate for new terminology in addressing the limitations implied in particular by the label *nondiegetic*, the majority adopt both labels of *diegetic* and *nondiegetic* music when discussing the concept. Opera scholars, on the other hand, enjoy no such accord. The original dichotomy of *diegetic* and *nondiegetic* music is somewhat rare in opera scholarship, Abbate’s parallel terms of *phenomenal* and *noumenal* music proving more common. Other authors have also attempted to coin their own terminology, though none have emerged as the dominant choice. Throughout it all, however, opera scholars never dispute the fundamental premise of music that originates within the world of the opera and its characters. In the wake of examining the complexities of operatic reality, this section turns directly to opera’s fiction. Discussion begins with an examination of the terminological discord surrounding the subject of diegetic music and its relation to parallel conversation in film circles. The core of this section examines the variety of underlying concepts within which authors ground their perspectives on diegetic music. Finally, an analysis of the two most thorough theoretical treatments of diegetic music in opera concludes this section, paving the way for my own theories to close the chapter.

### 2.2.1 Terminological Discord

Along with its conscription of the concept of diegetic and nondiegetic music from film studies, opera scholarship also inherits all the topic’s attendant complications. Such impediments include confusion between the ancient Greek and modern meanings
of diegesis, frustration regarding the lack of a firm definition for nondiegetic, and
discontentment with diegetic-nondiegetic terminology as too subjective, realist, restrictive,
or literary. In opera, however, many of these issues are further compounded by both
intrinsic and extrinsic factors. By virtue of its musical medium and characters’ use of
singing as their standard mode of communication, nondiegetic music in opera must
inherently serve a vastly expanded repertoire of functions when compared to that of
film. While fulfilling all the same narrative, psychological, and dramatic purposes,
music also provides harmonic and melodic support for everything that happens on the
operatic stage. Beyond opera itself, the enormous success and influence of Abbate’s
Unsung Voices exacerbates filmic criticisms of inadequate definitions through the study’s
parallel imprecision regarding the nature of opera’s noumenal music. Furthermore, the
author’s suppression of the standard diegetic-nondiegetic terminology, in favor of her own
phenomenal-noumenal binary, also promotes the lexical variety that further confounds the

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64 See Chapter 1, Section 1.3.1: What’s Wrong with Diegetic Music in Film...
65 Like Claudia Gorbman before her, nowhere does Abbate definitively declare, “noumenal music is...” and the most accurate possible interpolation is simply noumenal music is not phenomenal music. At its first mention, Abbate draws an analogy from noumenal and phenomenal music to “story” and “discourse” in a narratological sense, equating noumenal music with an “untwisted” form that lies behind the surface of a musical composition (Abbate, Unsung, 49). In her central discussion of operatic characters’ awareness versus deafness, a quasi-definition emerges through negative correlation: “this [noumenal] music is not produced by or within the stage-world, but emanates from other loci as secret commentaries for our ears alone” (Abbate, Unsung, 119). Most often, though, Abbate relies upon direct contrast to define noumenal music: “...to hear beyond realistic song to that other music...”, “opera...proposes these two musics; one is worldly and audible, the other otherworldly, silent...”, “…that distinction between phenomenal song and ‘unheard’ music...”, “the collision between music that can be heard, and music apart and transcendent” (Abbate, Unsung, 119-123).
topic in operatic discourse. Table 3 provides a glimpse into the range of terms used in
opera scholarship to refer to the same basic concept as diegetic and nondiegetic music. I
will refer to this table frequently throughout the ensuing discussion of operatic fiction.

Table 3: Lexical and conceptual variety on diegetic-nondiegetic in opera studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Diegetic Alternative</th>
<th>Nondiegetic Alternative</th>
<th>Broad Category</th>
<th>Specific Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cone (1974)</td>
<td>realistic</td>
<td>operatic</td>
<td>performance</td>
<td>realism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoppelli (1990)</td>
<td>stage</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>performance</td>
<td>narrative levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbate (1991)</td>
<td>phenomenal</td>
<td>noumenal</td>
<td>awareness</td>
<td>hearing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Van der Lek (1991)</td>
<td>diegetic</td>
<td>nondiegetic</td>
<td>source</td>
<td>sound origin / film</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waeb (2006)</td>
<td>synchronous</td>
<td>asynchronous</td>
<td>source</td>
<td>sound origin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penner (2013)</td>
<td>artistic</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>performance</td>
<td>fictional truth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although they discuss the concept repeatedly, neither Carolyn Abbate nor
Edward T. Cone ever use the words diegetic and nondiegetic. Instead, both authors select
another pair of words that carry analogous meanings—Abbate: phenomenal and
noumenal; Cone: realistic and operatic.66 These pairings, however, offer only two of the
numerous alternatives (Tab. 3). Whereas film scholars partially resolve questions of
terminological appropriateness through the widespread use of diegetic and nondiegetic,
opera scholarship enjoys no such benefit.67 In fact, a search for scholarly work
addressing diegetic music in opera yields few results, leading to a faulty impression that
the topic is even more neglected than it actually is. Ultimately, no one debates the

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67 Film music scholar David Neumeyer even explicitly states there is “little to be gained…by
substituting other terms for diegetic and nondiegetic in film sound and music studies.” [David Neumeyer,
fundamental distinction between performative and conversational singing within opera, but the same logical and historical objections to the use of *diegesis*, as seen in film studies, are further compounded with regard to opera due to music’s function as the genre’s primary communicative medium. The cognitive dissonance between ancient Greek and modern meanings of *diegesis*, the deficiency of the English language in differentiating between them, and the complementary nature of *diegetic music* and *mimetic performance* despite their contradictory words has led opera scholars to avoid the problem altogether by employing a different lexicon.\(^68\)

Even when opera scholars do use the terms *diegetic* and *nondiegetic*, many simply do not pursue the topic, keeping their references brief and with minimal if any explanation. For example, Deborah Burton pauses in her discussion of dance music in Puccini’s *La rondine* (1917) to offer a paragraph-length aside regarding the tradition of mixing diegetic and nondiegetic passages in operetta.\(^69\) Her brief excursion features no explicit definitions, only a few examples with minimal discussion, and no entry in the book’s topical index, thus reflecting her impression that a basic understanding of the subject is common knowledge. Likewise, Emanuele Senici’s introduction to a compilation of essays on Puccini mentions diegetic music with neither definition nor

\(^{68}\) This statement derives not only from the sampling of alternative terminology found in Table 3, but also from my own conversations with such scholar-authors as Alessandra Campana and Nina Penner.

indexical entry, as do the volume’s essays by Arman Schwartz and Micaela Baranello.\textsuperscript{70}

Such a casual manner in employing the term \textit{diegetic} demonstrates the extent to which the concept is accepted and perhaps even taken for granted within opera scholarship.\textsuperscript{71}

\textbf{2.2.2 Conceptual Variety}

The assortment of terms by which authors define and discuss the same fundamental concept poses the advantage of exposing each author’s underlying ideological inclinations regarding the topic. Diegetic music is especially ripe for a broad lexicon due to the plethora of angles by which the subject can be approached, including practical, philosophical, and literary viewpoints.\textsuperscript{72} More pronounced in opera than film studies, the range of terms spans from obvious in their exposure of the author’s conceptual bent—such as Cone’s \textit{realistic} versus \textit{operatic}—to less apparent, like Jacqueline Waebber’s \textit{synchronous} and \textit{asynchronous}. Terms that focus on perspectives from imaginative versus physical realities abound, including Nina Penner’s \textit{artistic performance}, Luca Zoppelli’s \textit{staged music}, Peter Rabinowitz’s \textit{fictional music}, and even

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\textsuperscript{72} See Chapter 1, Section 1.2: \textit{The Fractured Reality of Modern Diegesis}. 

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Abbate’s phenomenal and noumenal as revealed by her indebtedness to Kantian philosophy. These and other authors’ perspectives coalesce into three categories of how scholars make sense of diegetic music in opera. Most aligned with film is the source perspective, which highlights the visual while seeking to identify a music’s origin. The most populous category for opera, however, takes a performance perspective, emphasizing diegetic music’s narratological implications as well as its self-reflexive and realist aspects. Finally, awareness not only reflects the influential notion of what opera characters perceive, but also unites all three of these categories into a blended whole.

Source

The first perspective as a means of differentiating between diegetic and nondiegetic music is quite familiar due to its prominence within film studies. David Neumeyer’s discussion of early Hollywood sound film defines source music as emanating “from the world of the film’s narrative,” while background music “hovers in an ambiguous intermediate ‘space’ between film and audience.” Michel Chion likewise reveals his overriding concern with locating sounds’ origins when he states, “For music I prefer to rely on terms that simply designate the place where each (supposedly) comes

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73 Immanuel Kant distinguishes between what we know through experience (phenomena) and what is true regardless of individual experience (noumena). [Simon Blackburn, “Phenomenon” and “Noumenon,” in The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy (Oxford University Press, 2008).]

from.” Of course, in film, source is easy to specify since the camera’s lens limits the visual field and can explicitly identify the instrument, voice, or electronic device creating the music we hear. In opera, on the other hand, the visual field extends across the full stage and each member of the audience is free to define her visual focus as she sees fit.

Of the authors identified in Table 3, only Robbert van der Lek retains this filmic perspective in his discussion of opera, defining three parallel terms of actual, diegetic, and source music all as “music which is located within the action…” His rationale for preferring the term diegetic, since the word’s modern definition literally means “within the action,” confirms his conceptual focus on the music’s source.

Despite his pervasive commitment to source as a defining characteristic of diegetic music, van der Lek paradoxically expresses discomfort with the accompanying notion of opera’s nondiegetic music as originating from an outside source. Noting that audiences do not experience any part of an opera’s music as external to the portrayed diegesis, he resolves this dilemma by speaking of diegetic and nondiegetic music as

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76 Robbert van der Lek, *Diegetic Music in Opera and Film: A Similarity Between Two Genres of Drama Analysed in Works of Erich Wolfgang Korngold (1897–1957)* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1991), 27. The author’s retention of the dominant filmic perspective is understandable since his study compares Erich Wolfgang Korngold’s film and opera scores with respect to diegetic music.

77 Van der Lek, 29.

78 For parallel arguments from film studies, see Chapter 1, Section 1.3.1: What’s Wrong with Diegetic Music in Film...
emanating from two “musical strata”: one directly portraying the action and the other merely representing it. Similarly, Richard Taruskin questions the operatic literacy of any who might “seriously imagine that [the origins of operatic music] are not ‘within the stage world,’” while Jacqueline Waeber argues, “Whatever its status of audibility, [all music in opera, melodrama, or incidental music] transmits the diegesis in one way or another.” Further articulating her position, Waeber notes that even unstaged music that plays while the curtain is drawn is never truly nondiegetic since it continues to serve a narrative function. For this reason, she favors the terms synchronous and asynchronous, directly relating music to its correspondence with the visual stage action and thereby identifying its source. Although Waeber aligns her argument with

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79 Van der Lek, 31–32.
80 Taruskin, 194. Jacqueline Waeber, En musique dans le texte: le mélodrame de Rousseau à Schoenberg (Paris: Van Dieren, 2006), 129. “Quel que soit son statut d’audibilité, [toute musique dans un opéra, un mélodrame ou une musique de scène] transmet, d’une manière ou d’une autre, la diégèse.”
81 Waeber, 130. “Toutefois nous ne sommes pas ici au cinéma, mais à l’opéra, soit au sein d’un dispositif narratif où la musique omniprésente constitue la principale et constante source sonore diégétique. Même une musique d’entracte, devant combler un temps mort entre deux acts par exemple, n’est jamais vraiment «non diégétique»: de là tout le charme propre à ces musiques qu’on imagine être purement fonctionnelles, mais qui en réalité ne cessent jamais d’être diégétiques, c’est-à-dire qu’elles conservent toujours une fonction narrative, et ce même lorsque l’action scénique est interrompue, le plus fréquemment par le baisser du rideau.” [Translation: “However, we are not in cinema here, but in opera, or rather within a narrative device where omnipresent music constitutes the main and constant diegetic sound source. Even intermission music, needed to fill in dead time between two acts, for example, is never truly ‘non-diegetic’: hence, all the charm peculiar to such music that one imagines to be purely functional, but which in reality never ceases to be diegetic. That is, intermission music always preserves a narrative function even when the stage action is interrupted, most frequently by the lowering of the curtain.”]
82 Waeber, 130. “Si l’on veut se référer sans ambiguïté à ces deux catégories de musiques, audible ou non audible pour les personnages, il serait alors moins équivoque d’utiliser les adjectifs «synchrones» (audible pour les personnages de la diégèse) et non «synchrones» ou «asynchrones» (inaudible pour ces mêmes personnages).” [Translation: “If one wishes to refer without ambiguity to these two categories of music—audible or not audible to the characters—it would be even less ambiguous to use the adjectives
Abbate’s focus on what characters hear, her terminology references the stage action, as in *music that is synchronous (or not) with the action on stage*. In this respect, her suggestion mirrors Percheron’s highest level of distinction for diegetic sounds in film, which aims to examine each one’s temporal alignment with a visual correspondent.\(^8^3\)

The *source* perspective focuses explicitly on the visual realm and thus represents the most easily perceived of the three categories. When an opera composer or stage director wants to unequivocally represent diegetic music, he specifies not only the presence of instruments on stage, but also costumed characters to play them. Classic examples include Susanna accompanying Cherubino’s “Voi, che sapete” on a guitar in Act II of Mozart’s *Le nozze di Figaro* (1786), and a staged chamber ensemble for the opening party scene of Verdi’s *Rigoletto* (1851). Source can also be the focus for identifying diegetic music even when instruments are not directly visible onstage, such as when Puccini’s Scarpia and Berg’s Marie, each frustrated by the intrusion of offstage music in their respective operas, close a window to shut out the unwelcome noise.\(^8^4\)

Explicitly defined by textual reference within the libretto or physical presence of staged

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\(^8^3\) Daniel Percheron, “Sound in Cinema and its Relationship to Image and Diegesis,” Marcia Butzel, trans., in “Cinema/Sound,” special issue, *Yale French Studies*, no. 60 (1980): 19. Also see Figure 4 in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2: *...And How to Fix It.*

\(^8^4\) This occurs in Act II of *Tosca* (1900) by Giacomo Puccini and Act I of *Wozzeck* (1925) by Alban Berg.
instruments, the *source* perspective leaves little room for ambiguity in identifying diegetic music.

**Performance**

In its focus on *where* music comes from, source perspectives neglect *who* creates it. For film, where music functions primarily as aural enhancement and often has minimal impact on the plot or its principal characters, deciding upon a music’s source may be sufficient for understanding its role. In opera, however, music is so intimately entwined with the story itself as to become quite indistinguishable from it. Perhaps unsurprising, then, greater numbers of opera scholars’ discussions of diegetic music recede from the visual focus on *source* and instead emphasize the music’s *performance*. Performative viewpoints seek to define diegetic music not only by its means of production, but also its relationship to the portrayed story. Authors in this category approach diegetic music by various means, from agency to audience to self-reflexive acts.

In opera, with its ubiquitous and often omniscient music permeating every aspect of the medium, asking who creates the music we hear at any given moment is analogous to asking who narrates the story. This question of narrative responsibility remains contested for nondiegetic music, as demonstrated by Cone’s autocratic
figurehead of the composer versus Abbate’s egalitarian multiplicity of voices.\textsuperscript{85} When an opera shifts from nondiegetic to diegetic music, however, narrative responsibility—and, hence, the source of its creation—also shifts from some ambiguous entity to the characters themselves. In terms of narrative agency, this shift presents a moment of clarity in the otherwise thorny question of who narrates a plot. Zoppelli reflects this concept—as well as implies his allegiance with Cone’s perspective—when he describes diegetic music as suspending the composer’s narration, characters in such instances expressing their own voices rather than that of the composer.\textsuperscript{86} BaileyShea likewise acknowledges traditional diegetic music within his “fully diegetic” paradigm as differing from the usual musical environment through characters’ direct assertion of control.\textsuperscript{87} The staged \textit{commedia dell’arte} performance within Ruggero Leoncavallo’s \textit{I pagliacci} (1892) offers a straightforward and yet simultaneously complex example of this effect. When Nedda takes the stage as Colombina, she claims narrative agency for herself and is in charge of the portrayed story’s direction. But when Canio departs from the expected performance and instead demands to know the identity of Nedda’s secret lover, he challenges her narrative agency and she struggles with whether to respond as Colombina (part of \textit{her} narrative) or Nedda (part of Leoncavallo’s narrative). The core

\textsuperscript{85} See Chapter 2, Section 2.1.2: \textit{Authorship and Authority}.
\textsuperscript{86} Zoppelli, 30. Zoppelli only uses the term \textit{diegetic} in relation to the ancient Greek meaning; his term for music produced by characters is \textit{stage music}.
\textsuperscript{87} BaileyShea, 10.
conflict in this scene lies with one character’s refusal to allow the other to maintain narrative independence, an effect which both complicates and drives the plot as it unfolds.\textsuperscript{88}

Peter J. Rabinowitz applies another narratological perspective to opera with his claim that diegetic music causes audiences to occupy more than one listening perspective simultaneously.\textsuperscript{89} His argument centers upon the distinction between two types of audiences: an authorial audience that observes the author’s creation, and a narrative audience that observes a fictional one.\textsuperscript{90} While the authorial audience is hypothetical in Rabinowitz’s home field of literature, in opera it is quite real. In fact, opera’s authorial audience is none other than you and me, those who listen to the music and observe the plot unfolding on stage before us. For most of an opera, during its nondiegetic passages, the only level of hearing in effect is our own, that belonging to the authorial audience. With diegetic music, however, the same authorial audience is engaged at the same time in observing a narrative audience; that is, a real-world audience observes characters who in turn participate in a fictional audience as they

\textsuperscript{88} Narrative agency also relates closely to narrative levels and \textit{mise en abyme}. See Chapter 1, Section 1.2.2: Narrative Levels.

\textsuperscript{89} Peter J. Rabinowitz, “Music, Genre, and Narrative Theory,” in \textit{Narrative Across Media: The Languages of Storytelling}, Marie-Laure Ryan, ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 318. Rabinowitz only uses the term \textit{diegetic} in relation to the ancient Greek meaning; his term for music produced by characters is \textit{fictional music}.

\textsuperscript{90} Rabinowitz, 314.
observe a fellow fictional character in performance. In the example from Act II of I pagliacci, two audiences exist: the one sitting in a real-world theater watching the opera that was written by Leoncavallo in 1892, and the fictional one sitting on the stage of that theater, watching the commedia dell’arte performance by Nedda and Canio. Rabinowitz’s simultaneous listening perspective occurs in that we the real-world audience not only observe the opera’s stage action as a whole, but we also observe the commedia dell’arte performance as if we were a member of the fictional audience sitting on the stage. For Rabinowitz, the existence of a narrative audience defines diegetic music.

Straying from the previous authors’ literary influence, a focus on the operatic medium itself reveals the self-reflexive nature of staged performance, such as how a story of infidelity drives the plots of both Leoncavallo’s opera and the fictional commedia dell’arte performance it frames. Even within this structure of mise en abyme, with its performance-within-a-performance paradigm, authors pursue a wide variety of angles in their observations. Rabinowitz references diegetic music’s self-reflexivity as an act of mimicry, while Herbert Lindenberger phrases it in terms of exploitation. Philip Rupprecht takes a more psychological approach with his discussion of the children’s...

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91 Rabinowitz, 318. The author also relates this multiplicity of listening roles to the ancient Greek definitions of diegesis and mimesis: in the case of music produced on stage by characters, the fictional audience observes a mimetic performance, while the real-world audience observes a diegetic one.

92 Rabinowitz, 318.

93 For more on mise en abyme, see Chapter 1, Section 1.2.2: Narrative Levels.

94 Rabinowitz, 317. Lindenberger, 140.
games in Benjamin Britten’s *The Turn of the Screw* (1954) as performative expressions of their internal world. 95 Yet more authors focus on the realism reflected within diegetic music’s performative act, such as when Cone discusses whether or not a character is “really” singing. 96 Tim Carter also invokes realism when noting that composers draw upon real-world musical tropes in such set pieces as prayers, incantations, and folk or drinking songs, thereby lending verisimilitude to the operatic plot. 97 Consistent throughout all these perspectives is an implied recognition of opera’s imaginative reality as distinct from our own physical reality. Nina Penner, however, emphasizes this notion directly with her focus on “fictional truth,” characterizing diegetic music as an artistic performance within the world of the diegesis, whereas nondiegetic music constitutes no such performance. 98 Whether holding a mirror up to an opera’s own fictional diegesis or the real world of its creators and audiences, these authors define diegetic music by its ability to reflect other realities.

**Awareness**

In the same way diegetic music offers clarity with regard to narrative agency, the broader question of hearing in opera is also more straightforward in such moments.

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95 Rupprecht, 162.
98 Penner, 83. Penner never uses the term diegetic in any sense and, furthermore, defines no explicit term for music produced by characters. Based on her focus on artistic performance in relation to diegetic music, I have assigned the term artistic music to her ideas.
Whether or not characters can hear the nondiegetic music that permeates their lives, there can be no doubt they certainly do hear music when it is being performed for one another. *Hearing* is the simplest way to describe the concept of diegetic music: music that characters hear *as* music. Despite all the various perspectives and nuances presented in this study, this reference to the human auditory sense remains the most effective means of clearly and concisely expressing the basic meaning of diegetic music. As an idea that bids an individual to place him or herself within the diegesis of an opera and imagine how things would appear from that perspective, this simple definition is not without its own merit, despite that there is far more to the topic than it conveys. Even the category label of *awareness* acknowledges a broader panoply of ideas that focus on character perspectives, of which *hearing* is only one. In this respect, the *awareness* perspective on diegetic music also incorporates ideas that focus on characters’ subconscious, interpretive, or even intuitive recognition of the music that surrounds them.99

The true innovation in Carolyn Abbate’s *Unsung Voices* is not her presentation of phenomenal (i.e. diegetic) music as heard music, but her flipping of this paradigm when she represents opera characters as deaf to noumenal (i.e. nondiegetic) music. Her focus on a specific type of awareness, however, also emphasizes the interconnectivity of all three perspectives on diegetic music. With her opening example of the Bell Song from

99 Examples include: Cone, *Voice*, 32-33; and Penner, 85.
Lakmé by Léo Delibes, Abbate explicitly introduces the concept of phenomenal music in tandem with performance, noting the simultaneity of narrative levels in which a singer performs for a real-world audience while a character also performs for her fellow characters. By these means, Abbate conflates the awareness perspective of diegetic music with the performative perspective, bringing both into a blended whole that is echoed by other authors. Although she does not make an explicit connection between characters’ hearing and the source perspective of diegetic music, logic dictates that music heard by a fictional character must surely originate within that character’s fictional world. With this observation, the appeal of Abbate’s focus on characters’ hearing becomes apparent. When we consider what characters hear with regard to diegetic music, we are also implicitly acknowledging matters pertinent to both performance and source. As such, the awareness perspective fails to provide a third category so much as to combine the angles for all three perspectives into one simple idea: diegetic music is music that characters recognize as music.

As might be expected given the radical notion of characters within a fundamentally musical medium being deaf to much of their aural environment, some

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100 Abbate, *Unsung*, 5. This also relates to the notion of authorial and narrative audiences and the idea that opera engages listeners in both levels of hearing simultaneously (Rabinowitz, 318).

authors express discomfort. In the words of Richard Taruskin: “…stage characters do not merely hear [noumenal music]; they live it.”\textsuperscript{102} He notes that Abbate herself alternates between \textit{deafness} and the word’s gentler version \textit{unaware}, although he finds this concession inadequate since both words imply a defect, something that opera characters should be able to accomplish but cannot. For Taruskin, the musical environment of an opera was never intended for the denizens of that world, but for the real-world audience observing it. He therefore rejects the notion of an opera character’s inability to consciously attend the music that engulfs him as a defect in his sensory capabilities.\textsuperscript{103} Neither, though, does the opposite prove satisfactory, the idea of characters as \textit{conscious} of their musical landscape also violating what we instinctively understand about operatic worlds and their inhabitants. Within his study of Verdi’s \textit{La Traviata}, Marshall Leicester formulates nondiegetic music as a representation of characters’ yearnings that, while perhaps beyond their full consciousness, is certainly not absent and at times may even be perceptible.\textsuperscript{104} And Nina Penner elucidates the distinction between hearing and understanding that Abbate seems to conflate, proposing that individual characters’ greater or lesser skill with interpretive competence may dictate the extent to which they understand the information they hear.\textsuperscript{105}

\textsuperscript{102} Taruskin, 196.  
\textsuperscript{103} Taruskin, 194.  
\textsuperscript{104} H. Marshall Leicester, Jr., “In and Out of Opera: Technologies of \textit{Jouissance in La Traviata},” \textit{Repercussions} 9, no. 2 (Fall 2001): 100, 112.  
\textsuperscript{105} Penner, 85.
Ultimately, Penner contends Abbate fails to meet the burden of proof for claiming opera characters’ deafness as a convention of the genre. Instead, she argues that accommodating characters’ aural acuity contributes to an understanding of not only their fictional ontology, but also opera composers’ and producers’ narrative choices.\textsuperscript{106} Even Abbate herself, with the advantage of ten years’ perspective, acknowledges that the noumenal/phenomenal binary represents merely one means of distinguishing types of operatic music rather than a homogenous theory of all opera.\textsuperscript{107} In the end, while opera characters’ sensory perception may not quite achieve conscious awareness, neither does it necessarily constitute deafness.

2.2.3 Two Theoretical Frameworks

While most opera scholars present and deploy their terminological and conceptual viewpoints for diegetic music as part of a broader objective, two provide frameworks that fully theorize the subject. The first of these is Robbert van der Lek’s examination of film and opera scores by Erich Wolfgang Korngold (1897–1957). While drawing a direct correlation between the two genres, van der Lek’s study centers around a fully articulated methodology for assessing diegetic music that considers both visual and aural aspects. Five determinants provide the analytical structure for evaluating such

\textsuperscript{106} Penner, 88-89.
\textsuperscript{107} Carolyn Abbate, \textit{In Search of Opera} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), vii. In this passage, Abbate refers to phenomenal music as “onstage music” and noumenal as “everything else.”
moments: (1) picture, (2) text, (3) formal position, (4) style, and (5) congruence of picture and music.\textsuperscript{108} The first two (picture and text) relate exclusively to the dramatic aspect of the film or opera, while the third and fourth (formal position and style) pertain solely to the music. The last determinant (congruence of picture and music) considers both dramatic and musical aspects together. For every instance of diegetic music, van der Lek assigns a rating on a scale of 0 to 4 that expresses the relative strength of each of these determinants. The mathematical mean of all five ratings identifies the overall strength of a passage’s diegetic interpretation.\textsuperscript{109} In other words, a passage with high ratings in all five determinants is more clearly diegetic than one in which only some determinants—or perhaps none at all—achieve that feat.

In addition to articulating the determinants’ dramatic or musical focus, Van der Lek divides the group according to each one’s relative objectivity.\textsuperscript{110} The first two determinants often pose little ambiguity and therefore serve a concrete foundation for a passage’s diegetic status. Picture pertains to the visuals presented either on screen or on stage, while text articulates whether or not characters directly refer to the music before, during, or after its performance.\textsuperscript{111} Van der Lek’s more subjective determinants, however, shift their focus from drama to music. Formal position poses three options that

\textsuperscript{108} Van der Lek, 36.
\textsuperscript{109} Van der Lek, 57.
\textsuperscript{110} Van der Lek, 45-46.
\textsuperscript{111} Van der Lek, 37 & 39.
assess the diegetic passage’s relationship to its musical surroundings. *Formal independence* reflects distinct breaks in the music that frame the diegetic portion on either side, *formal preparation* describes the presence of a musical introduction that bridges the initial divide, and *formal integration* defines diegetic music that is seamlessly merged with its nondiegetic surroundings.¹¹² *Style* ascertains the extent to which a musical passage credibly corresponds to the portrayed world, such as when a gritty police drama features urban hip hop music.¹¹³ This determinant proves especially problematic in opera since the stylistic contrast between diegetic and nondiegetic music is typically more difficult to discern in that genre.¹¹⁴ Van der Lek’s final determinant, *congruence of picture and music*, considers the extent to which the visual and aural dimensions agree with one another.¹¹⁵ Once again, opera is at a distinct disadvantage, its live format and variety in staging yielding an uncontrollable output, whereas film’s fixed medium facilitates consistency.

The advantages and limitations of van der Lek’s study both derive from the same source: his methodology. While detailed and nuanced in its consideration of both visual and aural elements, it also proves restrictive and formulaic. Having established his methodology and the rationale behind it, the remainder of van der Lek’s monograph

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¹¹² Van der Lek, 41, 60-61.
¹¹³ Van der Lek, 42.
¹¹⁴ Van der Lek, 42-43.
¹¹⁵ Van der Lek, 37.
consists of assessing each instance of diegetic music in each of Korngold’s operas and film scores by each of the five determinants. The repetitive and superficial nature of this approach thus yields greater utility as a reference source for specific diegetic passages than as an incisive study in its own right. Likewise, the rating system—though valuable for its depiction of diegetic status as a question of how much rather than if—suffers from an overly quantitative approach that is furthermore marred by mathematical miscalculations. Finally, while providing an excellent means of assessing a diegetic passage’s relative strength, the study’s format offers no context either before or after this process. Specifically, the question of how passages are determined to qualify as diegetic is never addressed, nor does the author suggest what benefit such detailed analyses pose toward enjoying or understanding Korngold’s film scores and operas.

Luca Zoppelli, on the other hand, takes quite a different approach, asking what diegetic music does rather than what it is. His focus on the music’s function proves more useful from an interpretive perspective, addressing, for instance, how an analyst may apply the knowledge gained through van der Lek’s analytical methodology to achieve new insights into an operatic work. In this way, Zoppelli offers a response to the implied “So what?” that van der Lek leaves unanswered. As part of this process, Zoppelli divides diegetic music into five functions: (1) denotation, effect, and couleur locale; (2) emblems; (3) points of view and focalization; (4) musical continuity; and (5) temporal
structures. The first—denotation, effect, and couleur locale—constitutes what Zoppelli calls the “degree zero” of diegetic music, identifying music that serves to symbolize or provide ambience for an object or event. The second is actually a special subset of the first, where music serves as an emblem or symbol of an ideological group or situation.

With points of view and focalization, Zoppelli’s interest in narrative levels and agency comes to the fore, claiming such instances transfer the music from an external narrator’s possession to that of the fictional characters, often with special focus on one character in particular. In ancient Greek terminology, this represents a shift from opera’s usual mimetic stance to a marked diegetic (i.e. narrative) function. The last two functions are closely related, musical continuity designating a real-time event whose intrinsic musicality imparts an inexorable forward momentum that propels the story, while temporal structures present a means by which the performance of diegetic music traces the passage of time. Whereas van der Lek’s analytical approach uses five determinants to assess a single passage of diegetic music, Zoppelli’s taxonomy seeks to categorize each passage into one of five functions.

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116 Zoppelli’s term for diegetic music is actually stage music since he reserves the term diegetic for its ancient Greek meaning. I use diegetic here for the sake of continuity throughout my discussion.
117 Zoppelli, 31.
118 Zoppelli, 31.
119 Zoppelli, 33.
120 Zoppelli, 35-36.
To return to our favored example, Cherubino’s aria “Voi, che sapete” from Mozart’s *Le Nozze di Figaro* provides an apt reference for both of these theoretical frameworks. Van der Lek’s determinants establish a solid foundation in this case, with published stage directions and details of the libretto that specify the inclusion of a guitar on which Susanna accompanies the young man’s song. Furthermore, a performative atmosphere is conveyed by both the Countess’s observation of his singing and the musical introduction and coda that separate the aria from its surrounding recitatives. Depending on the staging, the aural/visual congruence between each of these effects may be heightened or undermined—either deliberately or unintentionally—which makes van der Lek’s last determinant impossible to definitively rate unless doing so with respect to a specific performance or production of the opera. Barring this caveat, Cherubino’s aria scores high on van der Lek’s scale, quantifying an obvious instance of diegetic music that suffers only from a lack of clear stylistic distinction between this aria and the rest of Mozart’s opera. In terms of Zoppelli’s taxonomy, “Voi, che sapete” best fits within the *points of view and focalization* category, focusing attention squarely on Cherubino as he narrates a description of himself. In terms of the opera’s broader plot, his characterization as a besotted, lovesick youth is essential to both understanding Count Almaviva’s suspicious regard and eagerness to maintain distance between Cherubino and his wife the Countess, as well as perceiving the Count’s hypocrisy as he simultaneously pursues his own amorous advances on Susanna.
Both van der Lek and Zoppelli contribute valuable paradigms for fully understanding the deployment of diegetic music in opera, but neither is complete without the other. Van der Lek’s analytical methodology adequately picks apart what diegetic music is and how it manifests in the operatic score, but neglects the matter of why it should be there in the first place. Zoppelli, on the other hand, addresses how composers deploy diegetic music in opera—though from an entirely different perspective—and his approach further urges contemplation of why it is present at all, of what purpose it serves the drama. Even combining van der Lek’s analytical rigor with Zoppelli’s dramatic interpretation reveals an image of diegetic music in opera is still incomplete since neither addresses the question of where. The matter of identifying or locating diegetic music in any opera is, of course, the first step toward studying it. While both van der Lek and Zoppelli clearly must have done so in preparing their work, neither mentions the approach they took in achieving that first step. For examples such as “Voi, che sapete,” the matter of identification is a simple one. But what of the less obvious examples, such as those detailed in van der Lek’s study that barely rate on his scale and yet may still be considered diegetic? What of the impact they may impose upon the drama, despite the weakness of their diegetic status? The combination of these two approaches, along with a more defined approach for the initial identification of diegetic passages, will form the basis of my own analytical methodology, seeking to answer the questions of where, what, how, and why in relation to operatic diegetic music.
2.3 A New Perspective

Diegetic music is a concept of great depth and complexity hidden by a veneer of simplicity. Rather than a negative, however, such complexity presents a strength, lending the concept considerable flexibility in adapting to a variety of perspectives and approaches, as we have seen. At the same time, its deceptive nature obligates scholars to provide a clear statement of the assumptions and biases that lurk beneath the surface of their arguments, especially when those precepts depart from the mainstream understanding of diegetic music. This chapter therefore closes with such a statement of my own, first exposing five premises as the conceptual foundations of my approach, then articulating my own contributions to the scholarly conversation surrounding this topic. This brief discussion presents a broad overview of my perspective on diegetic music within the context of the scholarship that precedes me; it neither contains nor attempts to provide a detailed analysis of any examples. The elucidation of all unanswered questions and missing minutiae is reserved for Chapter 3, which details my analytical methodology in the context of Puccini’s Manon Lescaut. Furthermore, the ensuing statement of my approach to diegetic music refers specifically and exclusively to opera. Although I have made the argument throughout this study that diegetic music in film and opera bear many similarities, perpetuating a direct correlation beyond this point only serves to complicate both genres unnecessarily. Instead, this statement of my approach to diegetic music—and especially the novel definition it contains—takes a very
decisive and deliberate step toward exclusivity, applicable only to the genre of opera.

2.3.1 The Conceptual Foundations…

The foundational premise of my approach is that diegetic music encompasses the full panoply of effects described throughout these first two chapters. Diegetic music defines the locus of a music’s source. It juxtaposes narrative levels by highlighting the commonalities and differences between them. It comments upon the performative medium in which it appears. It brings opera’s relative realism into relief, particularly regarding how both characters and audiences relate to the music in question. And, it encourages real-world audiences to imagine the fictional reality of the characters they observe. The full impression of diegetic music’s nature and function in opera draws simultaneously upon aspects of source, performance, and awareness, including realism, narrative levels, *mise en abyme*, self-reflexivity, and so on.\(^{121}\) That is to say, no one author encompasses the whole of the subject in exclusion to all others. This speaks to the complexity of the concept but also its flexibility, allowing audiences and analysts to pick and choose which facet best fits any particular example. Diegetic music does and is everything discussed in these chapters; there is no need to declare one element or author as espousing the definitive viewpoint.

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\(^{121}\) This mirrors my reading of how Abbate blends all three categories of perspectives. See “Awareness” in Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2: Conceptual Variety.
My second premise relates to Cone’s character-composer theory.\textsuperscript{122} For solo operatic expressions, certainly the idea of a melody stemming from a character’s thoughts and perceptions makes sense, but the “composition” taking place in such instances is quite distinct from what we usually mean by that word. In this case, the music arises from an effort to express oneself, whereas the aim of traditional composition is to produce a musical work. Both types of composing can and do occur in operatic diegesees, although only conscious efforts to produce a musical work entail diegetic music as we have defined it heretofore. In this respect, Cone’s notion of a character-composer is quite distinct from the idea of a character who composes music; the former addresses how music generally comes to exist within an operatic diegesis, while the latter pertains only to diegetic music. In fact, the idea of characters who write or produce music will return below as a key component in my new definition for diegetic music. The utility of character-composers, however, is quite limited since the introduction of even one additional character obscures the emotional and cognitive origin of the music as a whole. While certainly exceptions exist—such as when Don Giovanni adopts the musical characteristics of his targets for seduction—it is logical that orchestral ensemble accompaniments more consistently pose a neutral ground unattributable to any single character over the others.\textsuperscript{123}

\textsuperscript{122} See Chapter 2, Section 2.1.2: \textit{Authorship and Authority}.

\textsuperscript{123} Wye Jamison Allanbrook, \textit{Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart: Le Nozze di Figaro and Don Giovanni} (Chicago: University of Chicago press, 1983), 250. While a detailed examination of this idea is beyond the
The third premise concerns the nature of nondiegetic music. In response to Abbate, I do not readily subscribe to her perception of opera characters as ordinarily deaf to their musical surroundings; however, I do concede they may be largely unaware of the music.\textsuperscript{124} For an explanation of the role music plays in operatic diegeses, I prefer Matt BaileyShea’s analogy with air.\textsuperscript{125} Here in the real world, air is both constant and necessary for life, an essential element that most individuals typically spend little time contemplating, though such neglect by no measure diminishes its importance. In operatic diegeses, music fulfills that ubiquitous role, saturating every moment of characters’ existence while simultaneously eluding the need for their constant attention.

At first, allocating fictional entities the same measure of dependency upon music that we hold here in the real world for air may seem a step too far, until we recognize that pervasive music is the foundational difference between opera and other genres. With this in mind, it becomes quite rational to suggest that music is essential to an opera character’s existence. After all, without music, they are no longer opera characters but something else. In addition to its life-giving qualities, air’s ability to be simultaneously present and overlooked also promotes its analogy with operatic music. Despite its

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\textsuperscript{124} See Chapter 2, Section 2.1.1: Awareness and Deafness.

\textsuperscript{125} BaileyShea, 8.
ubiquity, air is utterly ignorable. We know it is there at all times, but we may be only fully aware of it when it is lacking in some manner, such as when fog obscures sight or pollution impedes breathing. In the same way, opera characters may not be consciously aware of the music that surrounds them at all times, its constancy also lending it a substantial measure of transparency.

Air, of course, is not the only real-world analogy that explicates the nature of music in operatic worlds. Other explanations that allow for a varying degree of characters’ attentiveness to the music as well as the messages it holds are also plausible. Included among these are Cone’s notion of music as deriving from a character’s subconscious and Penner’s idea that some characters may be more attuned than others to the information contained within the music.\textsuperscript{126} Both of these interpretations are strengthened by the impression that some opera characters—just like some real-world people—are more introspective and intuitive than others. While these explain the internal relationship between characters and the music that surrounds them, a different analogy is needed for the effect music has upon interpersonal relationships within operatic worlds. For this, Kivy’s attribution of the musical environment to physical gesture and body language rings true.\textsuperscript{127} Interpreting music as an aural manifestation of body language offers yet another real-world analogy for how opera characters may—or

\textsuperscript{126} For Cone, see Chapter 2, Section 2.1.1: Awareness and Deafness. For Penner, see “Awareness” in Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2: Conceptual Variety.

\textsuperscript{127} See Chapter 2, Section 2.1.3: The Musical Environment.
may not—perceive the prevailing mood among an assembled group of people. Akin to the real-world effect of “reading the room,” this intuitive skill varies among individuals, allowing some characters to correctly interpret the music’s cues while others miss them entirely.

Assembled together, all these analogies pose a cumulative effect. BaileyShea’s air, Cone’s subconscious, Penner’s introspection, and Kivy’s body language all achieve the same result of externalizing opera characters’ internal worlds. In the real world, body language is an outward manifestation of what we think and feel; we exhibit annoyance through folded arms, heavy sighs, and sour expressions, and excitement via jittery fidgeting, rapid speech, and raised eyebrows. Our faces and physical behavior also reflect our introspections and subconscious, almost as though such thoughts and feelings long to escape the confines of the individual and become community property…like air. In opera, the same is true, although now the music further aids in the efforts of characters’ inner world to free itself, to escape into the atmosphere and find its uninhibited expression. This is especially fortuitous since the music provides the information the real-world audience is simply too far away to detect on the singer’s face while observing a performance from the cheap seats at the rear of the opera hall. From a purely fictional perspective, however, the fact that we are there to perceive the characters’ secrets through the music that surrounds them is entirely incidental.

The fourth premise of my approach is that diegetic music in opera has no direct
opposite. Rather than one half of a dichotomous pairing, diegetic music is a *subset*, a special category of operatic music that reflects specific facets of the opera’s diegesis and plot. Although not directly transferrable to film, the essential core of this notion informs my reading of Claudia Gorbman’s original term for *nondiegetic music* as designating “music that is not diegetic,” rather than “music that is not part of the diegesis.”

128 This subtle distinction not only explains why *Unheard Melodies* never adequately defines the term, but also resolves complaints and contentions against the idea of nondiegetic music as inaccessible to the characters of the diegesis, whether in film or opera. With opera, however, this distinction becomes essential given my third premise, which renders nondiegetic music entirely indispensable to operatic worlds. By speaking of diegetic music as a subset of the opera’s musical landscape, we obtain a clearer view of the balance between them. In this respect, the most appealing of the alternate terms for *nondiegetic* as summarized in Table 3 is Cone’s *operatic music*.

129 The final premise of my approach is that the modern concept of diegesis as a fictional world or reality is central to an understanding of how characters relate to music, whether *heard* or *unheard*, *diegetic* or *nondiegetic*. More precisely, the interaction between the imaginative and physical realms provides a crucial step in unlocking this

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128 Gorbman’s definition of *diegetic music* and her problematic lack of the same for *nondiegetic music* is discussed in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.1: *What’s Wrong with Diegetic Music in Film*…

129 Cone, “World,” 127-128. The notion of diegetic music as a subset of operatic music blends well with Cone’s rejection of a rigid distinction between the two.
enigma. *Diegesis* ultimately describes the conceptual space that exists to facilitate the expression of a fictitious plot. For characters, that is their primary and often only reality. For real-world audiences, however, *diegesis* suggests a game of logic, constantly asking individuals to compare and contrast characters’ perceptions with their own. Our awareness of a story’s dual existence allows us to imagine ourselves within a fictitious world and to engage in translation between what happens there and how things happen here. We consistently employ this flexibility of imagination when asked to perceive music that fictional characters hear as music. In film, this is often sufficient, enough visual cues and stylistic variances present to easily differentiate between such music and the cinematic score. Opera, however, requires an approach to diegetic music that draws greater attention to the genre’s inherent multiplicity of realities, an approach that is not only broad enough to encompass the full scope of the concept, but also precise enough to be useful in the discussion of specific examples.

**2.3.2 …Of a New Definition**

Given the lack of consensus regarding terminology, particularly among opera scholars, I choose not to exacerbate the current confusion by introducing yet another lexical contender into the conversation. Furthermore, adhering to *diegetic music* as my primary terminology reflects the close relationship between film and opera in this respect. Despite the difficulties that plague the word *diegesis* in its modern sense—including its blatant contradiction of the ancient Greek meaning—the advantages to be
gained in rejecting the term cannot balance the clarity afforded by its wide and 
established use in multiple fields of academic inquiry. Ultimately, I advocate a unified 
view, recognizing that whenever opera scholars discuss diegetic, phenomenal, realistic, 
self-reflexive, staged, fictional, synchronous, or artistic music, they are all referring to the 
same basic concept.\textsuperscript{130}

The focus for my approach to the subject therefore becomes one of definition, 
rather than terminology. Diegetic music is \textit{music that is attributable to the work of two 
composers simultaneously: a real-world composer and a fictional one.}\textsuperscript{131} Real-world composers 
have names that are quite familiar and belong to real people who once lived and 
breathed: Mozart, Wagner, Verdi, and Puccini, to name only a few. Fictional composers, 
on the other hand, are denizens of an operatic diegesis who engage in the deliberate act 
of composing a piece of music. They may do so spontaneously on the spot or sometime

\textsuperscript{130} My choice of terminology lies in direct contrast to a recent and strenuous objection to the same found 
in the March 2020 issue of the \textit{Journal of the American Musicological Society} by Stefano Castelvecchi. While I 
cannot as easily as he dismiss the well-established precedent inherent in the term \textit{diegetic music}, my 
approach to the topic with respect to both film and opera fulfills his proviso that, whatever terminological 
choice is made, it should “be made with full awareness of its implications, and rendered explicit wherever 
necessary.” (Castelvecchi, 166) On this, Castelvecchi and I agree wholeheartedly.

\textsuperscript{131} Herein lies the primary reason for applying my approach to diegetic music exclusively to opera. 
Film, with its frequent references to contemporary popular music, raises new levels of complexity when 
attempting to relate the matter of real and fictional composers to its music. For example, an Elvis Pressley 
song playing on the radio in a film would represent diegetic music whose real-world composer is also 
represented in the fictional world and therefore also its fictional composer. Furthermore, by directly quoting 
a Pressley song, the film’s composer has no hand in producing the music we hear in the film. Both of these 
facts cause the song to fail the test of logic this definition proposes, despite the fact that it is clearly diegetic 
by any other measure. While distinctions between real-world and fictional composers certainly could be 
pursued in filmic contexts, the likelihood of such an effort providing useful perspectives on the film under 
consideration is decidedly more questionable.
in advance of the staged moment, and they may perform their own works or engage other characters as performers. They may be present for the staged performance of their composition, but they could also bear no involvement whatsoever in the event and not even be aware of its existence. They may be named and seen on-stage as a character in the opera’s plot, or they may exist in the background as part of the unexplored world implied by the story at hand. And their compositional efforts may be directly expressed in the libretto or merely implied through various methods that range from clear to downright vague. To articulate this premise through our favored example, we recognize “Voi, che sapete” from a real-world perspective as an aria by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, composed in the latter half of the eighteenth century as part of his opera, Le Nozze di Figaro. From a fictional perspective, however, the libretto clearly states the music was written by Cherubino, making him the aria’s fictional composer and its Act II appearance an instance of premeditated and self-performed composition. Though contradictory, both real and fictional perspectives are simultaneously true, which means “Voi, che sapete” is—by explicit definition—diegetic music.

My focus on fictional composers offers several significant advantages, the first of which is that it neither emphasizes nor negates any of the views discussed throughout these two chapters. Instead, this approach reflects the first of my conceptual foundations by embracing every one of these perspectives, but it also provides a simple test of logic.
that can resolve any ambiguity surrounding a diegetic interpretation. Another advantage pertains to diegetic music’s conceptual counterpart, providing an oppositional definition that avoids the ambiguity and negative implications surrounding its previous scholarly treatment. Nondiegetic music is music that is *attributable solely to the work of a real-world composer.* This new definition not only clarifies the fundamental difference between the two concepts, but also presents a third advantage to my approach: the ability to identify the precise foundational basis for a passage’s inclusion in the subset of operatic diegetic music. With this initial assumption clarified, further discussion of an example’s specific details regarding source, performance, and awareness gains credibility, especially in obscure cases that require a measure of creative interpretation to reveal the involvement of a fictional composer. Finally, this pair of definitions poses the advantage of raising new nomenclature in describing operatic music as either *fictionally composed* or *not fictionally composed.* Although lacking the pithy appeal of *diegetic* and *nondiegetic* and not meant to replace either of these terms for the reasons outlined above, this oppositional language proves more accurate to my intended meaning and avoids the many criticisms and

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132 Cavaradossi’s “L’alba vindice appar” from Act II of Puccini’s *Tosca*, as discussed in the introduction to this dissertation, provides a quintessential example of this effect.

133 I retain the term *nondiegetic* for the same reasons outlined above regarding *diegetic music*, choosing to clarify my approach through definition rather than terminology. Additionally, the prospect for quotation within opera (e.g. Puccini’s self-quotation of *La bohème* in *Il tabarro*, or Britten’s quotation of Wagner’s Tristan chord in *Albert Herring*) also complicates this definition, necessitating further discussion of the inherent analytical difficulties in such moments that is beyond the scope of this study.
complications revealed heretofore.

My approach to the study of diegetic music also embraces the concept’s variability. Quite often, discussions of diegetic music imply an all-or-nothing attitude: a particular passage of music either is or is not diegetic. Although certainly true regarding the presence or absence of a fictional composer, such definitive contrast conceals the fact that not all examples of diegetic music are equal. Rather than a stark black-and-white paradigm, diegetic music exists on a spectrum, with very obvious examples at one end, very ambiguous ones at the other, and many shades of gray between. The diegetic status of obvious examples—such as Mozart’s “Voi, che sapete,” with the fictional composer explicitly confirmed by the libretto—are undisputed and represent the quintessential examples of the concept. Ambiguous examples, however, such as Puccini’s “L’alba vindice appar” as examined in the introduction to this dissertation, require interpretive and analytical arguments in favor of both a fictional composer and a diegetic interpretation. Though less quantitative than van der Lek’s rating system, this diegetic spectrum addresses the relative strength of each instance.\footnote{See Chapter 2, Section 2.2.3: Two Theoretical Frameworks.} For example, with regard to the libretto, explicit textual references to its fictional composer reveal “Voi, che sapete” as bearing an infinitely stronger diegetic status than “L’alba vindice appar,” which lacks such references altogether. Rather than being fixed in place, however, an inherently
weak example can be strengthened through a convincing argument in favor of its
diegetic status. The spectrum, therefore, is fluid, yielding infinite subtlety regarding the
strength of an example’s diegetic status and elevating the analyst’s role in the analytical
process.

In addition to reiterating that these new definitions are intended to apply only to
opera, three additional caveats apply to this approach. First, as an echo of Abbate’s
revelation, the pairing of diegetic and nondiegetic music cannot fully address the
music’s complexity and involvement in an opera’s plot. My conceptualization focuses
merely on one particular aspect of what operatic music is and should not be construed
as the totality of its effect. Second, diegesis is quite distinct from convention. While
operatic conventions such as singing for speech may apply universally to the genre as a
whole, an individual opera’s diegesis can be entirely unique to a single opera. For
example, the diegesis of Mozart’s Die Zauberflöte (1791), with its many fantastical and
otherworldly elements, is wholly unrelated to the reality-based setting of Puccini’s Tosca
in 1800 Rome, which is also quite distinct from Madama Butterfly’s setting of 1904 Japan.
On the other hand, the overlapping of characters and continuity of story between
Rossini’s Il barbiere di Siviglia (1816) and Mozart’s Le Nozze di Figaro suggest these two
operas share a world that extends beyond the stage and therefore unites their diegeses.

135 Abbate, Search, vii.
Finally, to reiterate and emphasize the second premise of my conceptual foundations, the notion of fictional composers applies only to those who deliberately and consciously compose music within the portrayed diegesis. My approach is not intended to encompass or address music that reveals inner thoughts or emotions, exposes facts unknown to staged characters, or references other characters or events within the opera or its broader diegesis. Discussion of such narrative commentaries supplied through the orchestra—for example, Wagnerian leitmotif—is quite beyond the scope of this study since they make no implication toward the deliberate efforts of a fictional composer.

The Dual Lives of this chapter title refers to many dualities, not the least of which is the fictional dualism that has provided the structural framework for this chapter. Shifting from a strictly-fictional to strictly-real perspective, the title also references my research into this topic as well as its relationship to my scholarly predecessors. Not only do I aim to justify a renaissance on the topic of diegetic music in opera by providing a new perspective that opens new interpretive and analytical possibilities, but I also propose a new means of understanding one of opera’s most popularly vaunted and yet academically maligned voices. With scholarly perspectives on diegetic music from both film and opera studies disentangled and arranged into some semblance of order through these two foundational chapters, attention now turns to the other side of this study’s dual focus: Giacomo Puccini. What does this composer bring to diegetic music’s
conceptual table? How does his approach to operatic fiction address real-world
criticisms of his music? Is there anything left to learn about late nineteenth-century
Italy’s quintessential popular music? To address these and other questions, the
conceptual flexibility espoused in this chapter must now prove its worth in the more
concrete realm of analysis.
3. Identifying and Assessing Puccini’s Diegetic Music

If one assumes an opera’s opening features to mark an important element of the work as a whole, then diegetic music must be significant in Giacomo Puccini’s Manon Lescaut (1893). Within less than three minutes’ performance time and just over 100 measures, three examples of diegetic music occur, all before the entrance of the first principal character. Dramatically, this introductory scene of students, villagers, and young ladies returning from work bears little consequence beyond setting the stage for the events that instigate and propel the entirety of the plot. Musically, however, the opening is dense with signifiers that denote a crucial distinction between music as the product of a real-world composer and that produced by a fictional character. This concentrated cluster of diegetic music right at the opening of the opera therefore poses both an opportunity and an enigma, both of which this chapter seeks to resolve.

We begin with the opportunity, using the introductory scene and its three proposed diegetic songs to initiate an analysis of Puccini’s use of fictionally composed music in his first widely successful opera. At the same time, the first section of this chapter organizes the insights gleaned from analysis of the introductory scene into a methodology by which to understand additional examples of diegetic music within Puccini’s oeuvre. Once the development of this analytical methodology is complete, the second section of this chapter then challenges it, highlighting other perspectives that strengthen the methodology’s claims and resolving potential weaknesses that threaten
to detract from it. Finally, with the chapter’s third section, we turn toward the enigma posed by the introductory scene, asking if diegetic music actually is as essential to *Manon Lescaut* as the opera’s opening cluster of fictionally composed songs might suggest. Addressing such a question entails using the newly developed methodology in a final test of its efficacy as an analytical construct. It also involves the opportunity to draw a parallel between diegetic music and other perspectives on the opera by respected Puccini scholars and determine whether or not this approach yields new insights.

3.1 **Textual and Musical Features: Developing the Methodology**

*Manon Lescaut* opens in Amiens, France with a secondary character who appears only in Act I. Following a brief and frenetic prelude, the curtain rises to reveal a busy village square. A student named Edmondo sings “Ave, sera gentile,” but his fellow students promptly interrupt him (Ex. 2a). After noticing a group of girls returning from work in the distance, Edmondo then embarks on a second song, “Giovinezza è il nostro nome” (Ex. 2b), and, once the girls arrive, they contribute to the musical landscape with “Vaga per l’aura” (Ex. 2c). These three songs provide an ideal opportunity to examine Puccini’s treatment of diegetic music, offering an array of details that both illustrate and complicate the notion of fictional composers. Furthermore, these brief episodes progress

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1 This and all following music examples are adapted from Giacomo Puccini, *Manon Lescaut: Dramma lirico in four acts*; Mowbray Marras, trans.; Carlo Carignani, vocal score; Mario Parenti, ed. (Milan: Casa Ricordi, 2007).

A. R4/mm1–4

```
\begin{music}
&\text{A-ve se-ra gen-ti-le che di-scen-di}
\end{music}
```

B. R7/mm13–16

```
\begin{music}
&\text{Gio-vi-ne-za \ e \ il no-stro no-me}
\end{music}
```

C. R10/mm6–9

```
\begin{music}
&\text{Va-ga \ p}e\text{r l'a}u-ra \ u-n'on-da \ di \ pro-fu-mi
\end{music}
```

through the full range of the diegetic spectrum, beginning with absolute clarity of diegetic status, ending with sufficient ambiguity to require creativity in perceiving a diegetic interpretation, and bifurcated by an intervening example that shows some clarity and some ambiguity without fully committing to either extreme.

The opening scene of *Manon Lescaut* thus provides the case study by which I present a gradual unveiling of the analytical methodology that informs the remainder of this dissertation. Guided by the scene’s progression through the diegetic spectrum, I first establish my analytical hypothesis then further refine that hypothesis through more challenging examples. Analysis of “Ave, sera gentile” examines the libretto and score separately, identifying the features of both elements that suggest the contribution of a fictional composer and distinguishing them from features that imply nondiegetic

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2 This and all following references to the score identify the rehearsal number, followed by measure number(s). For example, (R10/mm6–9) indicates measures 6 through 9 of Rehearsal 10.
narration. “Giovinezza è il nostro nome” then raises new considerations that further refine the analytical approach through the addition of dramatic analysis. Finally, I argue for a diegetic interpretation of “Vaga per l’aura” using the proposed features of fictionally composed music and thereby define a taxonomy for diegetic music. At the conclusion of this process, my analytical methodology stands poised for service in the identification and assessment of diegetic music throughout Puccini’s oeuvre.

3.1.1 “Ave, sera gentile”: Establishing a Hypothesis

Music’s ineffability constitutes both an advantage and a disadvantage. As a means of expressing what words cannot, music stands supreme; but that same strength also leaves music open to various interpretations and, consequently, high potential for ambiguity. Words, on the other hand, while also subject to the vagaries of interpretation, provide a firm starting point and occasionally leave little room for doubt, as is the case with Edmondo’s opening song. Initiated and propelled by such textual clarity, the analysis of “Ave, sera gentile” begins with a close reading of the libretto to hypothesize textual features that align with diegetic and nondiegetic music, respectively. An examination of the score then seeks to define the musical features of both types of music. These textual and musical markers form the initial hypothesis toward the analytical methodology.

Textual Evidence

The opening moments of Manon Lescaut include a distinctive textual and
dramatic feature with the students’ interruption of Edmondo’s song. Their use of the
word “madrigal” (bolded below) not only confirms Edmondo had been performing
diegetically, but also suggests their text aligns with speech rather than singing.\(^3\) The
libretto for this section of the introductory scene therefore provides a tidy line of
demarcation between the diegetic song (underlined below) and the nondiegetic
interaction between Edmondo and his fellow students.

**EDMONDO**

*Ave, sera gentile che discendi* (11)
*col tuo corteo di zeffiri e di stelle;* (11)
*ave, cara ai poeta ed agli amanti…* (11)

**STUDENTI**

*Ah! ah! ah! Ai ladri ed ai brïachi!* (7)
*Noi t’abbiamo spezzato il madrigal!* (11)

**EDMONDO**

*E vi ringrazio.* (5)
*Pel vïal giulive* (6)
*vengono a frotte a frotte* (7)
*fresche, ridenti e belle* (7)
*le nostre artigianelle…* (8)

**STUDENTI**

*Or s’anima il viâle.* (7)

**EDMONDO**

*I preparo un madrigale* (7)
*furbesco, ardito, e gaio.* (8)
*E sia la musa mia* (8)
*tutta galanteria!* (7)

**STUDENTI**

*Ha ha ha! Also dear to thieves and drunkards!* (7)
*We have interrupted your madrigal!*

**EDMONDO**

*And I thank you.*
*Along the merry path*
*they come in throngs,*
*fresh, laughing and pretty,*
*our artisan girls…*

**STUDENTI**

*Now the avenue comes alive.*

**EDMONDO**

*I prepare a cunning, daring,*
*and merry madrigal.*
*And may gallantry*
*be my muse!*\(^4\)

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\(^3\) Edmondo’s later reference to “madrigal” is more complex and will be discussed below in relation to
the second diegetic song, “Giovinezza è il nostro nome.”

\(^4\) All libretto texts derive from the previously referenced vocal score (Puccini, *Manon Lescaut*). In each of
three reproduced segments, explicit references to music and musicians are highlighted in boldface, textual
To a significant degree, the libretto of an opera—or, indeed, the text of any vocal music—is poetry. Only in rare cases have the words sung by operatic characters been produced by the composer, their utterances far more often stemming from the imagination and work of poets and dramatists who serve as opera’s librettists. To suggest that any portion of the words opera characters sing may be regarded as non-poetic would therefore prove counterintuitive and unsatisfying. Nevertheless, the demarcation between diegetic and nondiegetic passages as defined above yields a distinction with regard to their poetic qualities. When compared directly, the text associated with diegetic music exhibits a higher degree of poetry, while the nondiegetic passage proves less poetic. Before proposing a correlation between diegetic music and highly poetic text, however, let us examine this observation in closer detail.

Several poetic elements in Edmondo’s opening song are immediately apparent. The first word, “Ave” (Hail), reflects an idyllic choice, whereas less poetic options such as “Ciao” (Hello) or even a more formal “Buona sera” (Good evening) could have sufficed. This word’s repetition at the beginning of the third line of text also promotes

lines that correspond to the proposed diegetic songs are underlined, and syllable counts appear at the end of each line in subscript parentheses. All translations of the libretto are adapted from Nico Castel, trans., “Manon Lescaut,” in The Complete Puccini Libretti, Vol. 1, Marcie Stapp, ed. (Genesco, NY: Leyerle Publications, 2002), 376–463.

Coming in the wake of a failure blamed in large part upon a deficient libretto for Edgar in 1889, Puccini was particularly demanding in the construction of the libretto for Manon Lescaut. Reflecting its laborious conception, the original published score took the unusual step of naming no librettists on the title page, although as many as six individuals—including renowned music publisher Giulio Ricordi—are known to have contributed some text to the libretto [Mosco Carner, Puccini: A Critical Biography (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1958), 63–67].

5
poetic structure through parallelism. Personification then describes Evening as descending with a train of breezes and stars, conjuring fanciful imagery of the encroaching night as a lady in a sparkling, midnight blue gown slowly descending a grand staircase. “Discendi” (descends) and “amanti” (lovers) produce a rhyme between the first and third lines, although the truncation of the song precludes verifying the presence of a cohesive “abab” rhyme scheme. All three lines are also set in a regular eleven-syllable length, the classic endecasillabo of Italian poetry. Finally, the overall topic and purpose for the text align with imaginative and reflective abstraction, as opposed to any mundane or realistic purpose. Within only three short lines, Edmondo’s song text yields a high degree of poetic quality through its word choice, imagery, structure, and function.

Analysis of the succeeding section, on the other hand, demonstrates consistent efforts to align the text with more mundane concerns. Chief among them is the students’ choice of “ladri ed…brîachi” (thieves and drunkards) as a replacement for Edmondo’s “poeti ed…amanti” (poets and lovers). While certainly motivated by mockery of their fellow student, the choice also evokes an image of gritty reality as a direct contrast to Edmondo’s more idealistic version. In addition to this shift in word choice and imagery,

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6 Tim Carter, Understanding Italian Opera (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 8. Poetic line lengths can be affected by elisions and diphthongs that fuse and separate adjacent syllables, respectively. For example, elisions on “tuo,” “-teo,” and “-ri e” account for the compression of Edmondo’s second line from fourteen linguistic syllables down to eleven poetic syllables. All syllable counts reflect the melodic setting found in Puccini’s score.
the general function of the text is quite different from the opera’s first three lines.

Following the students’ interruption, Edmondo responds in direct conversation with them before turning his attention to the girls, whom we may presume he sees returning from work in the distance. Since the girls remain off-stage and beyond the audience’s view, Edmondo helpfully narrates what he sees taking place within the opera’s diegesis. Thus, the function of this text is wholly practical, facilitating conversation and the passing of information both between characters and from stage to audience. Finally, in terms of structure, line lengths demonstrate more irregularity and range, and the rhyme scheme is likewise less predictable. Overall, this portion of the opening scene reflects a pragmatic perspective in the text’s word choice, imagery, structure, and function.

The students’ interruption thus marks a decisive schism in the text. On the prior side, Edmondo’s song represents diegetic music with his idealistic, fanciful, and abstract reflection upon the approaching night. After, both Edmondo and his fellow students engage in text that associates every word they utter with their reality within the opera’s diegesis. Both the reduction in the text’s poetic qualities, as well as its newfound focus on fictional reality, can be summarized in one of two functions: communication or description. Of these, direct conversation is most easily identified through the text itself, characterized by first- and second-person pronouns such as “I” and “you.” Description, however, enjoys no such easily identifiable linguistic markers. Nevertheless, Edmondo’s report of the fresh, laughing, pretty girls coming along the merry path may indeed be
taken far more literally than his account of Evening descending with a train of zephyrs and stars.\footnote{This statement is true of this particular opera and its diegesis. In other operatic diegeses, such as Mozart’s \textit{Die Zauberflöte} (1791), evening’s descent with a train of stars could be taken quite literally.}

This textual analysis yields an initial hypothesis regarding the features that delineate texts associated with diegetic versus nondiegetic music. Summarized in Table 4, these distinctions align with the broad categories of word choice, imagery, structure, and function. Given the close relationship between opera libretti and poetry, however, any conclusion regarding the diegetic status of a particular passage drawn solely through textual means will remain weak. After all, even Edmondo’s description of the approaching girls, with his consistent rhyming of “giulive,” “frotte,” “belle,” and “artigianelle,” may be considered more poetic than his surrounding lines. Consequently, while it provides an indispensable starting point, the relative poetic quality of a text is best viewed as one feature within a panoply of evidence in support of a diegetic interpretation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4: Textual markers of diegetic and nondiegetic music</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>\textbf{Diegetic}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>word choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>imagery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>structure</td>
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<tr>
<td>function</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Musical Evidence

Late Romantic compositions are not known for their ease of analysis, and Puccini’s are certainly no exception. Flush with chromaticism and broken compositional rules, it can be difficult to discern functional harmonies from those that amount to color or effect. Yet, at times, a moment of shining clarity comes through, a passage that seems so straightforward as to be almost absurd. Then the moment is gone, and the usual pedal tones, extended harmonies, and shifting keys return. This juxtaposition of ease and complexity leads scholars to remark upon the inconsistency of Puccini’s scores, although I propose there may be another explanation beyond the composer’s apparent ineptitude.8 As a product of his Italian compositional heritage, Puccini is grounded by its dictates, which includes phrases punctuated by cadences and grouped together into recognizable patterns of similarity and contrast.9 In a broader sense, these are the same relationships and structures that govern the Classical era, clarity of form representing the Enlightenment’s emphasis on reason. Classical form as outlined by William Caplin therefore becomes a useful means of differentiating between Puccini’s usual modernist style and the more traditional passages that represent the work of a fictional composer.10

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Given this context, cadences become especially important when analyzing Puccini’s music. Not only do such moments of rest delineate formal structures and define tonality, but they also tend to be somewhat elusive in his modernist idiom, making their identification a useful starting point for analysis. Beginning with Edmondo’s first vocal entrance (“Ave, sera gentile,” Fig. 8), two cadences appear in close succession. While the latter of these presents a straightforward perfect authentic cadence at the dominant (PAC; Ex. 3, R5/m1), the first is more problematic. As shown in Example 4a, the orchestral accompaniment offers no harmonic support for what otherwise presents a clear moment of vocal rest (R4/m8, circled). The low tonic pedal throughout these measures fails to produce the V chord implied by the second scale degree (♯2) in Edmondo’s vocal line, and the tenor-range VI immediatelly preceding and following the melodic conclusion offers no further aid. Nevertheless, the arcing contour of the vocal line, its ♯3-♯2-♯1 descent with a momentary lift prior to the tonic, and its long duration on the final syllable all evoke the sense of a cadence. The succeeding music further contributes to this effect through the music’s return to the orchestral and melodic content of Edmondo’s first entrance, suggesting a repeated phrase (Ex. 4a, R4/m9). In this example, melodic and rhythmic features argue for a cadence as strongly as the absence of harmonic support argues against it, but the musical experience of this

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11 Puccini consistently employs seventh chords and their inversions as extensions of their underlying harmonies.
This and all subsequent formal diagrams may employ the following abbreviations as space dictates: “ant” (antecedent), “cons” (consequent), “bi” (basic idea), “٪” (repetition of the basic idea), “ci” (contrasting idea), and “c/c” or “cont/cad” (continuation and cadence). All isolated lower-case letters represent phrases or motives, as appropriate. Prime lower-case letters (e.g. a’) indicate variations on a previously established phrase or motive.
Example 3: “Ave, sera gentile” (first iteration) in textural reduction with annotations,
*Manon Lescaut*, Act I, R4/m1 to R5/m5

**Antecedent**

(4)

Edmondo: *Ave, sera gentile,* che discendo col tuo corpetto di

**Consequent**

9

*Zef, fi, re di stel, le; Ave, cara ai po, ti ed a-gli a-

**melodic cadence**

13

*Man, ti,*... Students: (laughter) *Ai la, dri ed ai bri-

**Transition**

*na, chi! Noi t’ab; bia mo spezza to il ma, dri, gal!*

**PAC**

164

A. R4/mm5–9

B. R5/m9–R6/m1

moment—with the descent to the tonic, the rhythmic pause, and the return to a previously stated theme—provides the final confirmation of a definitive cadence.

Three more cadences arise before the music shifts into a new melody. After a brief transition that pivots from the minor dominant back to Edmondo’s original F♯ minor (Ex. 3, R5/mm2–5), a repeat of the two completed phrases begins, though neither of the original cadences survive unscathed. While the PAC simply fails to materialize (Ex. 5, R6/m6), the melodic cadence described above is also weakened through metric misalignment between the accompaniment and the voice (Ex. 5, R6/m1). Example 4b
shows the nearly identical orchestral accompaniment shared by both iterations of the melody, although the melodic 2-1 arrives a measure late in the voice, thus overlapping with the beginning of the next phrase in the accompaniment (Ex. 4b, R6/m1). Circles mark the metric displacement of the melodic cadence in the second iteration, as well as its alignment in the first. Following measure 6 of Rehearsal 6, the music’s direct correspondence with Edmondo’s first statement of the melody ends, replaced by new material and a pair of perfect authentic cadences (PAC) that first reaffirms the original F# minor key (Ex. 5, R7/m6) then steps down to the new key of E major (Ex. 5, R8/m3) in preparation of next melody.

The two phrases of parallel melodic construction suggest a tight-knit periodic structure for the first sixteen measures, which in turn strengthens the argument for a melodic cadence as the conclusion of the antecedent phrase (Ex. 3). Much of this period aligns with Edmondo’s diegetic song as hypothesized by the preceding textual analysis, although the last four measures feature the students’ interruption. The music, however, continues to its expected conclusion to create a definitive parallel modulating period with the standard weak-strong cadence configuration, the satisfactory formal conclusion reinforcing the contrasting sense of textual incompletion. The strength of the PAC in the dominant minor (Ex. 3, R5/m1) lends support to the speculation that Edmondo would

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13 Caplin, 65.
Example 5: “Ave, sera gentile” (second iteration) in textural reduction with annotations, *Manon Lescaut*, Act I, R5/m5–R7/m11
have completed an “abab” rhyming quatrain had the students not interrupted him.¹⁴

Before establishing an official hypothesis, we must consider the formal features of the nondiegetic segment. The weakening of the period’s cadences through the melodic misalignment of the first (Ex. 4b and Ex. 5, R5/m12–R6/m1) and the outright omission of the second undermines the periodic structure that was so clear at the outset. The period’s symmetrical presentation is also compromised in the nondiegetic repeat due to the truncation of the consequent phrase by two measures. The remaining music, however, offers no corresponding sense of formal regularity, with two melodic

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¹⁴ Deborah Burton concurs with this reading, noting for this passage, “a periodic form of 8+8 bars with a codetta, the entire section then repeated nearly intact.” [Deborah Burton, Recondite Harmony: Essays on Puccini’s Operas (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2012), 142.]
structures of four and three measures, respectively, both repeated in a new key (Ex. 5, R6/m7–R7/m11). Combined with the textual expectation that the students’ interruption should align with nondiegetic music, these two iterations of the “Ave, sera gentile” melody raise the prospect that small, tight-knit structures in the Classical tradition correlate with diegetic music.\(^\text{15}\) That is not to suggest, however, that tight-knit forms invariably indicate diegetic music. Due to the prevalence of periodic forms and similar structures within Puccini’s Italian tradition, form is best considered a means of strengthening a diegetic argument, rather than serving as its foundation.\(^\text{16}\)

The conclusion of this section of music, starting with the new material that begins a few measures before Rehearsal 7, constitutes a formal extension of the original melody. Although the new melodic content could suggest a coda, the absence of the period’s concluding cadence prior to its commencement belies such an interpretation. Instead, these two new melodic fragments extend the periodic structure by moving the PAC forward. Despite its melodic nature, however, the extension serves not a formal function but a harmonic one, first destabilizing the C# minor goal of the original modulation by omitting the cadence, then complicating the music’s return to F# minor

\(^{15}\) I furthermore contend that Puccini’s use of Classical form as a means of marking diegetic music in his operas aids in resolving ongoing questions of the composer’s inconsistent formal clarity. This same matter also relates to the broader question of Puccini’s status as a traditional or modern composer, in which clarity of form relates to tradition and lack of the same relates to modernism. Authors who have engaged with this issue include Nicholas Baragwanath, Deborah Burton, Alessandra Campana, Andrew Davis, Arman Schwartz, Emanuele Senici, and Alexandra Wilson.

\(^{16}\) Baragwanath, 205–207.
by adding a non-chordal subdominant pedal, and finally establishing E major through the strength of a repeated cadence (Ex. 5, R6/m7–R7/m11). Having successfully derailed the melodic, harmonic, and formal content of the opening song, this extension further undermines its formal parameters by overlapping Edmondo’s vocal conclusion to the first section with the orchestra’s introduction to the next (Ex. 5, R8/mm10–11).

In addition to form, melodic contour also varies between the initial diegetic statement of “Ave, sera gentile” and its nondiegetic repeat. Example 6 provides a measure-by-measure comparison of Edmondo’s vocal line in both iterations of the melody. In this arrangement, the contrast between the graceful arcs of the first iteration and the angular, erratic contours of the second is immediately apparent. Furthermore, the melodic repetition that occurs at the beginning of both phrases in the first iteration is first altered then omitted in the nondiegetic repeat. Both the song-like contour and the melodic repetition mark the first iteration as diegetic. The second iteration’s short rhythms and numerous repeated pitches, on the other hand, suggest a recitative-like texture in which the primary concern is not lyrical but communicative. The traditional operatic convention of expressive reflection for arias and speech-like conversation for recitatives therefore accords with the proposed function for texts in relation to diegetic and nondiegetic music.

This analysis culminates in two musical parameters that align with diegetic and nondiegetic music in Puccini’s operas, as summarized in Table 5. Defined forms—
Example 6: Melodic comparison, “Ave, sera gentile” (both iterations) in piano-vocal reduction, *Manon Lescaut*, Act I

whether Classical or otherwise—suggest diegetic music, while other structures like recitative or sectional arrangements align with nondiegetic music. Similarly, diegetic music tends to be expressed in lyrical melodic contours, and nondiegetic music in angular or speech-like textures. Even this comparatively straightforward example, however, produces some complications for the burgeoning hypothesis regarding the identification and assessment of diegetic music, especially since the clarity of the periodic structure in the first iteration of “Ave, sera gentile” conflicts with the premature shift to communicative functions as demonstrated by the text. Rather than negating
Table 5: Musical markers of diegetic and nondiegetic music

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Diegetic</th>
<th>Nondiegetic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>form</strong></td>
<td>defined (e.g. sentential, periodic, binary, ternary, strophic, etc.)</td>
<td>undefined (e.g. through-composed or recitative-like)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>melody</strong></td>
<td>lyrical and expressive</td>
<td>angular or erratic; speech-like</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

these hypotheses, however, the misalignment of textual and musical markers instead dramatizes the students’ interruption of Edmondo’s song, demonstrating a close entanglement between musical, textual, and dramatic elements.\(^{17}\) The conflict also illustrates the need for corroborating evidence derived from both libretto and score, textual and musical analyses working in tandem to present a unified case for diegetic music. This is especially crucial for musical evidence, since both form and melody are prominent aspects of any musical analysis and not exclusive to diegetic and/or nondiegetic music. Explicit textual references may be sufficient to argue in favor of diegetic music even in the absence of corroborating musical evidence, but musical markers must always bear some measure of textual support to reach a satisfactory diegetic conclusion.

### 3.1.2 “Giovinezza è il nostro nome”: Refining the Approach

Applying the foregoing hypothesis to the next diegetic song presents some

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\(^{17}\) As further corroboration between text and musical markers, the orchestra melody associated with “Ave, sera gentile,” reappears later in the act, following des Grieux’s aria, “Tra voi, belle.” There, the reprise is preceded by an explicit reference in the libretto that identifies the melody as a *brindisi*, an Italian drinking song (Act I at R19).
complications, the first of which appears in the text.¹⁸

EDMONDO
[Preparo un madrigale (7)]
[furbesco, ardito, e gaio. (8)]
[E sia la musa mia (8)]
[tutta galanteria! (9)]

EDMONDO
[I prepare a cunning, daring,]
[and merry madrigal.]
[And may gallantry]
[be my muse!]

EDMONDO E STUDENTI
Giovinezza è il nostro nome, (9)
la speranza è nostra Iddia, (9)
Ci trascina per le chiome (8)
indomabile virtù, (7)
Santa ebbrezza! Or voi, ridenti, (8)
amorose adolescenti, date il cor… (11)

EDMONDO AND STUDENTS
Youth is our name,
hope is our goddess.
Indomitable virtue
drags us away by the hair.
Holy intoxication! Now you, laughing,
affectionate adolescents, give your heart…

Several features problematize the effort to differentiate between text associated with diegetic or nondiegetic music. First of all, when Edmondo announces his work on a madrigal, it is unclear to which song he refers: the ensuing “Giovinezza è il nostro nome” or the preceding “Ave, sera gentile.” Beyond that, the interpretation of nondiegetic conversations as a frame to a second diegetic song suffers from the seepage of poetic elements into nondiegetic texts. For example, Edmondo’s declaration clearly evinces a nondiegetic affiliation through its first-person pronoun and communicative function, but at the same time his invocation to Gallantry for inspiration and his description of the madrigal a “cunning, daring, and merry” are more fanciful, thereby aligning with diegetic music. Likewise, the proposed song text exhibits a high degree of poeticism through its parallel structure and personifications of Youth as a name, Hope

¹⁸ The first four lines of text are duplicated from the preceding textual segment and enclosed in brackets. All other formatting features remain unaltered from the previous excerpt.
as a goddess, and Virtue as an indomitable guide, but it also poses a hint toward the nondiegetic with first-person plural pronouns.

The diegetic spectrum plays an important role in resolving these conflicting indications, recognizing that the absolute clarity found in “Ave” is not required to acknowledge “Giovinezza” as diegetic also. After all, though Edmondo—as a self-identified composer of madrigals—is perhaps naturally more inclined toward poetic language, his appeal to Gallantry is nevertheless directly communicative to the real-world audience, providing an explanation for his otherwise imperceptible efforts toward composition. Similarly, the concluding entreaty for the girls to “date il cor” (give your heart), while fanciful in tone, is also directly communicative in function, as evidenced by their immediate contribution of the third diegetic song below. And, conversely, the first-person plural pronouns within the text of the diegetic song turn its abstract reflection inward, resulting in Edmondo and the students’ contemplation of their own nature. Within this blending of means and functions, the communicative aspects provide a firmer foundation for a nondiegetic interpretation than the stray poetic elements do for a diegetic one, just as the diegetic song’s reflective qualities supersede its pronominal language. Regardless of how one justifies them, the consequence of these textual ambiguities is a considerably less conclusive argument for diegetic versus nondiegetic passages than was seen in the first part of the scene. Nevertheless, the text in this segment presents some indication of a fictionally composed song, and the music may
now provide further evidence toward determining its position on the diegetic spectrum.

This second diegetic song offers more rigorous musical arguments than its predecessor, including a fully articulated form (“Giovinezza è il nostro nome,” Fig. 9). This new music divides into two contrasting themes: a gracefully leaping melody of longer durations (Ex. 7, R7/mm13–16), and a rhythmically active one in a descending contour (Ex. 7, R8/mm1–4), each based upon a two-measure motive (Ex. 8). The song opens with three statements of the first theme (Ex. 7, R7/mm9–21), each concluding with a local IV-V-I cadential formula that is also reflected at a higher level, the first closing on IV (Ex. 7, R7/m12), the second on V (Ex. 7, R7/m16), and the third on I of E major (Ex. 7, R7/m20).19 The latter two phrases exhibit a clear antecedent-consequent relationship, and the addition of the first phrase can be rationalized as either an external introduction to the theme or the first of two antecedents in a three-phrase period with equal aplomb.

The second theme also occupies eight measure, the first two introducing the new motive in the orchestra before Edmondo provides a repeat at a lower pitch level to continue its descending contour (Ex. 7, R8/mm1–4). Both vocal and orchestral lines then fall repeatedly and obsessively to the dominant B, the vocal line eventually resorting to five quarter notes on that pitch (Ex. 7, R8/m5–R9/m1). These structures—a two-measure basic motive followed by a varied repeat of that motive, which then proceeds to a four-

19 The key signature of three sharps is a remnant from the preceding F# minor section. Ds in the introductory phrase (Ex. 4, R7/mm9–12) fit within the temporary tonicization of A major, and D#s in the remainder of the period (Ex. 4, R7/mm13–21) compensate for the missing sharp in the key signature.
Figure 9: Formal diagram, “Giovinezza è il nostro nome,” *Manon Lescaut*, Act I, R7/m9–R10/m6
Example 7: “Giovinezza è il nostro nome” (first iteration) in textural reduction with annotations, *Manon Lescaut*, Act I, R7/m9–R9/m1
Example 8: Rhythmic Profile of Basic Motives, “Giovanizza è il nostro nome,” *Manon Lescaut*, Act I

A. First Theme

B. Second Theme

measure segment that fragments and liquidates the same basic motive—define a sentence.\textsuperscript{20} The lack of a definitive cadence seems problematic until we recognize the four-measure-long V\textsuperscript{7} of the sentential continuation as an early arrival of the half cadence’s (HC) dominant harmony (Ex. 7, R8/m5–R9/m1). Overall, Edmondo’s second song consists of a period on the first theme and a sentence on the second, the pair of which combine to create a tight-knit binary form.\textsuperscript{21}

Unlike “Ave,” this song retains not only its orchestral accompaniment in its repeat, but also its vocal melody and text, marking the second iteration an unequivocal continuation of the previously established diegetic example. The repeat features the students singing along with Edmondo, adding new harmonizations and embellishments.

\textsuperscript{20} Caplin, 35-42.

\textsuperscript{21} Caplin, 87-91.
to his basic melody (Ex. 9). The lack of an orchestral introduction in the second iteration of the first theme appears to eliminate the option for a three-phrase period, although the initial phrase here acquires the first iteration’s introductory tonicization of A major (Ex. 9, R9/mm2–5). The consequent, however, introduces G♭, thereby shifting into the opera’s first occurrence of D major (Ex. 9, R9/mm6–9). Formally, Puccini’s use of the first iteration’s introductory phrase as the repeat’s antecedent presents a problem since both cadences of the first theme are now IAC, challenging the interpretation of a periodic structure. With a retrospective harmonic reading in D major, however, the period is strengthened by A major’s dominant relationship to D, resulting in HC (Ex. 9, R9/mm4–5) followed by IAC (Ex. 9, R9/mm8–9). The second iteration of the second theme likewise eliminates the orchestral introduction but, rather than occupying the entire sentence, the diegetic text occupies only half the phrase (Ex. 9, R9/mm11–14). In addition, the second half of the vocal phrase adheres to the first iteration’s orchestral accompaniment, eschewing the five quarter notes for the more active embellished eighth note pattern from the orchestra (Ex. 9, R10/mm3–4). While the second iteration of this melody does reach a parallel conclusion to that achieved in the first iteration, the adjustments in its repetition lead to some additional considerations with regard to the developing methodology (Fig. 9).

As with the previous example, the formal confines of this diegetic song extend into the succeeding text, creating a brief passage that expresses conflicting diegetic
Example 9: “Giovinezza è il nostro nome” (second Iteration) in textural reduction with annotations, *Manon Lescaut*, Act I, R9/m2–R10/m5

First Theme

Edmondo & Students: **Giovi - nezza è il nostro nome**! La spe-

Second Theme

- ran - za è nostra Id - di - a, ei tra - se - na per le chio - me in-do-

IAC

basic idea repeated

- ma - bi - le vir - tu... Santa eb - brez - za! Or voi, ri - den - ti a - mo-
statuses, depending upon whether one considers the music or the text. In fact, this occurrence is even more problematic than its parallel in “Ave, sera gentile” due to the lack of a convenient dramatic device in the students’ interruption of Edmondo to explain it (Ex. 9, R10/mm1–4). Table 6 provides the text underlay for each iteration of the second theme, aligning the text with each segment of the musical sentence. By this view, it becomes apparent that the second iteration’s omission of both the orchestral introduction and the textual repetition condenses the text enough to provide sufficient space for the new addition (shaded in Table 6). Still, however, the problem remains that the nondiegetically-aligned text overlaps the sentential structure associated with the diegetic song (Ex. 9, R10/mm1–4). Although textual and musical evidence once again reach contradictory conclusions in this case, they are not wholly incompatible since these measures can express both diegetic and nondiegetic music at the same time, the operatic equivalent of talking over the end of a song playing on the radio. After all, being able to choose between two options does not always mean one must.

Even with this section’s textual and musical parameters exhausted, however, dramatic analysis yet has a role to play despite the aspects of staging and performance
Table 6: Text underlay, “Giovinezza è il nostro nome,” *Manon Lescaut*, Act I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentential Segment</th>
<th>1st Iteration (R8/m1–R9/m1)</th>
<th>2nd Iteration (R9/m11–R10/m4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>basic idea</td>
<td>[orchestral introduction]</td>
<td><em>ci trascina per le chiome</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>repeat of the basic idea</td>
<td><em>ci trascina per le chiome</em></td>
<td><em>indomabile virtù</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>continuation/cadence</td>
<td><em>ci trascina per le chiome</em></td>
<td><em>Santa ebbrezza! Or voi, ridenti,</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>amorose adolescenti, date il cor</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

that lie beyond the scope of this study. The difference between Edmondo’s simpler conclusion to his solo iteration (Ex. 7, R8/m7–R9/m1) and the more complex rhythm found in the repeat (Ex. 9, R10/mm8–9) indeed serves a practical purpose in accommodating the additional text’s added length; however, the song’s diegetic status itself presents yet another possibility. Taking his use of the present tense verb *preparo* literally, we may understand Edmondo to be actively composing his song while singing it and therefore interpret the static quarter notes as his struggle with how to conclude his burgeoning melody. The rhythmically active accompaniment in that first iteration, on the other hand, may represent Edmondo’s subconscious, a foreshadowing of how he will resolve this particular compositional dilemma in the repeat. Harmonically, however, the return of the long, static V7 chord in the repeat suggests that, while a melodic solution to the end of the song may have presented itself, Edmondo’s harmonies remain a work in progress. Furthermore, the change in textual-melodic alignment suggests further refinement is underway, as does the fact that nondiegetic text still occupies the last few measures of the song. By this dramatic interpretation, we can imagine Edmondo spending the rest of his day—after the opera’s principal
characters and we the real-world audience have left Amiens behind—in the continued refinement of his song, of which this staged diegetic moment has provided merely a preview.

Through this application of the proposed analytical methodology, we have seen that the evidence for a diegetic interpretation is not always clear. As with many other aspects of music theory and analysis, context is always pertinent. In the case of diegetic music, context is provided not only by the libretto and the score, but also by the dramatic plot. A full understanding of any instance of diegetic music requires consideration of all elements, though a finite conclusion may yet remain elusive. In the end, while we can certainly make a diegetic argument for any particular passage, the fact remains that some examples will be clearer than others. “Ave, sera gentile” poses stronger and more conclusive evidence as the work of a fictional composer than does “Giovinezza è il nostro nome,” and the latter therefore requires greater effort for a diegetic label to adhere. With this gradation of relative strength, the diegetic spectrum emerges, ranging from indisputably evident instances to vaguer examples. At the weaker end of this continuum, the proposed analytical methodology shifts its function from identification to assessment, providing textual, musical, and dramatic sources of evidence by which we may argue toward either a diegetic or nondiegetic interpretation. For a demonstration of this capability, we now turn our attention to the conclusion of Manon Lescaut’s introductory scene.
3.1.3 “Vaga per l’aura”: Defining a Taxonomy

Unlike the preceding examples, the final segment of the introductory scene offers no references to music or musicians. Nevertheless, the girls’ language is highly poetic, leading to the question of whether their melody poses an example of singing as speech or singing as music.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>FANCiUlle</strong></th>
<th><strong>GIRLS</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Vaga per l’aura</em> (9)</td>
<td>A wave of scents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>un’onda di profumi,</em> (7)</td>
<td>wanders on the breeze,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>van le rondini a vol</em> (6)</td>
<td>swallows take to flight,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>e muore il sol!</em> (4)</td>
<td>and the sun dies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>È questa l’ora delle fantasie</em> (11)</td>
<td>This is the hour of fantasies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>che fra le spemi lottano</em> (8)</td>
<td>that struggle between hope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>e le malinconie.</em> (7)</td>
<td>and melancholy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>STUDENTI E BORGHESI</strong></th>
<th><strong>STUDENTS AND TOWNSPEOPLE</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Date il labbro,</em> (4)</td>
<td>Give your lips,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>date il core alla balda gioventù!</em> (10)</td>
<td>give your heart to bold youth!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>STUDENTI</strong></th>
<th><strong>STUDENTS</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Ecco des Grieux!</em> (4)</td>
<td>Here is des Grieux!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Focusing on poetic qualities in differentiating between diegetic- and nondiegetic-affiliated texts raises a dilemma. After all, despite that nondiegetic music may feature less poeticism, its texts still derive from operatic libretti, which are themselves poetry. Not only can this result in poetic features within nondiegetic passages, as discussed above with regard to Edmondo’s appeal to Gallantry for inspiration, it also raises the prospect of relying upon the power of interpretation in defining the precise meaning of otherwise ambiguous texts. The entreaty to “date il cor” (give your heart) provides an apt example of the conflict that may arise from such interpretive potential since “heart”
can assume a variety of connotations. On the innocent end of the spectrum, the word can refer merely to thoughts, as in *unburdening one’s heart*. It can also suggest physical affection, which in turn can range anywhere from hand-holding to sexual intercourse. In the absence of any direct reference to music, “date il cor” is open to interpretation. Understanding “heart” as synonymous with “thoughts” suggests “Vaga per l’aura” represents the girls’ observations at the end of the day, their descriptive function in turn promoting a correlation with nondiegetic music. In a more abstract interpretation, however, “heart” can be read as an expression of emotion, “date il cor” thereby requesting a melodic contribution to Edmondo’s songs and thereby suggesting a diegetic status. The highly poetic nature of the girls’ text supports the latter reading, waving scents, wandering breezes, dying suns, and flying swallows all producing images of lighthearted freedom. The personification of fantasies as both Hope and Melancholy, each in conflict with the other, furthers the poetic effect of the text, rendering the diegetic interpretation all the more plausible.

With this third example, *Manon Lescaut*’s introductory scene now encompasses a range of textual references to diegetic music. Although I have argued from the outset for the presence of three distinct diegetic songs, only “Ave, sera gentile” is explicitly and unequivocally identified by the text as diegetic when the students first interrupt then expressly declare their interruption of Edmondo’s song. Edmondo’s second diegetic song, on the other hand, is only implied, since the libretto does not definitively identify
“Giovinezza è il nostro nome” as the madrigal he prepares. The girls’ song, however, is even more obscure, lacking either an explicit or implicit textual reference and requiring interpretation of the text to settle upon a diegetic reading. In this way, the introductory scene demonstrates textual reference as the first criteria by which instances of diegetic music may be categorized. Explicit textual references directly mention music or musicians within the libretto with no uncertainty, while implicit ones use indirect terminology or otherwise undermine a definitive allusion.\textsuperscript{22} Obsolete textual references, on the other hand, make no outward mention of diegetic music whatsoever and therefore require interpretation to argue for its presence. Finally, a fourth category of ambiguous allows for the possibility of examples whose textual references suggest both diegetic and nondiegetic statuses simultaneously, such as dreams or memory.\textsuperscript{23}

With the textual reference to “Vaga per l’aura” categorized as obsolete, the evidence provided by the score becomes crucial in either upholding the interpretive reading of this passage as a third diegetic song (Fig. 10). Several features of the music, however, make that goal problematic (Ex. 10). The lack of repetition throughout this segment provides no structural guideposts, as does the absence of any clear cadences.

\textsuperscript{22} A common implicit reference is one in which instruments and characters who play them appear on stage—or are described in the opera’s published stage directions—but lack a direct acknowledgement of their diegetic contribution within the libretto.

\textsuperscript{23} The distinction between obsolete and ambiguous textual references is subtle. Obsolete references may only be diegetic or nondiegetic, depending upon which interpretation of the pertinent text an analyst chooses to advance. Ambiguous references, however, carry some measure of both diegetic and nondiegetic elements at once. For both of these categorizations, analysis and discussion of the text, music, and drama surrounding such examples is essential.
Even the tonal structure is vague, a D major pedal offering the only hint of a tonic (Ex. 10, R10/mm6–9) and largely by virtue of the half cadence on A that ended the previous melody (Ex. 9, R10/mm1–4). Harmonically, this section is dominated by a pedal on an incomplete minor seventh chord on E in third inversion, but even that proves unreliable as a harmonic guide due to the shifting of the chordal third, repeatedly implying the dominant of A instead (Ex. 10, R10/m13–R11/m4). Only when a motive drawn from the prelude settles into an oscillation between E and B in the orchestra does a possible key present itself, establishing the now-steady pedal as a minor tonic seventh (Ex. 10, R11/mm5–6). E minor is further supported by new Cs in both the orchestral and vocal parts, as well as the girls’ octave descent that settles on E, but still no cadence confirms the key before the orchestra moves on into another scalar descent (Ex. 10, R11/mm7–15). With no cadences, clear tonality, or even lyrical melodic content beyond scales and leaping fifths, the prospects for a diegetic interpretation of “Vaga per l’aura” appear slim.

Although it may be tempting at this point to abandon all pretenses of a diegetic

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24 The rhythmic motive (seen most clearly at R10/m14) is drawn from various points in the Act I prelude (R0/mm7–8; R2/mm11–12; and R3/m8).

Serene Melody

Girls: Va-ga per l’a-ur-a u-n’on-da di pro-fu-mi, van le ron-di-ni a vol...

Upward Fifths

Students: Da-te il...

Girls: È que-sta l’o-ra del-le fan-ta-

lab-bro, da-te il co-re al-la bal-da gio-


Octave Descent

Che...
interpretation for this concluding section of the introductory scene, one analytical focus yet remains. In some respects, the dramatic element is at once the most apparent and the most easily overlooked as it centers on the matter of the entity at the core of this whole endeavor: the fictional composer. In the first two songs, the fictional composer is defined not only textually, but also musically and aurally since Edmondo sings his own creations. With “Vaga per l’aura,” however, there is nothing to even suggest who may be the composer of this melody, nor that such an individual even exists. In fact, therein lies the third diegetic song’s redemption. If we ascribe the same status to the girls that we did to Edmondo, we also must accept that the group spontaneously composed, harmonized, and executed their song in response to the students’ entreaty to “date il cor.” That is, of course, unless we assume that the girls wrote their song prior to this staged moment and were merely awaiting the right moment to reveal it. Yet another
possibility remains, however, if we assume none of the girls are in fact the fictional composer we seek. Instead, “Vaga per l’aura” could be a folk song or popular ditty with which they were already familiar. Perhaps it is a song they typically enjoy singing during their walk home from work. Since the libretto makes no suggestions toward such an interpretation, we are free to infer one ourselves. Indeed, is it this very sort of creative interpolation that opera singers and actors engage in when they ponder their portrayal of a character.

In this case, there is little to be gained from reaching a firm conclusion regarding this excerpt’s diegetic status since the girls’ presence in the opera is so fleeting and inconsequential to the remainder of the plot. A comparison of the three diegetic songs does, however, bring to light the three remaining principles of categorization, all of which center around the fictional composer. First, the composer’s identity may be defined within the libretto, as is the case with Edmondo’s two songs, or remain undefined, as with the folk song interpretation of “Vaga per l’aura.” The second categorization pertains to the staged performance of the song and whether or not the composer is also the performer, as with Edmondo’s performances of his compositions. As with many traditional folk songs, however, we can assume the fictional composer of “Vaga per l’aura” is not one of the girls and therefore not involved in this particular performance. Finally, diegetic music can be categorized according to its timing in relation to its composition. The composition can be spontaneous, offering the real-world audience a
glimpse into the character’s compositional process; it can be *premeditated*, completed prior to and entirely independent of the staged performance; and it can be entirely *undefined*, affording actors and stage directors the freedom to interpret and portray the event as they wish. Thus, in these three examples of diegetic music, we have two performances by the song’s fictional composer, one of which portrays spontaneous composition. The composer’s identity and the performance’s temporal relation to the act of composition for the remaining examples, however, are simply undefined and subject to interpretation. Table 7 summarizes the taxonomy of the introductory scene’s three diegetic songs.

**Table 7: Taxonomy of diegetic music, *Manon Lescaut*, Act I, R4/m1–R11/m1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Song</th>
<th>Textual Reference</th>
<th>Fictional Composer</th>
<th>Self-Performance</th>
<th>Performance Timing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Ave, sera gentile”</td>
<td>Explicit</td>
<td>Edmondo</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Undefined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Giovinezza è il nostro nome”</td>
<td>Implicit</td>
<td>Edmondo</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Spontaneous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Vaga per l’aura”</td>
<td>Obscure</td>
<td>Undefined</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Premeditated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While assuredly not every moment of Puccini’s works is as rife with diegetic possibilities, this introductory scene to *Manon Lescaut* provides an ideal demonstration of the flexibility with which diegetic music can be both presented and analyzed in opera. “Ave, sera gentile” demonstrates a high degree of certitude regarding its diegetic status from both textual and musical perspectives, while “Giovinezza è il nostro nome” proves less conclusive in both respects. Not only does the text lack an unequivocal reference to its own status as diegetic song, but the formal clarity of the music also comes into
question when its repeat both shifts to a new key and encompasses text associated with nondiegetic music. However, even this is more conclusive than “Vaga per l’aura,” where both the text and the music present considerable obstacles to a firm declaration of its diegetic status and can only be redeemed through dramatic interpretation of both the song and the characters’ relationship to it. The methodology that facilitates both the identification and assessment of diegetic music centers around three analytical elements: text, music, and drama. These elements are not hierarchical and instead function toward a combined whole, strengths in one area able to compensate for deficiencies in another. Only when all three elements preclude the possibility of a diegetic interpretation can a passage of music be denied a diegetic status. Otherwise, the example nevertheless falls somewhere on the diegetic spectrum even if it is extremely weak, as is the case with “Vaga per l’aura.” In the end, the three songs of Manon Lescaut’s introductory scene together illustrate a fundamental principle of diegetic music: ambiguity. While, on occasion, we may encounter examples that provide absolutely no evidence to the contrary—and those, inevitably, are the quintessential instances of diegetic music in general—many other examples will exhibit contradictory arguments that frustrate a firm conclusion. In such circumstances, the only reasonable choice is ambiguity, thereby embracing one of the many facets of opera that makes it so intriguing.
3.2 Intermezzo: Challenging the Methodology

Before proceeding to the remainder of the chapter, I wish to take a cue from Puccini by inserting an intermezzo. Within Puccini’s works, Manon Lescaut’s orchestral intermezzo between Acts II and III is entirely unique, providing a moment both to reflect upon what has passed (most recently, Manon’s arrest for attempting to steal Geronte’s valuables before fleeing with des Grieux) and to anticipate what is to come. In this dissertation, the intermezzo provides space to reflect upon the proposed methodology and address some challenges to its tenets before discovering how attention to diegetic music in Manon Lescaut yields new insights into the opera. The first section examines other authors’ perspectives on diegetic music their relationship to my approach. Attention then turns toward Classical form, discussing its relevance to Puccini’s late nineteenth-/early twentieth-century context by outlining first its correspondence with Italian compositional traditions, then precedents for adapting instrumental forms to vocal genres, and finally Puccini’s attentiveness to formal structures in his works. Lastly, analyses of two arias from Manon Lescaut address implications that arise from the proposed connection between diegetic music and Classical form.

3.2.1 Scholarly Precedents

Authors consistently remark upon the ambiance evident in Manon Lescaut, particularly in the second act where Manon appears in an opulent lifestyle as Geronte’s
mistress. Whether anachronism, neo-rococo, or pastiche, music plays a central role for these authors in establishing the posh environs of the eighteenth-century Parisian elite.25 Diegetic music certainly suits this objective, providing an appropriate historical rationale for the harmonic and formal constraints imposed by the proposed methodology. But if I am to claim a position of particular importance for diegetic music in this opera, there must be more than only this. After all, Luca Zoppelli characterizes this particular function for diegetic music as its “degree zero,” its purpose so straightforward that he allocates only a single brief paragraph to its explanation, with no examples.26 Indeed, if that is perceived as the extent of diegetic music’s contribution to the opera, it is small wonder many authors do little more than acknowledge its presence in the score.

While remarkably few scholars have gone so far as to propose a comprehensive means of distinguishing between diegetic and nondiegetic music, several make note of such effects when discussing specific examples. Most common among them is a difference in style, promoting a sense of separation between the diegetic contribution and the remainder of the score. Robbert van der Lek identifies two methods of establishing stylistic difference: external and internal. Referring to the music’s basis for


comparison, examples of external stylistic differentiation include music from differing eras or genres, such as a Baroque concerto within the confines of a twentieth-century opera. Internal comparisons, on the other hand, rely upon the nondiegetic music of the score to provide the alternative against which the diegetic music is judged.²⁷ In practice, though, external and internal differentiation often coexist, as when Herbert Lindenberger characterizes diegetic music as “marked off” from its surroundings through such features as increased lyricism or the evocation of an earlier or more popular style.²⁸ Similarly, Philip Rupprecht notes Britten’s use of a quoted nursery rhyme, its triple meter and stepwise melody causing it to “stand apart” from its operatic environs.²⁹ Although both of these perspectives align to some extent with my own approach to Puccini’s works, Zoppelli comes the closest to my thesis when he states, “An abdication of [the composer’s] authorial style can occur to varying degrees, and may in extreme cases result in a complete identification with the style of a given character.”³⁰ While Zoppelli regards this as a rare occurrence, I argue Puccini’s assumption of a dramatic persona as his standard procedure, resulting in a clear

³⁰ Zoppelli, 30.
demarcation of style between the music of a fictional composer and that produced within his own idiom.

Beyond stylistic comparison, authors have also pointed toward more concrete realms of form, text, and melody in characterizing diegetic music. Carolyn Abbate references the strophic nature of Wotan’s Ring monologue in arguing for its status as phenomenal music, and Ellen Rosand notes Monteverdi’s use of strophic or “other formal structuring” in marking diegetic music in his operas.31 Andrew Pau argues that the misaccentuations of the French language in nineteenth-century French operas indicates diegetic song.32 And, from the alternative perspective, Arman Schwartz notes the ordinariness of Michonnet’s nondiegetic “Ecco il monologo” from Francesco Cilèa’s Adriana Lecouvreur, characterizing it as “declamatory, antimelodic, barely accompanied by the orchestra.”33 As these examples demonstrate, the bulk of my methodology is not novel, elements having been proposed to explain both specific examples and other bodies of work. Where it does break new ground is in its explicit correlation between Classical tight-knit form and diegetic music, as well as its focus on Puccini’s oeuvre, which raises the next matter for consideration.

3.2.2 Puccini’s Relationship with Form

William Caplin’s 1998 study of Classical form is very specific in its scope, his first order of business in the introduction even being to clarify his exclusion of non-Classical styles.\(^\text{34}\) Regarding the genre of music under investigation, however, he specifies considerably less, although the subtitle of the monograph—*A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven*—provides a fair indication. Caplin’s adaptation of Arnold Schoenberg and Erwin Ratz’s *Formenlehre* theories was never intended to be applied to either the late Romantic era or opera, hence the author’s surprise when I mentioned my work to him at a conference.\(^\text{35}\) However, not only does my perspective on Puccini’s diegetic music as deliberately anachronistic align with Caplin’s historical context, but Nicholas Baragwanath’s recent scholarship into the composer’s Italian compositional tradition also reveals a particular affinity with Viennese Classical form.\(^\text{36}\) Recognizing the supreme dominance of opera for Italian composers, discovering the overlap between the formal constructs of Puccini’s heritage and Caplin’s theories thus advocates the use of instrumental form for operatic analysis.

Of particular interest in Baragwanath’s discussion of Italian form is historical perspective on opera as a succession of single-movement pieces called *pezzi*. These *pezzi*
in turn are made up of periods, whose only requirement is a sufficiently conclusive cadence.\textsuperscript{37} Exhibiting greater flexibility in comparison to modern conceptions of periodic form, the Italian tradition allowed for wide variance in the construction of periods, a process called \textit{periodologia}.\textsuperscript{38} Not only could individual periods consist of anywhere from a few measures to an entire composition, but the exact configuration of the concluding cadence was also highly variable. While perfect authentic cadences were certainly the norm, other varieties—as well as other keys—were also acceptable provided the aural effect was sufficiently final.\textsuperscript{39} Particularly important for guiding the character of the \textit{pezzo} as a whole was the \textit{motivo}. Not to be confused with the Beethovenian motive that builds musical texture from small fragments, the Italian \textit{motivo principale} (“principal theme”) served as a unifying theme, a musical character or affect to which subsidiary periods may refer, thereby producing a cohesive work.\textsuperscript{40} Other types of periods and formal structures acquire familiar names with easily discernible functions: \textit{secondo motivo} (“secondary motive”), \textit{uscita di tono} (“departure from the key”), \textit{passo di mezzo} (“intermediate passage”), \textit{period di cadenza} (“cadential period”), and \textit{coda}.\textsuperscript{41} With these, it becomes apparent not only how the Italian tradition prescribed formal structure through \textit{periodologia}, but also how this conception aligns with Caplin’s theories on Classical form.

\textsuperscript{37} Baragwanath, 205.  
\textsuperscript{38} Baragwanath, 205.  
\textsuperscript{39} Baragwanath, 206 and 233.  
\textsuperscript{40} Baragwanath, 211.  
\textsuperscript{41} Baragwanath, 216-220.
Table 8 outlines the phrase structure of a hypothetical small ternary piece, specifying the terminology employed by both Classical and Italian traditions in describing each phrase and the relationships between them.

**Table 8: Classical and Italian formal labels for a hypothetical ternary piece**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Phrase</th>
<th>Classical</th>
<th>Italian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>contrasting modulating period</td>
<td>antecedent, motivo principale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>consequent, uscita di tono</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>sentential phrase</td>
<td>passo di mezzo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A'</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>contrasting period</td>
<td>antecedent, motivo principale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>consequent, period di cadenza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coda</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>coda</td>
<td>coda</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the organization between phrases, Puccini’s Italian tradition also exhibits some alignment with Classical structure inside each phrase. While Caplin focuses on primarily two subphrase elements—the basic and contrasting ideas—Baragwanath identifies only one such structure: the *aaba* configuration known as the lyric prototype.\(^{42}\) Typically—though not exclusively—consisting of four measures each, the *aaba* elements can form a single sixteen-measure structure with one cadence at its end, four distinct phrases each with its own cadence, or a pair of phrases similar to Caplin’s period.\(^{43}\) The essential characteristic is therefore not the quantity and

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\(^{42}\) Caplin, 9 & 11; and Baragwanath, 207.

\(^{43}\) Baragwanath, 207. Baragwanath labels each element of the *aaba* prototype a “phrase.” To avoid confusion, my use aligns with Caplin’s in reserving this word for a complete musical thought that ends with a cadence.
configuration of the cadences but the melodic content of each melodic element and its relationship to its fellows. This greater freedom in the Italian lyric prototype translates to a more challenging alignment with Classical tight-knit phrase structures as shown in Table 9. After transferring Caplin’s basic and contrasting ideas to the Italian notation of $a$ and $b$ elements, respectively—as well as $c$ and $d$ in the case of the contrasting period—this Table demonstrates that neither of Caplin’s two archetypal periods nor the sentential structure exactly align to the $aaba$ lyric prototype. Especially with regard to the alignment between the melodic content of the first and third elements, none of the Classical options match the Italian ideal. Nevertheless, given the Italian flexibility with cadence position and element lengths, prospects arise for the adaptation of Classical norms to a variety of configurations, including a pair of eight-measure periods (four cadences), a single sixteen-measure period (two cadences), or even a solitary sentence (one cadence).

**Table 9: Comparison of subphrase elements in Italian and Classical traditions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tradition</th>
<th>Phrase Type</th>
<th>Element 1</th>
<th>Element 2</th>
<th>Element 3</th>
<th>Element 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>lyric prototype</td>
<td>$a$</td>
<td>$a'$</td>
<td>$b$</td>
<td>$a''$ or $c$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sentence</td>
<td>$a$</td>
<td>$a'$</td>
<td>$a''$</td>
<td>$b$ or $a'''$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>presentation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>continuation &amp; cadence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>antecedent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>consequent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classical</td>
<td>parallel period</td>
<td>$a$</td>
<td>$b$</td>
<td>$a'$</td>
<td>$b'$ or $c$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>antecedent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>consequent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>contrasting period</td>
<td>$a$</td>
<td>$b$</td>
<td>$c$</td>
<td>$b'$ or $d$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>antecedent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>consequent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Much remains unaddressed in this overview of the two theories. Caplin and Baragwanath each admit far more variety than is presented here regarding formal
structures both within and among musical phrases, but this review provides sufficient information to perceive the overlap between the genres of instrumental and vocal form. Of the two, Caplin’s theories pose the more restrictive guidelines and therefore comprise a greater obstacle toward the acceptance of musical passages as exemplifying its tenets. Though perhaps more challenging, the effort to apply instrumental structure to Puccini’s scores is not without precedent. René Leibowitz’s analysis of Manon Lescaut’s first act includes efforts to align Puccini’s music not only with Wagnerian composition but also with a four-movement symphony. More recently, Deborah Burton has taken the perspective of an extended rondo for the same music, citing the flexible rotational approach espoused by James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy in their influential study of sonata theory. And Hepokoski himself has argued for a rotational structure within Puccini’s one-act opera, Suor Angelica. All these authors align Puccini’s work with instrumental forms in a flexible manner, acknowledging and accepting that Puccini’s late Romantic and vocal contexts mean not everything will appear in his scores just as it would in a Haydn string quartet, for example. Though reasonable to assume that Puccini may never yield a perfectly normative Classical form, it is also reasonable to

45 Burton, 143.
seek and discover suggestions of Classical structure within his works and to recognize an effort to emulate more traditional forms in such moments.

While we unfortunately lack anything so clear as Puccini unequivocally stating that small forms must be preserved in his music in order to uphold the sense that a fictional composer rather than he himself wrote that segment of the score, Linda Fairtile’s dissertation on Puccini’s revision process affords us perhaps the best alternative. Fairtile reaches two conclusions regarding the composer’s small-scale formal revisions. First is a trend toward eliminating the repeated a melody from the still-popular aaba structure, suggesting a rejection of—or, at the least, a willingness to compromise—the Italian tradition’s lyric prototype. Second, Fairtile remarks upon the consistency with which Puccini strove to preserve symmetrical structures once they had been established. This suggests some measure of essentiality regarding the textual location of such structures. When considered in conjunction with Fairtile’s overall conclusion that Puccini’s revisions consistently demonstrate his highest priority to be dramatic expression, it seems reasonable to conclude that his preservation of straightforward, instrumentally-derived, small-scale structures must have posed some dramatic significance. Though nothing specifies diegetic music—or any of its

48 Fairtile, 408.
49 Fairtile, 425.
associated terms or concepts—as the rationale by which Puccini inserted Classical forms into his late Romantic style, such a possibility poses at least one means of resolving that particular puzzle.

3.2.3 Implications of the Classical-Diegetic Partnership

The analytical methodology as developed and presented in the first section of this chapter purports analysis should begin with the text as the most conclusive of the three areas of inquiry. Actually, though, text, music, and drama are all intimately entwined in opera and each facet speaks to the others. For that reason, this is not a firm rule and any of the three elements can instigate an inquiry into the diegetic status of a passage of music. For example, given the focus on a correlation between Puccini’s diegetic music and Classical form, an observation such as Julian Budden’s that “the skill with which Puccini has integrated a formal number into the freer discourse that precedes and follows it” logically raises the question of whether or not the aria to which he refers may be diegetic. After all, does my thesis not suggest that a clear instance of Classical form should indicate the presence of diegetic music if there is indeed a relationship between them? Rather than employing Classical form in the identification of diegetic music, this approach turns the procedure on its head, using diegetic music to explain the presence of Classical forms in Puccini’s operas. The aria Budden refers to in

50 Budden, 110.
the preceding quote is des Grieux’s first, occurring shortly after his appearance on stage following the conclusion of the introductory scene (“Tra voi, belle,” Fig. 11). But before examining the dramatic situation, let us first discover the formal structure to which Budden alludes.

Upon first glance, “Tra voi, belle,” is a straightforward aria in ternary form, its outer A sections in F major contrasted by a brief B section in the dominant key (Ex. 11). In applying Classical expectations to its structure, however, a significant deficiency arises with the lopsided presentation of the A section’s two cadences. Although Deborah Burton notes the four-by-four-measure structure of the A section, the harmonies fail to provide the half cadence that the melody seems to call for, supporting 5 at the melody’s midpoint as the fifth of a tonic chord rather than the root of a dominant. Puccini compensates for this lack by supplying a deceptive cadence at the fermata, then immediately producing a tonicized half cadence to conclude the A section (Ex. 11, R15/mm6–8). The second A section echoes the first, though with the addition of a high A at the deceptive cadence and a strong PAC to conclude the aria (Ex. 11, R16/mm6–8). In both cases, the music gives the sense of a contrasting period, which in turn combines into a higher-level double period where the tonicized HC and final PAC serve as the conclusion to a larger antecedent and consequent. The lack of an intermediary cadence

51 Burton, 142.
Figure 11: Formal diagram, "Tra voi, belle," *Manon Lescaut*, Act I, R15/m1–R16/m8

- **ANTECEDENT**
  - Compound basic idea
  - Presentation
  - Conclusion/cadence

- **CONSEQUENT**
  - Compound basic idea
  - Presentation
  - Conclusion/cadence

- **B**
  - 
  - Presentation
  - Retransition

- **DC in F**
- **HC in F**
- **HC in C**
- **DC in F**
- **PAC in F**
Example 11: “Tra voi, belle” in textural reduction with annotations, *Manon Lescaut*, Act I, R15/m1–R16/m8

Des Grieux: Tra voi belle, brune e bionde si nasconde giovinet-la vaga e vezzosa, dal labbro rosa che m’adora.

(15) A

DC

-spetta? Sei tu bionda stel-la? Dillo a me! Palesta-mi il desiderio e il destino.

DC

HC

B

-vi-no viso ardente che m’innamor-rì, ch’io vegga e ador-ri e-ter-namen-te! Students: (laughter)
in both A sections further supports this reading of the full aria as a period, though with the oddity of an intervening phrase in the form of the B section. In addition, the A section melody opens with some suggestions of a small-scale sentence, although the lack of a midpoint cadence complicates that impression (Ex. 11, R15/mm1–4). The blend of periodic and sentential functions, however, raise a different possibility.

In addition to tight-knit periods and sentences, Caplin outlines four hybrid structures that offer a mixture of formal functions derived from them. Two of these—Hybrids 3 and 4—open with a compound basic idea, whose defining characteristic is the
lack of a concluding cadence. In such a case, the initial four measures constitute a hybrid of antecedent and presentation functions, containing both the basic and contrasting ideas of a period’s antecedent phrase as well as the basic idea and repeat (i.e. the presentation) of a sentence. With “Tra voi, belle,” the structure is further complicated by a nested sentential structure within the first four measures (Ex. 11, R15/mm1–4). Extrapolating Caplin’s compound basic idea to accommodate such a feature means every two-measure segment of the A section must fulfill multiple roles, depending upon which of the four structures is under examination: the small-scale sentence (Ex. 11, R15/mm1–4), the large-scale sentence (Ex. 11, R15/mm5–8), the small-scale period (Ex. 11, R15/mm1–8), or the large-scale period (Ex. 11, antecedent: R15/mm1–8 and consequent R16/mm1–8). In addition to the annotations that delineate each of these possibilities below the orchestral reduction in Example 11, Table 10 summarizes the subphrase function that each two-measure segment of the A section must fulfill in order to realize each of these four structures simultaneously.

By this view, a logical conundrum presents itself, marked in Table 10 by a pair of asterisks. How can the same segment of music pose a repeat of the basic idea for a large-scale sentence while simultaneously serving as a contrast to the basic idea of the small-scale period? Hybrids 3 and 4 share the compound basic idea in the phrase’s first half, and differentiate between continuation and consequent functions for its second half. Based upon the deceptive cadence that divides the latter half of the A section phrase into two contrasting segments this phrase aligns with Caplin’s requirements for Hybrid 4, compound basic idea + consequent. (Caplin, 61.)

Caplin, 61.
Table 10: Subphrase functions within a multiplicity of formal structures in “Tra voi, belle,” *Manon Lescaut*, Act I, R15/m1–R16/m8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tight-Knit Structure</th>
<th>Measures 1–2</th>
<th>Measures 3–4</th>
<th>Measures 5–6</th>
<th>Measures 7–8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 small-scale sentences</td>
<td>presentation</td>
<td>continuation &amp; cadence</td>
<td>presentation</td>
<td>continuation &amp; cadence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 large-scale sentence</td>
<td>basic idea</td>
<td>basic idea</td>
<td>basic idea</td>
<td>basic idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>small-scale period (antecedent phrase)</td>
<td>antecedent phrase</td>
<td>consequent phrase</td>
<td>basic idea</td>
<td>contrasting idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>large-scale period (antecedent phrase)</td>
<td>basic idea</td>
<td>contrasting idea</td>
<td>basic idea</td>
<td>contrasting idea</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

scale antecedent? In order to achieve such a feat, the melodic content of measures 3 and 4 must both mirror and contrast the preceding segment. Example 12 presents a vertical comparison of the first and second segment with all structural pitches circled. The rhythmic content easily reveals the contrasting nature between the small-scale antecedent’s basic (Ex. 12, upper staff) and contrasting (Ex. 12, lower staff) ideas. At the same time, rhythm demonstrates roughly equivalent overall dimensions between the two segments, as well the embellishing function of the sixteenth- and triplet-eighth-notes in measure 3. In terms of pitch content, the matching downbeats on F in measures 1 and 3, along with temporal alignment of structural pitches for the latter half in both segments, reveals closer affinity between the melodic segments than is initially evident. While on the surface the second segment does present a contrast to the first, it also represents a varied repeat of the same through contrary then parallel motion enhanced by rhythmic diminution. As such, the lower staff of Example 12 indeed poses both a surface-level contrast and a hidden repetition of the upper staff. Through this and other
instances of formal multiplicity, these eight unobtrusive measures of the A section reveal a remarkable depth of formal complexity, fulfilling Classical expectations in a highly sophisticated manner.

Despite this depth of formal complexity that can be fully explicated using Caplin’s theories of Classical form, we can still only provisionally assert a diegetic reading since so much relies on the text and the drama it conveys. The only explicit mention of music or musicians occurs following the aria, where Edmondo and the students suggest music as part of their celebration. If anything, this would seem to indicate a nondiegetic status for des Grieux’s aria, as if to say, “Enough with all this talking; let’s sing!” In addition, the text of the aria itself consistently uses second-person pronouns and the language is quite straightforward with very little poetic largesse, suggesting direct communication of the nondiegetic variety. While the libretto fails to even imply a diegetic interpretation, the moments of silence that surround the aria—as indicated by fermatas on rests in the score—could certainly occasion a staging

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54 In addition, the call to music is immediately answered in the score by a slightly altered rendition of “Ave, sera gentile,” further confirming that melody’s diegetic status.
that emphasizes such a reading: des Grieux taking a moment to clear his throat, perhaps settling the chorus girls before him to create a rapt audience, or even leaping atop a table as an impromptu stage. In such a case, the drama could easily be adapted to suggest this aria as a song of des Grieux’s composition—either premeditated or spontaneous—to express his soon-to-be-ironic belief that he is destined never to find the girl of which he sings. Such a staging—in addition to the formal rigor found within the score—would more than compensate for any deficiency inherent in the aria’s obscure textual reference to diegetic music.

STUDENTI
[Ecco des Grieux! (3)]

EDMONDO
A noi t’unisci, amico, e ridi (8)
e ti vinca la cura di balzana avventura. (14)
Non rispondi? Perché? (6)
Forse di dama inaccessible (10)
acuto amor ti morse? (7)

DES GRIEUX
L’amor? L’amor? (4)
Questa tragedia, (5)
orver commedia, io non conosco! (10)

EDMONDO E STUDENTI
Baie! Misteriose vittorie (9)
cauto celi e felice! (7)

DES GRIEUX
Amici, troppo onor mi fate. (8)

EDMONDO E STUDENTI
Per Baco, indoviniam, amico, (9)
Ti cruci d’uno scacco. (7)
DES GRIEUX
No, non ancora, (5)
ma se vi talenta, (6)
vo’ compiacervi (5)
e tosto! (3)

DES GRIEUX
No, not yet,
but if it pleases you,
I will satisfy you
and soon!

DES GRIEUX
Tra voi, belle, brune e bionde, (8)
si nasconde giovine taglia e vezzosa, (13)
dal labbro rosa che m’aspetta? (9)
Sei tu bionda stella? Dillo a me! (10)

DES GRIEUX
Among you, fair ones, brunettes and blondes,
is there hiding a graceful and charming girl,
who awaits me with rosy lips?
Is it you, blonde star? Tell me!

Palesatemi il destino (8)
e il divino viso ardente che m’innamori, (13)
ch’io vegga e adori eternamente! (10)

Show me my fate
and the divine ardent face I might fall in love with,
which I might gaze upon and adore forever!

Tra voi, belle, brune e bionde, (8)
si nasconde giovine taglia e vezzosa, (13)
dal labbro rosa che m’aspetta? (9)
Sei tu bruna snella? Dillo a me! (10)

Tra voi, belle, brune e bionde, (8)
si nasconde giovine taglia e vezzosa, (13)
dal labbro rosa che m’aspetta? (9)
Sei tu bruna snella? Dillo a me! (10)

EDMONDO E STUDENTI
Ma bravo! Ma bravo! (6)
Guardate, compagni, (6)
di lui nessuno più si lagni! (9)
Festeggiam la serata! (7)
Come è nostro costume, (7)
suoni musica grata nel brindisi il bicchier, (13)
e noi rapisca il fascino ardente del piacer. (15)

EDMONDO AND STUDENTS
Bravo! Bravo!
See, companions,
let no one complain of him anymore!
Let us celebrate the evening!

In contrast to “Vaga per l’aura,” this example is particularly well-balanced,
placed so precisely between diegetic and nondiegetic that it could nudge easily in either
direction. What benefit, then, might a diegetic interpretation pose? In the case of “Tra
voi, belle,” the aria can be interpreted as expressing des Grieux’s lighthearted and

55 As with previous texts, brackets indicate duplicated lines, underlining indicates proposed diegetic
songs, boldface indicates explicit references to music and musicians, and syllable counts appear in
parenthetical subscript.

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erudite nature: playfully lingering on the deceptive cadences, cleverly layering various formal structures on top of one another, and lazily tempting fate with the banal oscillation of vi and vii\(^6\) chords in the B section. Of course, such a result arises regardless of whether the aria is considered diegetic or nondiegetic, but what changes is a matter of agency. In a nondiegetic reading, it is Puccini—or whatever entity one chooses to regard as the assumed narrator of the opera—who selects such details to represent des Grieux’s personality. But if “Tra voi, belle” is a diegetic song composed through the characters’ own conscious effort, such features become a matter of intent, less a representation of his personality and more a declaration of the same. It represents not only an expression of his personality, but also his contentment with his carefree existence, the destruction of which poses an even greater tragedy after Manon’s arrival turns his world upside down.

The risk with identifying an aria in Classical form first then interpreting a diegetic reading afterward is that it becomes logical to conclude all arias must therefore be diegetic. After all, some portion of Puccini’s success lay in his ability to write portable arias, brief examples of his music that could be extracted from the opera, travel among the populace, and generate enthusiasm for his melodies at every hearing. While certainly arias must have their own structure and formal logic in order to provide a compelling miniature of Puccini’s art, Classical tight-knit forms are the not the only means by which such a feat may be accomplished. In order to demonstrate this point,
the following analysis examines perhaps the most famous melody from *Manon Lescaut*, an aria from Act II that not only features no textual reference to a diegetic status, but also loses substantial dramatic impact with such a reading. Whereas a diegetic interpretation of “Tra voi, belle” enhances des Grieux’s dramatic circumstances if we consider that he consciously composed a song—either at some time in the past or spontaneously during Act I—to express his delight with his responsibility-free life, “In quelle trine morbide” has the opposite effect. We could, indeed, interpret Manon’s reminiscence of her lost love as a consciously planned and executed composition, but that reading belies the impression that her recollection of des Grieux is a rare and dangerous indulgence, one that expresses both her regret and her trust in her brother, to whom she confesses her true emotions. In this case, a nondiegetic interpretation proves the stronger dramatic option, lending the aria a greater sense of Manon’s sorrow amid her realization that the price she pays for her worldly comfort as Geronte’s mistress may indeed be too high.

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56 These lines conclude Lescaut’s Act II aria “Sei splendida e lucente,” hence the regularity of the eleven-and seven-syllable lengths. They are included here to provide context for the ensuing conversation.
MANON
E dimmi… (3)

LESCAUT
Che vuoi dire? (4)

MANON
Nulla! (2)

LESCAUT
Nulla? Davvero? (4)

MANON
Volevo dimandar… (6)

LESCAUT
Risponderò! (4)

MANON
Risponderai? (4)

LESCAUT
Ho inteso! (3)

Ne’ tuoi occhi io leggo un desiderio. (11)
Se Geronte lo sospettasse! (9)

MANON
È ver! Hai colto! (5)

LESCAUT
Brami nuove di lui? (6)

MANON
È ver! È ver! L’ho abbandonato (9)
senza un saluto, un bacio! (7)

In quelle trine morbide (8)
nell’alcova dorata (7)
p’è un silenzio, un gelido mortal. (9)
un freddo che m’agghiaccia! (10)

Ed io che m’ero avvezzo (7)
a una carezza voluptuosa (10)
di labbra ardenti e d’infuocate braccia… (12)

MANON
And tell me…

LESCAUT
What do you wish to say?

MANON
Nothing!

LESCAUT
Nothing? Really?

MANON
I wanted to ask…

LESCAUT
I will answer!

MANON
You will answer?

LESCAUT
I have understood!

In your eyes I read a wish.
If Geronte suspected it!

MANON
It’s true! You’ve understood!

LESCAUT
You long for news of him?

MANON
It’s true! It’s true! I abandoned him
without a farewell, without a kiss!

In these soft hangings
in the golden alcove
there is a silence, an icy mortality,
a coldness that freezes me.

And I, who had grown used
to a voluptuous caress,
to ardent lips and passionate arms…
or ho tutt’altra cosa! (7) now I have quite another thing!

O mia dimora umile, (7) O my humble dwelling,
tu mi ritorni innanzi (7) you appear before me
gai, isolata, bianca. (7) joyful, isolated, pure,
como un sogno gentile e di pace e d’amor! (12) like a gentle dream of peace and love!

LESCAUT
Poichè tu vuoi saper… (6)

LESCAUT
Since you wish to know…

High-level analysis reveals an overall form of AA’B (Fig. 12). The paired A sections provide the sense of a period, with the first concluding on a half cadence in E♭ major and the second on a PAC in B♭ major despite that the melody of A’ begins in G♭ major (Ex. 13, R6/mm6–21). Like “Tra voi, belle,” each of these sections suggests a pair of phrases in a periodic structure but lacks the midway cadence (Ex. 13, R6/mm 9 and 17). Resorting to the same Hybrid 4 structure found in des Grieux’s earlier aria, the notion of a compound basic idea for the first four measures is compelling but also presents a curious peculiarity. The melodic motives of the first four measures of each A section present a two-measure segment followed by two iterations of a motive half as long, or the dimensions of a sentence in reverse (Ex. 13, R6/mm6–9 and mm14–17). The first phrase of the B section also poses this sort of reverse sentence, although now ending with a half cadence to align more closely with the expectations for an antecedent phrase.

57 While compromising the tonal expectations for the periodic structure, the music’s motion from E♭, through G♭, to B♭ major outlines a background minor triad, as if to express Manon’s underlying sorrow despite the major tonality.
Figure 12: Formal diagram, “In quelle trine morbide,” Manon Lescaut, Act II, R6/m6–R7/m17
Initially heard in a solo flute in the orchestra, Manon’s vocal line distorts the dimensions of the reverse sentence in the consequent phrase, destroying the uniformity of the repeating motive by first shortening (Ex. 13, R7/mm13–14) then lengthening it (R7/mm14–17) for the final cadence (R7/mm9–17). In spite of these changes, the B section achieves a more normative periodic structure with both a midpoint half cadence and a final IAC in the same key of G♭ major (Ex. 13, R7/mm1–17).

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58 This melody is foreshadowed in Lescaut’s preceding aria, “Sei splendida e lucente,” at the point where Manon’s brother sings of finding her living in a small house with des Grieux.

59 This presentation echoes that found in Lescaut’s aria: the melody heard first in the orchestra then altered in the vocal part. Lescaut’s aria, like “In quelle trine morbide,” is nondiegetic.
But even this is undermined by the aria ending on $\hat{5}$, eluding a conclusive PAC and suggesting that Manon and des Grieux’s story is not yet over.

While many aspects of this aria’s form suggest Classical dimensions, details repeatedly throw such a reading into doubt. In this respect, the aria mirrors Manon herself, continually attempting to achieve what is expected (i.e. Classical form for one and happiness with her rich and doting benefactor for the other) only to be thwarted by an inability to maintain the ruse. The aria’s reversed sentences, erratic tonalities, switched cadences, and faulty echoing of orchestral melodies join with the off-beat accompanimental pattern in the A section and the text to provide an unsettling image of Manon’s elegant Parisian life. From a diegetic perspective, the music suggests Manon’s deceit, hiding her true emotions behind a façade of contentment. From a nondiegetic angle, however, this aria manages enough of a hint toward Classical form to feel comfortably familiar, yet not enough to conclusively meet Caplin’s rigorous standards. It is natural to expect Puccini to adapt Classical principles to his late Romantic practice and the formal idiosyncracies evident in “In quelle trine morbide” are therefore quite acceptable from a historical perspective. The analytical methodology for Puccini’s diegetic music, however, ascribes a much closer adherence to Classical formal logic than this aria exhibits. In this respect, the presence of Classical forms in Puccini’s late Romantic context presents a sense of anachronism or displacement and recasts that impression as a dramatic choice that scholars have misinterpreted as musical ineptitude.
3.3 Manon’s False Face: Diegetic Music in Act II of Manon Lescaut

As the only explicitly confirmed fictional composer of Manon Lescaut’s first act, Edmondo drives the opera’s score, his melodies returning periodically as fragmentary references within the chorus and orchestra. Most of these repetitions, however, fail to achieve a full statement of the songs as heard at the beginning of the act. Instead, they intermingle and dance around one another like images in a kaleidoscope to create the overall texture of the act—that is, until a coach arrives bearing Manon and her brother Lescaut en route to deliver her to a convent, and Geronte di Ravoir, a rich banker from Paris. At that point, all references to “Ave, sera gentile” and “Giovinezza è il nostro nome” disappear from the score, the musical landscape now occupied by new melodies and scenes that develop the plot’s two primary relationships: Manon and Renato des Grieux, and Lescaut and Geronte. That is not to say, however, that Edmondo has fully served his purpose. Whereas the student’s melodies drove the music in the first half of the act, his actions now drive the plot. Without his intervention—including eavesdropping on Lescaut and Geronte’s scheme to abduct Manon, revealing their plan to des Grieux and suggesting that he abscond with her instead, and even pressing des Grieux into action while he ensures that both Lescaut and Geronte are too distracted to notice Manon’s departure—the plot to come would have failed to manifest. As though to rejoice with one last song before retiring from the stage, Edmondo leads the students in a rousing chorus to close the act, a conscription of des Grieux’s “Tra voi, belle” with new
text that mocks Geronte’s desire to claim the youthful Manon (“Venticelli ricciutelli”
beginning at R67/m10).

In Act II, we find Manon ensconced in the luxurious world of Parisian high
society. The curtain opens upon a lavish boudoir, Manon working with a hairdresser to
perfect her appearance. From the audience’s perspective, this is an abrupt change from
where Act I ended, Manon having since then fulfilled her brother’s prediction of trading
her love with des Grieux for wealth and comfort with Geronte. Her choice, however, is
not without consequence and Manon wears her Parisian role like a costume, hiding her
longing for des Grieux behind a false face to convince others—as well as herself—of her
contentment as Geronte’s mistress. Diegetic music serves an important function in
costuming Manon’s psyche, both reminding her of the role she must play and providing
her the means of achieving her deception. In this reading of Act II, analysis begins with
an examination of the eighteenth century couleur locale provided through both diegetic
and nondiegetic elements, then demonstrates how Manon recommits herself to her
opulent Parisian lifestyle through her growing engagement with fictionally composed
music. Focus then turns from fictional to real-world concerns, ascertaining how
attentiveness to the fictionally composed moments in this act augments other scholarly
assessments, as well as determining what new information such an approach offers.

3.3.1 Manon’s couleur locale

Act II of Manon Lescaut opens with an airy flute melody over string and harp
accompaniment to aurally establish the delicate elegance of the late eighteenth-century Parisian setting (Fig. 13). Although Luca Zoppelli describes such moments of couleur locale as the foundational function of diegetic music in opera, this example makes no indication of being fictionally composed.60 Underscoring Manon’s toilette as she instructs a hairdresser in the construction of her physical image, the melody consists of short, measure-long motives that group together by proximity and repetition rather than exhibiting a tight-knit phrase structure (Ex. 14). Its delicate texture nevertheless overcomes the text’s lack of any outward indication of a diegetic status sufficiently for Laura Protano-Biggs to declare the music “seems to be phenomenal, issuing from somewhere in Geronte’s mansion and suffusing the boudoir.”61 From a dramatic standpoint, this is feasible, the music perhaps intruding upon Manon’s preparations from musicians who entertain Geronte while he undergoes the same chore. As a demonstration of couleur locale, however, this opening melody serves as only a preliminary example.

Beyond merely providing an eighteenth-century ambiance, diegetic music plays an important role in Act II through its performative aspects. Enveloped by the opulence of Geronte’s Paris home, Manon’s life of leisure is highlighted visually through her beauty regimen and aurally through two distinct musical performances. First is the

60 Zoppelli, 31.
Figure 13: Formal diagram, opening melody (third iteration), *Manon Lescaut*, Act II, R3/mm5–24
presentation of a madrigal written by Geronte, performed expressly for Manon in the privacy of her dressing room. Between Manon’s explanation for the musicians’ presence and her instruction for her brother to pay them afterward, the diegetic status of this passage is beyond doubt. The musical setting further supports a diegetic reading, with

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62 The third iteration appears here and in Figure 13 since its harmonic content is slightly more complex. The last three measures of this example are also unique to this iteration, the first two ending with additional repetitions of the motive found here in measure 21. The first iteration appears at R0/mm1–19, and the second at R1/mm3–22.
audible separation from the surrounding music in terms of both texture and timbre. Distinct from the rhythmically active and dynamically engaging orchestra of the surrounding moments, a dry accompanimental pattern of registrally alternating eighth notes sustains in pizzicato strings throughout the madrigal, occasionally enhanced by pastoral woodwinds. Although an elision with Manon’s explanation for the musicians thwarts a full formal separation from the preceding recitative, the solitary measure of the new accompanimental pattern prior to the singers’ entrance is sufficient to prepare the shift from conversation to performance. The staging of particular productions can further emphasize this diegetic moment by dressing the madrigal singers in matching uniforms, positioning them behind music stands, or having them hold folders that contain their music. Attention to the textual and musical cues, however, renders such visual efforts superfluous.

**LESCAUT**
*Che ceffi son cosètor?* (6)  
*Ciarlatani o speziali?* (7)

**LESCAUT**  
What mugs are these?  
Charlatans or chemists?

**MANON**  
*Son musici!* (4)  
*È Geronte che fa deì madrigali!* (11)

**MANON**  
They’re *musicians*.  
Geronte composes madrigals.

**MADRIGALE (VOCE SOLA E CORO)**  
*Sulla vetta tu del monte erri, o Clori:* (12)  
*Hai per labbra due fiori*  
*e l’occhio è un fonte.* (12)  
*Ohimè! Ohimè! Filen spira ai tuoï pië!* (10)

**MADRIGAL (SOLO AND CHORUS)**  
You wander, Clori, over the hill’s summit:  
You have two flowers for lips and your eyes are a fountain.  
Alas! Alas! Filen expires at your feet!

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63 This transition corresponds with Robbert van der Lek’s notion of formal preparation, although the conclusion of the madrigal aligns more closely with formal independence due to the full separation between the concluding bass cadence and Manon’s reaction to the performance (van der Lek, 61).
Di tue chiome scioglì al vent il portento, (12) Loosen your hair’s wonder to the wind
ed è un giglio il tuo petto bianco, ignudetto. (13) and your naked white bosom is like a lily.
Clori sei tu, Manon, You are Clori, Manon,
ed in Filen, Geronte si mutò! (16) and Geronte has changed himself to Filen.

Filen suonando sta; (6) Filen is playing;
là sua zampogna va susurrando: pietà! (12) his pipes are whispering: have pity!
L’eco sospira: pietà! (7) The echo sighs: have pity! Filen weeps:
Piagne Filen: “Cuor non hai, Clori, in sen? (10) “Have you no heart in your bosom, Clori?
Ve’ già Filen vien men!” (8) See already Filen is swooning!”
No! Clori a zampogna che soave plorò (13) No! To the pipes that softly pleaded,
non disse mai no! non disse mai no! (10) Clori has never said no! Never said no!

MANON
Paga costor! (4)

LESCAUT
Oibò, offender l’arte? (5)
Io v’accomiato in nome della Gloria! (12)

I DISMISS you in the name of glory!

Puccini adapted the music for Geronte’s madrigal from an *Agnus Dei* he wrote in 1880 (Ex. 15). In addition to the sparse and clearly accompanimental texture of the orchestra, the music evokes even older styles through pizzicato accompaniment that resembles a sixteenth-century lute, traditional poetic meter, and madrigalisms such as the rests that represent Filen’s erotic gasps at the concluding PAC (Ex. 15, R11/m36).

The music is organized into two statements of the solo melody, each followed by a choral response. All cadences are locally tonicized and appear at the conclusion of both

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64 As with previous texts, brackets indicate duplicated lines, underlining indicates proposed diegetic songs, boldface indicates explicit references to music and musicians, and syllable counts appear in parenthetical subscript.
66 Girardi, 88.
solo and chorus to form two antecedent-consequent pairings, the first in B♭ major and the second in the relative G minor (Ex. 15, R11/mm9, 13, 21, and 25). The IAC in G minor elides with new choral material that features a descending scale and brief upward arches on eighth-note triplets, and that modulates back to B♭ major (Ex. 15, R11/mm25–28). An IAC in B♭ is immediately repeated, but the anticipated PAC is thwarted by a flattened deceptive cadence that shifts the music to G♭ major (Ex. 15, R11/mm29–31). A second deceptive cadence pivots back to B♭ via vi before finally arriving on the conclusive PAC in B♭ major (Ex. 15, R11/mm33–37). Given the novelty of the melodic content in this last section and the conclusiveness of the final cadence, the form for the full madrigal is AA′B with the addition of a brief coda (Ex. 15, R11/mm37–44). Although many features of the madrigal attempt with varying degrees of success to conform to Classical standards (Fig. 14), the libretto offers a distinct advantage in its interpretation since we know of Geronte’s profession as a banker and may deduce composing madrigals to be his hobby. Any musical misstep—such as the static melody that introduces both antecedent phrases, or the lopsided configuration of eight-measure antecedents with four-measure consequents—may therefore represent Geronte’s status as an amateur composer and could have been intentional on Puccini’s part.67

67 Geronte’s confirmed status as the madrigal’s fictional composer, however, refutes Jay Nicolaisen’s proposal that flat key signatures throughout the act represent Manon’s relationship with des Grieux. As the sole exception to this proposal, Nicolaisen rationalizes the madrigal’s key as an expression of Manon’s repressed longing for the poor student; however, from a fictional perspective, the B♭ key is Geronte’s choice.

Chorus: Cioè sei

Fuoni, ed in Filen, Geronte si mutò!

L'eco sospira: pietà!
For the first time in this study, we now encounter instrumental diegetic music. In this case, the fictionally composed music underscores the opera’s staged action, providing both accompaniment and harmonic support to the characters’ vocal utterances while simultaneously maintaining its own formal logic. The diegetic status of the accompanying music is stipulated through multiple methods: Manon mentions her
Figure 14: Formal diagram, Geronte’s madrigal, *Manon Lescaut*, Act II, R11/mm1–44
boredom with the music, repeated references to dancing as well as the dancing master’s very presence imply the ongoing music, and the score specifies a staged string quartet throughout the scene (from R13–R25). Puccini even plays upon the fictional reality of the staged quartet with a series of sustained As, Ds, and E, in open fifths shortly after the quartet’s entrance, mimicking the players tuning their instruments (R13/mm4–7 and mm11–15). The ensuing minuet underscores the scene, staged characters at times singing on top of the diegetic melodies and at other times directly engaging with them. The libretto makes no mention of the music’s composer, but the presence of a string quartet means we may assume the music to have been composed at some time in the fictional past. We may further assume that the composer is not present on stage and likely unaware that his or her music is being utilized in this way, just as contemporary composers are often not involved in performances of their works.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MANON</th>
<th>MANON</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I madrigali, il ballo, e poi, la musica! (14)</td>
<td>The madrigals, dancing, and then music!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son tutte belle cose…pur m’annoio! (11)</td>
<td>They’re all beautiful…yet, they bore me!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LESCAUT</th>
<th>LESCAUT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Una donna che s’annoia</td>
<td>A young lady who gets bored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>è cosa da far paura! (10)</td>
<td>is a thing to be feared!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andiam da des Grieux! (6)</td>
<td>Let’s go to des Grieux!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>È da maestro preparar gli eventi! (11)</td>
<td>It is up to the master to prepare the events!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IL MAESTRO DI BALLO</th>
<th>THE DANCING MASTER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vi prego, signorina, (7)</td>
<td>I beg you, young lady,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>un po’ elevato il busto… indi, (9)</td>
<td>lift your bust a little… there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ma brava, così mi piace! (8)</td>
<td>Well done, that’s how I like it!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutta la vostra personcina</td>
<td>All your lovely little body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or s’avanzzi, così! (15)</td>
<td>now comes forward, thus!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Io vi scongiuro… a tempo! (8)</td>
<td>I beg you… in time!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GERONTE
Oh vaga danzatrice! (7)

MANON
Un po’ inesperta. (5)

IL MAESTRO DI BALLO
Vi prego, non badate a lodi susurrate. (14)
È cosa seria il ballo. (8)

SIGNORI ED ABATI
Tacete! Vi frenate, come si fa da noi; (13)
Ammirate in silenzio, in silenzio adorate. (14)
È cosa seria. (5)

IL MAESTRO DI BALLO
A manca. Brava! A destra. Un saluto! (12)
Attenta! L’occhialetto. (7)

GERONTE
Minuetto perfetto! (7)

SIGNORI ED ABATI
Che languore nello sguardo, (8)
che dolcezza, che carezza! (8)
Troppo è bella! Pare stella! (8)
Che candori, che tesori! (8)
Quella bocca baci scocca! (8)
Se sorride stella pare! (8)

GERONTE
Troppa è bella! (4)
Si ribella la parola, (8)
la parola e canta e vanta! (9)

MANON
Lodi aurate mormorate (8)
or mi vibrano d’intorno. (8)
Vostri cori adulatori, su frenate! (12)
Ah!

GERONTE
Voi mi fate spasmare delirare! (8)

GERONTE
Oh, lovely dancer!

MANON
A bit inexperienced.

THE DANCING MASTER
I beg you, pay no heed to whispered praises.
Dancing is a serious matter.

GENTLEMEN AND ABBÉS
Silence! Restrain yourselves, as we do;
Admire in silence, in silence adore.
It’s a serious matter.

THE DANCING MASTER
To the left… Good! To the right… A curtsey!
Attention! The lorgnette…

GENTLEMEN AND ABBÉS
What languor in her look,
what sweetness, what caress!
She’s too beautiful! She seems like a star!
What purity, what treasures!
That mouth flings kisses!
If she smiles she seems like a star!

GERONTE
She is too beautiful!
My words fail me,
words both sing and praise her!

MANON
Golden murmured praises
vibrate all around me now.
Now restrain your choruses of adulation!
Ah!

GERONTE
You make me mad with desire!
SIGNORI ED ABATI
La dieta siete del giorno! (8)
Della notte ell’è regina! (8)

GENTLEMEN AND ABBÉS
You are the deity of the day!
She is queen of the night!

MANON
Il buon maestro non vuol, non vuol parole. (12)
Se m’adulate non dervi la diva danzatrice (16)
ch’ora già si figura la vostra fantasiasa (14)
troppo felice, troppo felice. (10)

MANON
The good master doesn’t want words.
If you flatter me, I won’t be the diva dancer
that your too wishful imagination
already imagines I am.

IL MAESTRO DI BALLO
Un cavalier! (4)

THE DANCING MASTER
A partner…!

GERONTE
Son qua! (2)

GERONTE
I’m here!

SIGNORI ED ABATI
Bravi! Che coppia! (5)
Evviva i fortunati innamorati! (11)
Ve’ Mercurio e Ciprigna! (7)
Con amore e dovizia (7)
oh, qui letizia leggiadramente alligna! (14)

GENTLEMEN AND ABBÉS
Well done! What a couple!
Long live the fortunate lovers!
See Mercury and Venus!
With love and riches,
oh, joy is happily united here!

The minuet presents in a rondo form of eight parts: ABACDAEA (Fig. 15). The
refrain consists of three melodic segments—‘a,’ ‘b,’ and ‘c’—that serve as basic and
contrasting ideas and pair together variably into phrases. In the initial refrain (A1), the
antecedent is formed from a+b and the consequent from a+c (Ex. 16, R13/mm18–26 and
mm26–34, respectively). The consequent, however, concludes with a half cadence and
therefore repeats segment ‘c’ a fifth lower to achieve a PAC (Ex. 16, R13/mm35–38),
thereby creating an unusual five-part period that elides with the refrain’s codetta (Ex. 16
R13/mm38–43). This departure from Classical expectations, however, resolves in an
entirely Classical manner with an immediate restatement of the melodic content
Figure 15: Formal diagram with tonal areas, dancing lesson music, *Manon Lescaut*, Act II, R13/m18–R22/m4
Example 16: Dancing lesson music (Refrain A1) in textural reduction with annotations, *Manon Lescaut*, Act II, R13/mm18–42

a (basic idea)

b (contrasting idea)

Antecedent

HC

Consequent

c (contrasting idea)

c' (contrasting idea)

Codetta

PAC

PAC
extending the cadential function to reach the expected cadence. Although subsequent refrains push Classical boundaries further, each reflects the same structural concepts as the first. The second refrain (A2) creates an asymmetric profile thorough an expanded antecedent that borrows melodic content from the first episode (Ex. 17, R14/mm16–19) and a missing ‘a’ segment that shortens the consequent (Ex. 17, R15/mm1–5). The expected cadence is also missing, first evaded through an abrupt shift to A major in the codetta, then only reaching a half cadence in the new key before proceeding to the next episode (Ex. 17, R15/m6–R16/m1). The third refrain (A3) is even more truncated, segments ‘b’ and ‘c’ combining to create an eight-measure period that similarly reaches a half cadence in a new key at the end of the codetta (Ex. 18). Finally, the last refrain (A4) contains only one phrase, segments ‘a’ and ‘b’ combining into an antecedent with sequential repetition that leads to a half cadence in G major (Ex. 19, R20/m2–R21/m9). The consequent, however, is missing entirely, a cadenza instead preparing Manon’s ensuing aria through a quotation of Richard Wagner’s Tristan chord (Ex. 19, R22/mm1–4). Despite the many variations the refrain undergoes, Puccini’s rondo structure remains intact, upholding Classical norms that allow for substantially different sections and incomplete repetitions, even with missing cadences.

While the minuet’s refrains exhibit some affinity with Classical tight-knit forms,

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68 Caplin, 101.
69 Girardi, 79-80.
Example 17: Dancing lesson music (Refrain A2) in textural reduction with annotations, *Manon Lescaut*, Act II, R14/m9–R16/m1

- **a (basic idea)**

- **b (contrasting idea)**

- **Antecedent**

- **c (full phrase)**

- **HC**

- **Consequent**

- **Codetta**

- **Evaded cadence**

- **(15)**

- **(16)**
Example 18: Dancing lesson music (Refrain A3) in textural reduction with annotations, *Manon Lescaut*, Act II, R17/m1–R18/m6

The episodes are less conclusive in that respect. The first episode (B) consists of two segments, ‘d’ and ‘e’, the second of these repeated and expanded before reaching an IAC that also elides with an in-progress repetition of the refrain (Ex. 20, R14/mm1–8). The second episode (CD) consists of two sections as defined by double barlines in the score (Ex. 21).\(^7\) With the exception of an added two-measure accompanimental introduction

\(^7\) The grouping of sections C and D together into one episode reflects the dancing lesson music’s rotational structure as defined in Hepokoski and Darcy’s study of sonata theory. [James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late Eighteenth-Century Sonata* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 611–614.]
Example 19: Dancing lesson music (Refrain A4) in textural reduction with annotations, *Manon Lescaut*, Act II, R20/m2–R22/m4

These episodes are structured identically. Each contains two statements of a different melodic segment with an expansion in the repetition (Ex. 21, R16/mm2–12 and mm13–24, respectively), but only C achieves a cadence, which elides with D’s introduction (Ex. 21, R16/m13). The last episode (E)
Example 20: Dancing lesson music (Episode B) in textural reduction with annotations, *Manon Lescaut*, Act II, R14/mm1–8

Example 21: Dancing lesson music (Episodes C and D) in textural reduction with annotations, *Manon Lescaut*, Act II, R16/mm2–24
consists of a single twelve-measure phrase that breaks down into three segments, ‘h’ and ‘i’ sounding twice while ‘j’ sounds only once and leads to a PAC in F# minor (Ex. 22).

Example 22: Dancing lesson music (Episode E) in textural reduction with annotations, Manon Lescaut, Act II, R19/m1–R20/m1

Through the nondiegetic opening and the sequence of performances that dominate the first half of this act, the couleur locale of Manon’s eighteenth-century boudoir is well established. Light textures, jaunty melodies, balanced structures, and frequent cadences fill our ears, lulling us into a false sense of security to juxtapose the aural onslaught that arrives with des Grieux when Puccini’s late Romantic idiom takes over. With Manon and des Grieux’s first meeting after her abrupt abandonment of him, the genteel delicacy of the eighteenth-century style is insufficient to contain the angst that flows between them. But is couleur locale truly the only purpose the plethora of diegetic melodies in this act serves? What more can the relationship between a fictional character and the music that she hears within her fictional world reveal about her? And how does that fit in with what other scholars have already observed?
3.3.2 Manon’s Musical Mirror

Alessandra Campana’s 2015 study of operatic spectatorship includes a reading of *Manon Lescaut* that centers on the concept of gaze, analyzing how others—both diegetic characters and nondiegetic audiences—view the title character and how the opera’s settings reflect and inform Manon’s internal state. Of particular interest in Act II is a moment where the disjunction between Manon’s inward sadness and her outward happiness finds its most critical point of conflict. Following “In quelle trine morbide” and its sorrowful reflections on the life with des Grieux that she abandoned, Manon gazes upon herself in the mirror. In this moment, she absorbs her own coiffed and carefully arranged appearance—as well as that of the surrounding finery—into her psyche, reminding and enabling her to reacquire the *joie de vivre* that she projects for the gazes around her, both fictional and real. Through the dramatic shift from melancholy to gaiety, we witness the instant in which Manon reembraces her wealthy lifestyle along with the carefree nonchalance her environment and circumstances demand.

Attention to the diegetic music of the act both complements and facilitates Campana’s focus on gaze, its performative aspects emphasizing that not only do audience members see the fictional performers, but staged characters see them, too. Manon’s expression of boredom following the performance of Geronte’s madrigal

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72 Campana, 166.
73 Campana, 167.
suggests a staging in which she ignores the music to which he dedicated time to produce. Such a visual would accentuate the fact that Manon is not looking, that her gaze is not where it should be. And, frankly, why should it? With only her brother—whose loyalties align with hers since Geronte keeps him in wealth and status, too—and paid musicians to witness her actions, there is little reason for her to expend the energy required to maintain appearances. When the singers are replaced by the string quartet and an entourage of Geronte’s friends, however, the dynamic has changed. Now, the admiring gazes are directed upon her, which is precisely where she wants them to be. Still, though, despite her greater engagement with the music both physically and emotionally, her control over the scene is incomplete, a fault she remedies when she assumes melodic control of the music in the second (section D, Ex. 21, R16/mm15–24) and third episodes (section E, Ex. 22). By usurping the melody from the orchestra, she both eliminates any potential for the string quartet’s staged performance to pull gazes from her and demonstrates her dissatisfaction with that prospect. She may be bored with the music and dancing, but she is not at all bored with holding the gazes of Geronte and his friends.

While Campana suggests an instantaneous shift from melancholy to gaiety when Manon peers at her reflection in the mirror following “In quelle trine morbide,” Manon’s tangential then increasing engagement with the diegetic music of the scene suggests a lengthier process. By the end of the dancing lesson, she is fully absorbed into her
environment and, by extension, her role within it. Through a series of reminders—her own carefully constructed image in the mirror, the message of Geronte’s madrigal, and the attentive audience for her dancing lesson—she recalls the benefits of living the lie, her narcissistic need to claim and hold gazes easily justifying an outward appearance of frivolity and grace despite the absence of genuine love. Up to now, though, she has only received adoration, having as yet offered nothing in return. As though in recognition of this requirement and therefore as final confirmation of her reaffirmation, Manon steps forward with her own contribution in the aria, “L’ora, O Tirsi,” a public display of her dedication to Geronte that solidifies her commitment to wealth and privilege in the wake of the momentary weakness and regret expressed through “In quelle trine morbide.” Such an interpretation not only establishes these arias as the bookends for Manon’s journey from regret to commitment, but also contrasts nondiegetic self-expression with intentional composition. Although nothing in the libretto or stage directions provide an explicit reference, the diegetic status of Manon’s musical offering to Geronte is implied through its complement to his madrigal.

**MANON**

*L’ora, o Tirsi, è caga e bella.* *(8)*

*Ride il giorno, ride intorno* *(8)*

*la fida pastorella.* *(7)*

*Te sospira, per te spira.* *(8)*

*Ma tu giungi e in un baleno* *(9)*

*viva e lieta è dessa allor!* *(9)*

*Ah! Vedi il ciel cant’è serena* *(9)*

*sul miracolo d’amor!* *(7)*

**MANON**

The hour, O Tirsi, is lovely and beautiful.

The day laughs, laughs around your faithful little shepherdess.

She longs for you, she expires for you.

But you arrive and in a flash then she is alive and happy!

Ah! See how serene the sky is above the miracle of love!
With the addition of Tirsi to Clori and Filen from Geronte’s madrigal, the three together reference a 1707 cantata by George Frideric Handel: Clori, Tirsi e Fileno (HWV 96). Set for three voices, the music tells the story of a shepherdess who cannot choose between her two suitors. The cantata opens with an aria in which Tirsi laments Clori’s inability to remain faithful to him. When Clori arrives with Fileno, Tirsi withdraws to listen as the pair argue, Clori despairing of Fileno’s ability to remain faithful to her while Fileno accuses her of dallying with Tirsi. Part One ends with Clori and Fileno pledging love and fidelity to one another, but matters are quickly overturned in Part Two where Tirsi flings a brutal rebuttal upon Clori, likening her to a snake, the inconstant sea, and Medusa. Clori, however, attempts to appease Tirsi with declarations of love, claiming that the argument he overheard was merely a harmless joke. When Tirsi and Fileno exchange tales of Clori’s contradictory professions, however, the two shepherds agree to shun Clori’s love and instead indulge their own whims. The cantata ends with all three characters united in an expression of the tale’s moral.24

The real-world cantata’s 1707 composition accords with the opera’s fictional setting of the late eighteenth century and we may easily assume Geronte to be familiar with Handel’s cantata given his position of wealth and privilege in musically connected Paris. The plot’s association with that of Manon Lescaut, however, raises some issues.

24 Anthony Hicks, trans., Libretto in Clori, Tirsi e Fileno HWV 96, by George Frideric Handel, (Harmonia Mundi 907045, CD, 1992), 16–35.
From the audience’s perspective, the invocation of Handel’s cantata merely reflects the parallel love triangle portrayed in the opera. But, since both the madrigal and the aria in which the names appear are diegetic and therefore consciously composed, we must also consider Geronte’s decision to associate himself with Fileno—the character who appears to have a less genuine grasp on Clori’s affections than his rival—as well as Manon’s choice to shift Geronte’s persona from Fileno to Tirsi. For Geronte’s, we might assume some measure of ignorance concerning the cantata’s plot. Perhaps on the occasion in which he attended a performance of the cantata, he was drawn away at the midpoint and never saw the conclusion. Or perhaps his madrigal was inspired by a lone aria, Fileno’s “Son come quell nocchiero” (I am like the sailor) posing a good prospect for such an inference since it expresses a Fileno’s anxiety over Clori’s lack of commitment.

Manon’s conflation of Fileno with Tirsi, on the other hand, could reflect her attempt to assuage Geronte’s insecurities, assuring him he has her affection either way. At the same time, the merging of Clori’s two loves reflects Manon’s hopeless wish that she could combine what she loves about des Grieux and Geronte into one ideal entity. Since she already lives in a fantasy of her own making, further self-deception of this sort might ease the underlying angst she keeps carefully hidden as she turns her false face inward to lie even to herself. Such an interpretation therefore represents the length, breadth, and depth to which Manon has absorbed the reality that surrounds her.

In addition to this dramatic analysis, the aria’s form provides further support for
a diegetic reading (Fig. 16). The aria consists of two statements of an eight-measure phrase, the second extended by a corrective cadential progression following a deceptive cadence (Ex. 23). This structure meets all requirements for a sixteen-measure compound theme with one exception.\footnote{Caplin, 65.} The midway point in the first phrase, although coinciding with a dominant V chord, lacks a half cadence since the first six measures of the phrase simply alternate between V and vi harmonies (Ex. 23, R22/m9). The corresponding position in the second phrase, however, does feature a half cadence, complete with a tonicization of the dominant harmony (Ex. 23, R22/m17). Since Caplin stipulates that a sixteen-measure period should feature the same structures within the antecedent and consequent phrases—the only exception being the closure to a more conclusive cadence in the latter—this aria violates that expectation. Within each phrase, however, all other standards are upheld, the antecedent phrase reflecting a sentential structure with only one cadence (Ex. 23, R22/mm5–13), and the consequent bearing a hybrid 1 form in recognition of the nested periodic structure with a continuation function for the smaller consequent, including motivic fragmentation, acceleration of the harmonic rhythm, and increased rhythmic activity (Ex. 23, R22/m17 – R23/m1).\footnote{Caplin, 61–62.} With the exception of this mid-aria shift from one type of compound theme to another, “L’ora, O Tirsi” presents a normative sixteen-measure period, even its two-measure extension adhering to the
Figure 16: Formal diagram, "L'ora, O Tirsi," Manon Lescaut, Act II, R22/m5–R23/m2

ANTECEDENT
(Sentence)

presentation

bi

% 

continuation & cadence

Consequent
(Hybrid 1)

presentation

bi

% 

continuation & cadence

extension

Rehearsal:

HC
in G

HC
in G

DC
in G

PAC
in G

Manon: L’o-ra, o Tir-si, è va-ga e bel-la. Ri-de il gior-no, ri-de in-tor-no la

Antecedent

continuation & cadence

fi-da pas-to-rel-la. Te so-spi-ra, per te spi-ra. Ma tu

HC

Chorus: Voi sie-te il mi-ra-co-lo, sie-te l’a-mo-re, sie-te l’a-mo-re,

Consequent

HC
expectations for the correction of a deceptive cadence (Ex. 23, R22/m21 – R23/m1). As with Geronte’s madrigal, this formal oddity may be interpreted as a fictional mistake borne of Manon’s status as an amateur composer. Yet it may also be perceived as intentional on Puccini’s part, either for this cause or as a representation of Manon’s internal conflict and false face. After all, the shifting, nested, and hybrid structures all suggest tight-knit sentences and periods at once without strictly adhering to either Thus, while the aria appears to present Manon’s commitment to Geronte, a diegetic analysis reveals the underlying conflict that exposes its deception.

In augmenting Campana’s reading of Manon’s mirror as a significant moment in
her recommitment to the luxurious life Geronte offers, I have aligned her discussion of
gaze with the performative aspects of diegetic music and demonstrated how Manon’s
relationship with three examples—Geronte’s madrigal, the dancing lesson music, and
her “L’ora, O Tirsi” aira—reflects the increase of that commitment throughout the scene.
I have also, however, interpreted a lingering hint of Manon’s deception. No matter how
effectively she may hide her false face from Geronte and his friends, the music reveals
the fictional reality to any who wish to interpret it. As though wishing to ensure our
understanding, however, Puccini’s score features two additional features that suggest
Manon’s duplicity prior to des Grieux’s return. The first occurs in the cadenza that
concludes the diegetic rondo and prepares Manon’s aria with a nearly exact quotation of
Wagner’s Tristan chord.\textsuperscript{77} The inclusion of this chord at this moment in the opera serves
two purposes: indicating the end of the diegetic minuet since both its elusive chromatic
harmonies and its 1859 conception lie well outside Manon Lescaut’s eighteenth-century
musical milieu, and evoking the plot of the opera from which it is famously drawn,
another love affair doomed to failure and death. Additionally, Tristan und Isolde is a
story of false love, the emotions that catapulted the title characters toward their fates
having been created through sorcery and deception, and therefore serving as an apt
reminder to Puccini’s audience of false love as Manon sings a love song to Geronte. And

\textsuperscript{77} Girardi, 79-80.
secondly, after all have departed and Manon is free once more to express her true emotions in the absence of any diegetic gaze that might influence her, she instead seizes a mirror to admire her false image yet again and proclaims, “Oh, sarò la più bella!” (Oh, I will be the most beautiful!).

Even in that solitary moment, when she is alone and beholden to none but herself, she eagerly anticipates the gazes she will gather about her like a comforting shield while out on the streets of Paris. This moment, more than any other, reflects the extent to which Manon has embraced her false face…and just in time for it all to come crashing down with des Grieux’s return.

### 3.3.3 Manon’s Downfall

Often criticized for its disjunct structure of four largely independent acts with little continuity between them, *Manon Lescaut* takes more effort to appreciate than many of Puccini’s other operas. Regardless, authors have begun in recent years to make sense of the composer’s first great success, even finding strength in its odd act-to-act structure. Through the concept of gaze, Campana argues that each of the widely divergent settings established in the four acts reflects a step in Manon’s fall from grace. Amiens, with its small village simplicity, represents Manon in her Act I innocence while Geronte’s luxurious Act II Parisian abode reflects the opulence and underlying artificiality of high

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78 Puccini, 173.
79 Campana, 154.
Act III directly contrasts Act I, the grimy harbor of Le Havre and its accompanying prison distorting Amiens’ village charm in the same way Manon’s virtue is deformed by her imprisonment and imminent banishment. Finally, the last act’s desert setting in a Louisiana wasteland mirrors the desiccation of Manon’s character, the music’s saturation with references to earlier moments in the opera likewise indicating that the titular character has nothing left to give anymore but her death. For Campana, the static environs of the opera sequentially represent Manon’s innocence, artificiality, distortion, and demise. Deborah Burton, on the other hand, takes a more directly music theoretical approach, assessing the opera in terms of thwarted formal expectations as a parallel to Manon’s dramatic trajectory from respectable civility to ostracization and death. Noting first a series of defined formal structures that are interrupted and left unfulfilled in their Act III repetitions, Burton also observes the prominence of small forms in the first half of Act II—including Geronte’s madrigal and the minuet for Manon’s dancing lesson—and their conspicuous absence in the second half. She even notes an external deformation when Puccini devolves a self-quoted passage for Act I’s prelude from a tight-knit period by inserting three extra measures. In terms of overall trajectory, Burton argues the opera’s deformation progresses from beginning to end,

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80 Campana, 149 & 150.
81 Campana, 151.
82 Campana, 152.
83 Burton, 137, 139–140.
84 Burton, 140-141.
formal structures appearing in fewer quantities as Manon’s personal journey likewise
devolves from “order to chaos.”

Both Campana and Burton’s perspectives can be augmented by attention to
diegetic music. As discussed in the preceding section, this approach foregrounds
Campana’s focus on gaze by drawing greater attention to fictional performance,
constantly asking who observes whom. In this respect, Campana’s reading offers an
explanation for why diegetic music figures so prominently in the opera. Likewise,
diegetic music provides an explanation for the tendencies Burton observes throughout
the opera, her delineation between form and deformation consistently aligning with
diegetic and nondiegetic passages, respectively. Indeed, Burton largely upholds the
correlation between Classical form and fictional composition, all without discussing or
acknowledging their diegetic status. Examples include her acknowledgment of periodic
and ternary structures in the first half of Act I with Edmondo’s melodies and des
Grieux’s “Tra voi, belle,” and her recognition of the complete absence of small forms in
the latter half of Act II. Although unable to claim full correspondence between Burton’s
approach and my own since her analysis of Acts I and III primarily concern deformed
repetitions of nondiegetic passages, diegetic music nevertheless offers a dramatic
explanation for why the opera’s musical structures are so consistently undermined.

85 Burton, 149.
86 Burton, 140, 142.
Overall, though, my approach blends with both Campana and Burton, each of our perspectives complementing one another to result in a broad reading of *Manon Lescaut* that sees diegetic music as the unifying rationale by which both the drama (i.e. Campana’s gaze) and the music (i.e. Burton’s deformations) reflect Manon’s downfall.87

Given this premise toward diegetic music’s central role in *Manon Lescaut*, an accounting of all its occurrences becomes pertinent. Table, 11 provides such a list, for each one noting the starting location in the score and the factors that categorize its textual reference and fictional composer. In addition to a precipitous decline in the number of examples of diegetic music within the latter half of the opera, another significant shift occurs between Acts I and II regarding performers. Whereas every confirmed diegetic song in Act I—the sole exception here being the very weakly diegetic “Vaga per l’aura”—is performed by its fictional composer, this is true of only one instance in Act II. Even then, “L’ora, O Tirsi” requires some measure of dramatic interpretation to qualify as diegetic due to the lack of an explicit textual reference to that

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87 As a demonstration of this effect, diegetic music offers an explanation for the abrupt stylistic change that occurs midway through Act II with des Grieux’s entrance. For Burton, this means the absence of defined forms, though she offer no explanation for this change (Burton, 140). Campana, on the other hand, focuses on the change in style as a consequence of des Grieux’s arrival, a moment that forces Manon to confront the conflict between the image she seeks to project and her concealed unhappiness (Campana, 150). Adding my own perspective, the absence of diegetic music from this moment forward explicates not only the absence of formal structures as Burton observes, but also the dissolution of the disguise within which Manon had shrouded herself, due both to des Grieux’s ability to see Manon’s truth and the incongruity that consciously composed fictional music would pose within a scene of such impassioned angst.
Table 11: Deployment of diegetic music throughout *Manon Lescaut*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Act</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Textual Reference</th>
<th>Performing Character</th>
<th>Fictional Composer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Ave, sera gentile</td>
<td>R4</td>
<td>explicit</td>
<td>Edmondo</td>
<td>Edmondo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Giovinezza è il nostro nome</td>
<td>R7/m10</td>
<td>implicit</td>
<td>Edmondo &amp; chorus</td>
<td>Edmondo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vaga per l’aura</td>
<td>R10/m6</td>
<td>obscure</td>
<td>girls</td>
<td>unspecified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Tra voi, belle</td>
<td>R15</td>
<td>obscure</td>
<td>des Grieux</td>
<td>des Grieux</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Danze, brindisi, follie (reprise of “Ave sera, gentile”)</td>
<td>R19</td>
<td>explicit</td>
<td>Edmondo &amp; chorus</td>
<td>Edmondo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Venticelli riciutelli (reprise of “Tra voi, belle”)</td>
<td>R67/m10</td>
<td>obscure</td>
<td>Edmondo &amp; chorus</td>
<td>des Grieux</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Sulla vette tu del mon (Geronte’s madrigal)</td>
<td>R11</td>
<td>explicit</td>
<td>madrigal singers</td>
<td>Geronte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Manon’s dancing lesson</td>
<td>R13/m19</td>
<td>explicit</td>
<td>string quartet</td>
<td>unspecified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>L’ora, O Tirsi</td>
<td>R22/m5</td>
<td>implicit</td>
<td>Manon</td>
<td>Manon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>E Kate rispose</td>
<td>R11</td>
<td>implicit</td>
<td>lamplighter</td>
<td>unspecified</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Instead, the greater focus in Act II is on professional performances of Geronte’s madrigal and Manon’s dancing lesson minuet that are quite independent of the diegetic music’s composition. Furthermore, diegetic passages in both Acts I and II tend to cluster in the first half of each, prior to a dramatically prominent entrance: Manon in Act I and

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88 In fact, the most recent staging of *Manon Lescaut* available at the Metropolitan Opera On Demand (recorded March 5, 2016, starring Kristine Opolais and Roberto Alagna, Fabio Luisi conducting) features Manon opening a folder just before singing “L’ora, O Tirsi.” While confirming the aria’s diegetic status, the folder’s visual correspondence with those from which Geronte’s madrigal singers had already performed implies he wrote the aria as another of his madrigals for her to sing. The resultant shift in fictional composer undermines the reading proposed here, wherein the aria represents the final step in Manon’s full commitment to disguising her true emotions. In addition, this example further demonstrates why the visual aspect of diegetic music lies beyond the scope of this study, where one small visual change can pose vast repercussions for the interpretive analysis in progress. By contrast, the other two productions available at the Metropolitan Opera On Demand as of June 1, 2020 (one recorded February 16, 2008, starring Karita Mattila and Marcello Giordani, James Levine conducting; and the other recorded March 29, 1980, starring Renata Scotto and Plácido Domingo, James Levine conducting) both feature Manon performing her aria from a small book that is entirely different from the folder already associated with Geronte, thereby sustaining the foregoing analysis.
Des Grieux in Act II. While this tendency sustains without exception in Act II, Act I necessitates the caveat of no new diegetic melodies occur beyond that point in Act I since the act’s concluding chorus “Venticelli ricciutelli” is based upon Des Grieux’s melody from “Tra voi, belle.”

Taking the lead from both Campana and Burton, diegetic music also provides a handy metaphor for Manon’s trajectory over the four acts of the opera. Through its performative shift between Acts I and II, its abrupt absence in the wake of pivotal moments in these same acts, and its precipitous decline beyond the temporal midpoint of the opera, diegetic music may be perceived as a symbol of Manon’s stability with a direct correlation between them. In the opening of Act I, Manon is on her way to a convent, expecting to live out the rest of her days in service to God. Even in the absence of any background information regarding her—or others’—motivation for packing her off to a convent, we may assume Manon’s path to be clear and stable through the first part of Act I. Once she arrives in Amiens, however, her stability is challenged through Geronte and Lescaut’s plotting, but more so by her meeting with des Grieux and their ultimate decision to run away with one another. With the upheaval of these events, Manon’s stability is lost, though not necessarily in a negative sense. In fact, the inclusion of one last diegetic song at the act’s close could even suggest the stability Manon would

89 Burton, 132; and Campana, 154.
experience going forward from that moment in a life of love shared with Des Grieux.

Act II functions in much the same manner, Manon’s life, though false, is stable in the life of ease that Geronte facilitates… until des Grieux returns. Abruptly thrown into disquiet and anxiety yet again, diegetic music disappears entirely along with the loss of Manon’s stability. Unlike Act I, however, with its undercurrent of promised stability suggested by the presence of diegetic music at its close, no such positivity occurs here. Had Manon departed with Des Grieux immediately, rather than stopping to gather jewels and other valuables from the home Geronte had provided her, perhaps we could have expected one last occurrence of diegetic music. As it is, however, with Manon’s arrest for thievery at the conclusion of the act, we can only be assured of lingering instability for our heroine.

The latter two acts pose a very different story for Manon, thus rationalizing the near absence of diegetic music. Whereas Edmondo’s song occurred in a position of prominence in the first act, and the lengthy sequence of madrigal, minuet, and pastoral song lent weight to the second, the third act conspicuously features only one brief diegetic song. Furthermore, it is the only instance of diegetic music throughout the opera that has no bearing whatsoever on the opera’s primary plot. Other than a parallel to Manon’s story in the lamplighter’s text about a girl named Kate who rejects the advances of a king in favor of love, its function is entirely incidental, providing a charming detail to the setting of the port at Le Havre. Compared to the wealth of
diegetic melodies in the first two acts, this song’s tangential and inconsequential qualities highlight the lack of stability in Manon’s life as she languishes in prison awaiting her fate. With des Grieux’s deal to accompany her to America, however, Manon’s social instability at the opening of Act IV is not quite as absolute as it was in Act III. She may be convicted and banished, but at least she has her love with her. Instead, the absence of all diegetic music throughout the entirety of this act reflects a different kind of instability: that fostered by her health. No matter how much death may have convinced her to reexamine her priorities, no matter how devoted she may now be to des Grieux, any newfound conviction cannot stabilize her against the onslaught of her imminent demise. It is the final and ultimate instability, one that cannot be surmounted by love, determination, or even fate. Hence, the desolation of both the landscape and Manon’s psyche is reflected in the absolute absence of diegetic music.

In the end, Manon Lescaut indeed upholds the initial supposition posed by the concentrated cluster of diegetic songs at its opening that fictionally composed music holds an essential role in this opera. Not only does the analytical methodology developed, challenged, and employed in this chapter reveal a rationale for the appearance of old-fashioned, Classical norms within Puccini’s late Romantic idiom, but it also provides a fresh perspective on the opera, expanding our understanding of the relationship between opera characters and the music that surrounds them. In addition,
this chapter has clarified many of the latent issues that have lingered since this
dissertation’s introduction. With the analytical methodology for both identifying and
assessing diegetic music in Puccini’s operas complete, we may now turn our attention to
two of Puccini’s most enduring works.
4. Public Space, Realism, and Diegetic Music in La Bohème

Ma che tragedie storiche o drammi storici! Ma che eroi, ma che grandi figure memorabili! Io non mi ci faccio con cotesta roba. Non sono un musicista di cose grandi, io; sento le cose piccole e non amo trattar d’altro che di cose piccole. Mi piacque Manon perchè era una cara ragazza piena di cuore, e niente più.¹

But what historical tragedies or dramas! But what heroes, what great memorable figures! I don’t deal with this stuff. I’m not a musician of great things, myself; I feel the little things and don’t like dealing with anything other than little things. I liked Manon because she was a nice girl with a big heart, and nothing more.

The above words, attributed to Giacomo Puccini by Ildebrando Pizzetti in 1914, have come to characterize the composer’s philosophical approach to his art: a composer of “little things,” of details that move and stir the emotions, of great loves between tragic souls. As a lover and devotee of little things, it therefore stands to reason that large, boisterous, crowded settings are rare in Puccini’s operas. Relatively few in number overall, Puccini’s choral scenes also tend to eschew open spaces, typically set in enclosed locations that diegetic inhabitants would seek intentionally. For example, the finale of Tosca’s (1900) first act takes place inside a church, the opening of La fanciulla del West (1910) in a saloon, the central act of La rondine (1917) in a dance hall, and the conclusion of Suor Angelica (1918) in a convent. In each of these, the assembled crowd is united in its

¹ Ildebrando Pizzetti, Musicisti contemporanei: Saggi critici (Milan: Treves, 1914), 51. Translation is my own.
purpose, whether for drinking, dancing, or worshipping.\(^2\) Other choral scenes occur in private spaces—such as the wedding scene in Act I of *Madama Butterfly* (1904) and the exhibition of the title character in Act II of *Manon Lescaut* (1893)—or in some off-stage place that leaves the question of location entirely unclear, such as the humming chorus that bridges Acts II and III of *Madama Butterfly*. For the most part, the same unity of purpose observed within enclosed public spaces prevails in the composer’s few open settings for crowd scenes: witnessing trials or attending imperial ceremonies in *Turandot* (1926), condemning and executing Dick Johnson in *La fanciulla del West*, seeing convicted women exiled to America in *Manon Lescaut*, and alternately honoring and cursing a deceased soldier in *Edgar* (1889).

Scenes of public life in open settings, where individuals pursue various objectives that bear little to no relevance to the principal drama, are uncommon in Puccini’s oeuvre, limited to only two operas: *Manon Lescaut* and *La bohème* (1896).\(^3\) As the earlier of the two, *Manon Lescaut* demonstrates Puccini’s less mature approach to the

\(^2\) Another scene that fits within this category is the engagement party that opens *Le Villi* (1884); however, the location is unspecified, and the enclosed or open nature of the celebration’s setting is therefore inconclusive.

\(^3\) The crowd scenes in *La fanciulla del West, La rondine, and Turandot* occasionally exhibit the sort of dramatic variety under discussion here, but Puccini’s choruses more frequently function as a united character, reacting to and occasionally driving the principal drama. Furthermore, of these three, only *Turandot*’s choral scenes consistently occur in open spaces that are accessible to all denizens of the opera’s diegesis, while the saloon and dance hall settings of the other two operas pose more controlled environments. Of course, stage directors and singer-actors can alter this perception in any of Puccini’s operas by assuming and portraying background roles for individual members of the chorus; however, only *Manon Lescaut* and *La bohème* feature published stage directions that explicitly allocate such dramatic specificity.
scene, the choral text of Act I focused primarily on one event at a time—first mocking Edmondo for his singing, then engaging with des Grieux before turning its attention to Manon’s arriving carriage—while gambling and drinking the evening away. In contrast, the chorus of La bohème’s interior acts demonstrate greater diversity of dramatic function throughout, much of its text betraying choral characters’ complete apathy regarding the events unfolding between the principal characters in their midst. Furthermore, the variety of roles exhibited in these later scenes of public life is unequivocally reflected in the operatic score. Directly contrasting the intimacy of the first act’s garret setting in which five principal characters are introduced and the plot’s primary romantic pairing established, Act II takes place amid the frantic and bustling activity of the Latin Quarter on Christmas Eve in 1830s Paris. Vendors call out their wares for sale, diners shout for service from a café’s waiters, exhausted mothers chase after their excited children, and crowds struggle to wade through the crush of people all at once. Through the careful balancing of musical and vocal forces, Puccini constructs and sustains a full act that illustrates the frenetic activity of a busy, entirely open public space on what is surely one of the busiest days of the year. In yet another direct contrast, however, the next act portrays a very different public scene. Opening in the frigid, pre-dawn hours, Act III depicts the slow and reluctant awakening of a late February day at the Barrière d’Enfer or the Gate of Hell, the twin tollhouses that once stood guard at the outskirts of Paris. As sparse as Act II was cluttered, choral voices in this frozen scene depict grumpy customs
officials, multiple groups calling impatiently for admittance to the city, and the exuberance of an off-stage tavern. Whereas the multiplicity of dramatic roles fulfilled by the chorus of Act II combine in overlapping and chaotic layers of activity, here they are scattered, each moment intruding upon the stasis produced by the sparse and lethargic musical background.

As music that emanates directly from the portrayed world, diegetic music holds an essential position within the aural expression of an opera’s scenery, while public spaces yield a prime opportunity to explore the fictional world beyond its principal characters. This chapter therefore examines the intimate alignment between diegetic music and the aural scenery that evokes a particular setting. Although Puccini’s fascination with setting is most apparent in the exotic locales that offer an opportunity for distinctive music—including 1904 Japan, legendary China, and gold rush California—Paris of the not-too-distant past presented its own sort of exoticism for turn-of-the-century Italians.4 La bohème therefore offered both Puccini and audiences alike the chance to explore its unfamiliar streets within the comfortable familiarity of the operatic stage, emphasizing Act II’s frenetic activity and Act III’s frigid inertia through the music itself. As a precursor, this chapter opens with a discussion of operatic realism to elucidate the complex relationship between Puccini, La bohème, verismo, melodrama, and

soundscapes. Focus then turns to the central analysis of this chapter: a dissection of the Act II Latin Quarter scene’s musical components to determine how the variety of dramatic functions portrayed there contribute to both the Christmas Eve soundscape and the act’s musical and dramatic structure. Finally, I present a reading of Musetta’s aria “Quando me’n vo’” as a diegetic song and examine its reappearances in Acts II and III as a reflection of both the divergent soundscapes and the drama that unfolds within them.

4.1 Oxymoronic Realism: Verismo and Soundscape in Opera

Operatic verismo derives from a literary predecessor, itself largely aligned with the concurrent realist movement. The term itself is drawn from vero—the Italian word for “true”—since verismo’s authors seek to represent life as it really is, complete with all its sordid and unpleasant details.\(^5\) A prime example appears in *Jude the Obscure* (1895) by Thomas Hardy, when the eponymous character is confronted by the harsh realities of cottage life and must slaughter a pig.\(^6\) Featuring such aspects as the variety of sounds the animal makes in the course of its slaughter and the manner of its blood flow, Hardy’s description of the scene spares few details. In addition to the depiction of harsh truths, literary verismo also features an objective or scientific narrative style, subjects and

characters that reflect lower social classes, an increased focus on place within the prose, and consistent literary structures. Verismo’s bridge from literature to opera, however, occurred through the theater when prominent author Giovanni Verga adapted his short story Cavalleria rusticana to the stage, spawning a new theatrical style dubbed scene popolari. Pietro Mascagni in turn adapted the successful play to a one-act opera, winning a competition hosted by music publisher Eduardo Sonzogno and thus founding the operatic verismo movement.

In its adoptive home of opera, verismo’s affinity with realism presents a problem that is entirely foreign to its originating genre. Readers may recall my statement in the introduction to Section 2.1: “Opera is not realistic. In fact, the sooner an opera novice jettisons the notion that opera should be realistic, the more likely they are to enjoy it.” Therein lies the contradiction that plagues opera scholars’ efforts to pinpoint just what makes verismo verismo. Whereas literary prose and, to a greater extent, theatrical plays can adhere to the harsh realities of life, opera cannot without losing its essential operatic qualities. While this dilemma has led some authors to question the correlation between literary and operatic verismo, others have sought alternative understandings.

8 Sansone, §3.
9 Sansone, §4.
Guarnieri Corazzol, for example, aligns both versions through their shared rejection of elitist idealism in favor of popular objectivity.\textsuperscript{11} Arman Schwartz, on the other hand, rather than seeking reconciliation of literary and operatic perspectives, suggests that the simultaneous juxtaposition of opera’s visually realistic staging with its inherently unrealistic music results in the genre’s greatest source of fascination.\textsuperscript{12} In any case, the surface disparity between opera and realism was challenged and debated as early as 1896, making it quite understandable that this moment in operatic history should ultimately prove rather fleeting, yielding within only a few decades to the hyper-subjectivity of Expressionism.\textsuperscript{13} Despite its contradictory nature and historical brevity, though, \textit{verismo} remains a notable moment in operatic history if for no other reason than the prominence and importance of its most representative examples.\textsuperscript{14}

In discussing this most perplexing of operatic terms, I approach \textit{verismo} as a set of dramatic and stylistic choices that aim to reflect the oxymoronic notion of operatic realism. Diegetic music—as that which derives directly from the world portrayed on stage—therefore becomes an indispensable component of this objective. Before advancing to the central analysis of this chapter, I first provide an overview of \textit{verismo}’s

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{12} Arman Schwartz, “Rough Music: Tosca and Verismo Reconsidered,” in \textit{Nineteenth Century Music} 31, no. 3 (Spring 2008): 231.
\item \textsuperscript{13} Schwartz, “Rough,” 231.
\item \textsuperscript{14} For example, \textit{Carmen} (1875) by Bizet, \textit{Cavalleria rusticana} (1890) by Mascagni, \textit{I pagliacci} (1892) by Leoncavallo, and \textit{Tosca} (1900) by Puccini.
\end{itemize}
features, then delve into the relationship between the movement and Puccini’s operas. Here, I argue for the subtle distinction between verismo and melodrama, which correspond to La bohème and Tosca, respectively. In addition to aligning these aesthetic approaches with realism, this second section also realizes the aural representation of settings as a musico-dramatic technique common to both. Finally, I refine Schwartz’s work by identifying Puccini’s soundscapes as a blend of diegetic and nondiegetic elements, complete with a brief illustrative analysis. Together, these discussions not only rationalize my choice for the analytical focus of this chapter, but also establish the methodological groundwork for assessing Puccini’s portrayal of 1830s Paris.

4.1.1 Narrative and Musical Features of Verismo

Given verismo’s literary origins, it stands to reason that operatic verismo should manifest primarily in the libretto, especially through the characters it portrays. Eschewing the once-standard tradition of royal, divine, or mythical plots, verismo reorients operatic drama toward ordinary, everyday characters drawn from the real world, often from the lowest ranks of society. Some of these characters have endured the test of time and reign today among opera’s most beloved roles, such as Georges Bizet’s alluring gypsy, cigarette factory worker, and erstwhile smuggler, Carmen (Carmen, 1875). But opera also affords an opportunity that literature can only envy: the dimension

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15 Arman Schwartz, Puccini’s Soundscapes: Realism and Modernity in Italian Opera (Florence: Centro Studi Giacomo Puccini, 2016).
of sound. In Prosper Mérimée’s 1831 novella, the inspiration for Bizet’s most famous opera, it is Don José’s singing within the opening frame of the story that draws the first-person narrator’s attention and eventually leads him to hear the tale of Carmen: “Et, s’étant fait donner la mandoline, il chanta en s’accompagnant. Sa voix était rude, mais pourtant agréable, l’air mélancolique et bizarre; quant aux paroles, je n’en compris pas un mot.” Limited by its very nature, Mérimée’s prose is able to describe both Don José’s song and his voice only in woefully inadequate terms. Opera, on the other hand, not only brings Don José’s music to life but also allows Carmen to speak for herself, eliminating the multiple levels of mediation to which she is subjected in the original prose. In this way, the operatic medium actually contributes to the realist goals of verismo, allowing music a full expression that mere words never can.

With such an opportunity for musical realism, it is small wonder that verismo brought along with it a vogue for performing characters, though such characters are hardly new. After all, figures like Orpheus have helped navigate the narrative complexity of tales told through music since opera’s late sixteenth-century inception, rationalizing the inclusion of music through their very presence. Three hundred years

\[16\] “And, having been given the mandolin, he sang to his own accompaniment. His voice was rough yet pleasant, the song melancholy and strange; as to the lyrics, I understood not a word.” Translation is my own. (Prosper Mérimée, Carmen [Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1931], 18.)

\[17\] In Mérimée’s novella, although the narrator does meet Carmen prior to her death, the reader only learns of her tumultuous relationship with Don José and her tragic death through a complex narrative structure, first through Don José’s recollection, then through the narrator’s understanding of his tale, and finally through Mérimée’s prose. (Susan McClary, Georges Bizet: Carmen [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992], 20–21.)
later, realist aesthetics brought performing characters and their musical self-justification to the fore yet again, of which Carmen represents only one type. While she does sing melodies that are as indicative of her character as her words and actions, and her melodies are some of opera’s most beloved tunes and therefore require a practiced hand—or voice—for a successful portrayal, she is nevertheless an amateur within her diegetic world. Professional performing characters, however, are epitomized in the verismo era by Puccini’s eponymous opera singer in Tosca and the members of the traveling commedia dell’arte troupe in Ruggero Leoncavallo’s I Pagliacci (1892). Whether amateur or professional, the musical realism provided by performing characters aligns intimately with the plethora of diegetic passages that tend to populate such works, rendering operatic verismo especially pertinent to a study of diegetic music.

In addition to characters from lower societal ranks, verismo operas typically feature straightforward plots that overflow with passion. Frequently, such heightened emotion drives characters to murder, making verismo a rather bloody movement within operatic history. The dramatic and emotional extremes that typically prevail in verismo also encourage rapid juxtapositions within the plot, pivotal moments flowing in quick succession, one right after the other. The velocity of the plot thus results in a relentless pace that can be difficult for both singers and audiences to sustain. For that reason, verismo finds a welcome home in the single-act opera, such as the oft-paired Cav/Pag duo (Cavalleria rusticana by Mascagni and I pagliacci by Leoncavallo) and Puccini’s tripartite Il
trittico (consisting of Il tabarro, Suor Angelica, and Gianni Schicchi, 1918). In longer format operas, the momentum is often interrupted in a more traditional manner, with an aria that temporarily halts the plot’s forward drive while character and audience alike pause to reflect upon the situation. One such example is Tosca’s famous Act II aria “Vissi d’arte,” where the titular character offers a bitter prayer asking God why her devotion is being repaid with an impossible choice. Surrounded as it is by scenes of rape, torture, and murder, the aria offers the audience a moment to breathe in the midst of all the action; however, the fitful progress that results also undermines the overarching goal of realism.

While authors generally agree on the literary features of operatic verismo (i.e. features of its characters and plot), no such consensus has arisen with regard to the movement’s musical style. Indeed, scholars have long questioned the relationship between verismo and opera due to a lack of stylistic consistency among its composers.18 Furthermore, Arman Schwartz has also noted that, even within the oeuvres of such supposedly verismo composers, their musical styles remain consistent, regardless of whether or not a particular plot reflects verismo standards.19 Taking a different approach,

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however, Schwartz identifies three tropes that both characterize *verismo* operas and contribute to its score in some way: performing characters, offstage singing, and extra-orchestral sounds.\(^\text{20}\) The first of these tropes—the prevalence of performing characters—aligns directly with diegetic music, its performative aspects evoking a familiar construct within the opera’s fictional reality.\(^\text{21}\) Offstage singing, meanwhile, expands the opera’s sonic boundaries, either hinting at the fictional world beyond that directly perceived on the stage, or allowing voices to merge with the scenery rather than represent individual characters.\(^\text{22}\) Finally, sounds that originate beyond an orchestra’s traditional instruments typify *verismo* scores, especially through the prominence of bells that function as “sounding architecture” with their evocation of distant churches and towers.\(^\text{23}\) Drawing a more direct connection between sound and scenery than offstage singing, this third trope of non-orchestral sounds lends greater realism to the operatic experience, both by extending the portrayed world beyond the confines of the stage and referencing aural features of landscapes that otherwise have no explicit place in the opera’s plot.\(^\text{24}\)

\(^\text{20}\) Schwartz, “Rough,” 234.
\(^\text{22}\) Schwartz, “Rough,” 233.
\(^\text{24}\) Of course, these tropes are not exclusive to *verismo* composers or operas, each of them finding a place in the works of various composers throughout history, such as Monteverdi (e.g. Orpheus as a performing character), Verdi (e.g. offstage voices providing the howling wind of a storm in Act III of *Rigoletto*), and Mozart (e.g. the noisy clatter behind a closed door that betrays Cherubino’s presence in Act II of *Le Nozze di Figaro*). While the prevalence of these and other examples of performing characters, offstage singing, and non-orchestral sounds throughout operatic history suggest these tropes cannot be attributed solely to the rise of *verismo*, their greater quantity of occurrences within the small collection of *verismo* operas and the
Additionally, these last two tropes also transfer verismo’s literary emphasis on a story’s physical and cultural milieu to the aural dimension.\(^{25}\)

The last decade of the nineteenth century also saw the happy convergence of two more trends with the rise of operatic verismo: through-composed structure and a more dramatic style of singing. While both of these trends were ascendant throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century, they also suited verismo’s inclination toward realism remarkably well. Through-composed structures not only obliterated the traditional succession of largely independent numbers, but also smoothed the relentless alternation of recitatives that move the plot forward with arias that stagnate that momentum, achieving a more consistent and therefore realistic temporal flow.\(^{26}\) In terms of vocal style, verismo eschews the old bel canto tradition that seeks elegance and finesse above all, instead advocating more powerful sounds and effects intended to convey the drama of the moment. By rejecting carefully controlled coloratura in favor of registral extremes, spoken declamation, shouts, and laughter, verismo’s singing style more closely approximates the manner in which the human voice is used every day.\(^{27}\)

\(^{25}\) Corazzol, 40; Dahlhaus, 354.


Verismo’s realist tendencies elevate the everyday to the status of art, and it is therefore predictable that the new aesthetic met with some resistance. Many turn-of-the-century cultural elitists condemned the movement for both the surface vulgarity of its subjects and methods as well as its mass appeal, which can only be motivated by financial gain.\textsuperscript{28} Justified by the perception of an attempt to please the public rather than one’s own artistic integrity, the hostility toward verismo composers from certain circles presages attitudes that would become endemic later in the twentieth century. Puccini’s close association with verismo therefore set his oeuvre on a path that would find limited scholarly interest for decades to come. Deemed unworthy by his undeniable popularity, Puccini was only able to overcome the stigma attached to his operas at the height of his career in recent decades. But to what extent does Puccini’s work actually deserve a verismo designation?

4.1.2 Verismo vs. Melodrama

As the most prominent member of the group of composers most associated with verismo, Puccini is often regarded as the movement’s primary contributor despite that he neither began nor ended his career with verismo subjects, and only a third of his operas warrant that label.\textsuperscript{29} However, of the composers ranked among the giovane scuola,

\textsuperscript{28} Corazzol, 52–53.
Puccini is the only one to have achieved a sustained presence in the world’s opera houses for multiple works. To some extent, then, Puccini’s position as the quintessential verismo composer is the consequence of a lack of options, rather than an overriding philosophy intrinsic to his oeuvre. Still, an association with verismo is difficult if not impossible for Puccini to escape, especially since one of his most famous works, Tosca, is commonly regarded as the movement’s quintessential example. The eponymous character’s profession as an opera singer, the plot’s unrelenting pace, the music’s unapologetic passion, and the vocal style’s power certainly epitomize verismo opera, but there are other impediments to such a classification. Most notably, the three main characters do not uphold verismo’s call for subjects representative of lower social classes. Tosca performs for royalty, Scarpia heads the police for a major European city, and Cavaradossi is entrusted with painting the Madonna inside a Baroque church. Even if their professions may be considered low-class, the success each has achieved elevates them to a higher status. Scarpia and Cavaradossi’s entanglement with the political course of the nation also nudges the opera beyond verismo’s typical rural focus, as does its setting in Rome.

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30 The only other verismo operas from this group of composers that still commonly appear in performance today—though in significantly smaller numbers in comparison to Puccini—are Cavalleria Rusticana by Mascagni, I pagliacci by Leoncavallo, Andrea Chénier (1896) by Umberto Giordano, and Adriana Lecouvreur (1902) by Francesco Cilea. The remaining members of the giovane scuola are Alfredo Catalani, and Alberto Franchetti.
Tosca intrudes upon a complex distinction between verismo and another tradition, melodrama. Not to be confused with either Italian melodramma—which signifies a sung play—or music accompanied by speech, theatrical melodrama is defined by an exaggerated performance style that Peter Brooks dubs the “mode of excess,” as well as stories that raise emotional and ethical issues through a conflict between good and evil. Many aspects of Tosca suit Brooks’s basic outline for typical melodramatic plots, including Scarpia first meeting Tosca under the guise of aiding her, his later presentation of a moral dilemma that precludes any compromise when he proposes to exchange Tosca’s virtue for Cavaradossi’s life, and the sequence of violent action that results from her attempts to escape Scarpia’s evil plan once she perceives it. The opera also features multiple passages that suspend the forward momentum of the plot to indulge in the scene’s sounds and that may be interpreted as the sonic version of a melodramatic tableau, which Brooks defines as a frozen moment that summarizes the scene’s emotions through its visuals. Not only do “Vissi d’arte,” the mute scene following Scarpia’s murder that closes Act II, and the introduction to Act III all fit Brooks’s criteria for such moments of stasis, but they also benefit from a melodramatic explanation by clarifying their function.

32 Brooks, 29, 36, and 42.
33 Brooks, 48.
Between these points that uphold Tosca as melodrama and those that minimize its association with verismo lies each movement’s relationship with realism. In his glossary definition of verismo, Carl Dahlhaus notes, “By adopting naturalistic traits only to subject them to traditional melodrama, verismo ignored the social criticism inherent in literary naturalism.”34 This definition appears to claim half of each aesthetic, unifying the narrative elements of verismo with the theatrical style of melodrama while ignoring melodrama’s plot structure and verismo’s performative style. Indeed, an interpretation of Tosca as verismo benefits from such a restrictive view, tidily resolving the conceptual clash between melodrama and verismo that Dahlhaus explores in greater depth.35 When taking both sides of each aesthetic into account, however, Tosca aligns far more closely with melodrama than verismo, despite exhibiting elements of each. At the same time, La bohème adheres quite successfully to verismo’s parameters, so successfully, in fact, that its absence from Mosco Carner’s listing of Puccini’s verismo operas is all the more perplexing.36 Unlike Tosca’s three principal roles, the bohemians of La bohème fulfill the expectation for characters from lower social classes. The opening act’s focus on their efforts to feed and warm themselves highlights their status as struggling artists: a writer, painter, musician, and philosopher whose only explicit measure of success within the confines of the opera’s plot appears with Marcello’s Act I painting of the crossing of the

34 Dahlhaus, 404.
35 Dahlhaus, 351–359.
36 Carner, 13.
Red Sea hanging over the door of a small, modest tavern at the outskirts of the city in Act III. Not one of them is wealthy, accomplished, famous, or powerful; nor are they motivated by such pursuits, instead preoccupied with survival and love. Quite in contrast to Tosca’s constant action and heightened drama, La bohème is, as Catherine Clément puts it, “the opera of innocence,” featuring no antagonist other than a common respiratory ailment that leads to the opera’s solitary death. Through both its characters and its plot, La bohème emphasizes universal human truths relevant to most individual’s own lives, thereby heightening the audience emotional engagement through shared empathy.

While musical texture and general style are probably the area in which Tosca truly shines as an example of verismo opera, the score’s seamless integration of recitative and arioso styles to yield a through-composed form was also present four years earlier in La bohème. According to Michele Girardi, Puccini’s quest for realism in operatic structure came to life in the wake of Giuseppe Verdi’s last masterpiece, Falstaff (1893). Through the master’s example, Puccini learned how to balance the conventions of opera with the plot’s dramatic demands, revealing a texture that flows smoothly with few temporal interruptions while nevertheless upholding the long Italian operatic tradition.

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37 Catherine Clément, Opera, or the Undoing of Women, Betsy Wing, trans. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 83.
of melodiousness.\textsuperscript{38} Even the few traditional arias that remain fold seamlessly into the plot, integrated either by an arioso style or a plot device that clearly articulates the aria’s dramatic purpose. For example, in the two successive arias of Act I when first Rodolfo then Mimi introduces themselves, a realistic texture emerges through Puccini’s clever use of recitative-like singing while the aria’s soloistic nature is sustained primarily by the listening character’s attentive silence (Ex. 24). Both “Che gelida manina” and “Mi chiamano Mimi” build to a lyrical climax that emerges from then sinks back into the prevailing arioso style with its indecipherable blend of recitative and aria (Ex. 25).\textsuperscript{39} The memorable melodies that emerge from these arias provide not only the singability that Italian tradition demands, but also two important themes that reappear throughout the opera. As though to verify the central role recitative plays in their structure, the pair of arias ends with one last blatant example (Ex. 26). In these arias and, indeed, throughout much of the opera, declamatory textures achieve verismo’s increased realism by undermining the very singing that defines opera and separates it from reality but in a wholly different manner from Tosca’s melodramatic outbursts.

Like their respective aesthetic formulae that seek some element of realism, both


\textsuperscript{39} In Rodolfo’s aria, this lyrical climax begins with “Talor dal mio forziere;” for Mimi, with “ma quando vien lo sgelo.”
Example 24: Recititative-like vocal style in aria openings, La bohème, Act I

a. “Che gelida manina,” R30/mm3–11

b. “Mi chiamano Mimi,” R35/mm1–10

Tosca and La bohème highlight moments in which the plot steps aside to allow music and audience alike to focus on the setting. Rather than depicting characters drawn from lower social circumstances or finding a compromise between singing and speaking, these scenes appeal to both melodrama’s tableau or verismo’s emphasis on milieu to draw the time and place of the action into close correspondence with the music.

Nowhere is this more evident in these operas than at the opening of Tosca’s third act, where Puccini’s deployment of fourteen bells in eight locations seeks to reproduce the

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40 Unless otherwise noted, this and all following music examples are adapted from Giacomo Puccini, La bohème (Scene dalla Vie de bohème di Henry Murger), vocal score, Mario Parenti, ed. (Milano: BMG Ricordi Music Publishing, 2005).

41 Translation: “What an icy little hand, let me warm it. What is the use of searching? We can’t find it [Mimi’s key] in the dark.” Unless otherwise noted, this and all following translations of the libretto are adapted from Nico Castel, trans., “La bohème,” in The Complete Puccini Libretti, Vol. 1, Marcie Stapp, ed. (Genesco, NY: Leyerle Publications, 2002), 2–119.

42 Translation: “Yes. They call me Mimi but my name is Lucia. My story is brief. I embroider cloth or silk at home or away.”

a. “Che gelida manina,” R32/mm8–12

Example 26: Recitative conclusion, “Mi chiamano Mimi,” *La bohème*, Act I, R38/mm22–23

aural experience of dawn overlooking the Roman city from atop the Castel Sant’Angelo. In addition to idealizing Arman Schwartz’s concept of “sounding architecture,” this scene evidences Puccini’s commitment to aural authenticity through his efforts to match the pitch of the lowest bell at St. Peter’s Basilica in the Vatican and

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43 Translation: “At times, all my jewels are stolen from my coffer by two thieves: two beautiful eyes.”
44 Translation: “But when the thaw comes the first sun is mine, the first kiss of April is mine! The first sun is mine!”
45 Translation: “I wouldn’t know what else to tell you about myself: I’m your neighbor who comes to bother you at odd hours.”
46 Schwartz, *Soundscapes*, 47.
the insertion of a quatrain in Roman dialect for the shepherd boy heard singing off in the distance. In addition to Puccini’s preoccupation with accuracy, this scene epitomizes Schwartz’s notion of soundscapes. Defined as a moment in which the score seeks to depict a scene through its aural features, the frequently static nature of such scenes betrays a concern with setting over plot or character. In that respect, soundscape addresses the specific method a composer uses to represent either melodramatic tableau or verist milieu in opera. While the conceptual language changes with its context, the resulting emphasis on aural representations of a physical setting is the same.

The distinction between verismo and melodrama is a deeply complex topic, of which the preceding discussion constitutes only an overture. Though paradoxical in some respects, the two aesthetic options unite in their mutual interest in realism, which in turn aligns neatly with our ongoing focus on diegetic music. Despite its common association with verismo, Tosca makes an excellent example of operatic melodrama in its passionate, intense portrayal of good versus evil. La bohème, meanwhile, epitomizes verismo through its simple characters whose travails with life, love, and illness pose a greater potential to connect with audiences’ lived experiences. Both approaches use soundscapes to emphasize the visual, whether highlighting a moment of extreme melodramatic tension or a physical verismo setting.

47 Schwartz, “Rough,” 229 and 233; and Ashbrook, Puccini, 75.
48 Schwartz, Soundscapes, 10.
4.1.3 Aural Scenery

In his 2016 monograph, Arman Schwartz adapts R. Murray Schafer’s ethnographic work with soundscapes to the examination of Puccini’s aural evocations of physical space.49 Identifying passages whose aural contributions center on their settings rather than characters or plot, Schwartz’s approach extends beyond Puccini’s score to encompass all manner of sounds produced on the operatic stage. Bells as an example of sounding architecture are certainly one such manifestation, but so are clapping, stomping, laughing, shouting, screaming, and so on.50 The resulting blend of sounds both defines the sonic dimension of an opera’s physical environment—that is, its aural scenery—and contributes significantly to the experience and effect of any particular scene. To some extent all operas produce soundscapes at all times simply by virtue of the music’s association with a staged visual, but Schwartz argues that Puccini’s careful attention to the scoring of specifically scenic moments sets his work apart from others, especially contrasting the overt modernism of Richard Strauss and Arnold Schoenberg.51 Though certainly precedents exist—such as the third act opening to Aida (1871), in which Verdi’s sparse texture of oscillating strings and a solo flute evokes the sense of moonlight on the Nile River—Puccini’s scenic moments have also had their detractors,

50 Schwartz, Soundscapes, 233 and 10–11.
51 Schwartz, Soundscapes, 3.
including Joseph Kerman’s condemnation of *Tosca*’s Act III Roman dawn as “one of the most undramatic things in opera…because nothing happens in the music.”^{52} Schwartz, however, hypothesizes that the gradual dissolution of such objections over the course of the twentieth century indicates that general sentiment has at last risen to the level of Puccini’s original vision.^{53} On other words, Camille Bellaigue’s 1898 description of *La bohème* as “music from which music is almost absent” may not be so much *inaccurate* as simply reveal the extent to which Puccini was ahead of his time.^{54}

Just as various authors refer to the basic distinction between diegetic and nondiegetic music by differing terms, soundscape’s notion of aural scenery is also reflected in the concept of *couleur locale*.^{55} By this rationale, all musical evocations of the eighteenth-century discussed in the previous chapter with regard to *Manon Lescaut*’s second act may also be understood as examples of soundscape.^{56} To recall Luca

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^{53} Schwartz, “Rough,” 229.


^{55} Of course, this concept is not limited to opera. Barbara Flueckiger uses the term *territory sound* within film studies to define sounds that identify a geographical, temporal, cultural, ethnic, or social location, the combination of which produces an ambience associated with a particular time and place (Barbara Flueckiger, “Strategies for Sound Effects in Film,” in *Sound and Music in Film and Visual Media: An Overview*, Graeme Harper, Ruth Doughty, and Jochen Eisentraut, eds. [New York: Continuum International Publishing, 2009], 169). And sociologist Henri Lefebvre discusses the creation of *representational space* through an effort to associate images and symbols with particular spaces to create the passive experience of a represented environment (Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, Donald Nicholson-Smith, trans. [Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1991], 33 and 39).

^{56} See Chapter 3, Section 3.3.1: “*Ave, sera gentile*”: Establishing a Hypothesis.
Zoppelli’s first category of diegetic music—denotation, effect, and *couleur locale*—he describes its “degree zero” function as “simply to define a situation or ambience.”\(^{57}\) Further refining that description, Carl Dahlhaus notes that local color evokes the sense of a place or its inhabitants through sonic properties, enriches the score without confusing the plot, and alleviates the tension between modernism and authenticity by appealing to both.\(^{58}\) As found in the previous chapter, diegetic music is not a required element of either *couleur locale* or soundscape. Composers can create aural representations of physical settings without resorting to fictionally composed music; however, melodies that originate within the very scene an opera aims to represent pose the most straightforward manifestation of its aural elements, requiring no further explanation beyond its own musical and dramatic logic. For that reason, an intimate connection exists between soundscape and diegetic music, although not an outright correlation.

Schwartz’s study of Puccini’s soundscapes reveals not only attentiveness to realism, but also an effort to blend realistic and musical sounds into a comprehensive whole. Especially typical of his scores are static moments that depict not only the location of a setting but also the hour. Commonly occurring at the opening to Act III, examples include the early dawn bells heard atop the Castel Sant’Angelo in *Tosca*, the

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\(^{58}\) Dahlhaus, 354.
distant shouts that reiterate the princess’s decree and her dawn deadline in Turandot, and the reawakening of Nagasaki in Madama Butterfly following the titular character’s nightlong vigil. Less temporally specific are the depiction of the barren desert in Act IV of Manon Lescaut, the gathering of the miners following the prelude to La fanciulla del West, and the assortment of dance themes in Act II of La rondine. In each of these instances, aural scenery becomes the central focus in the absence of stage action to propel the plot forward. Orchestral aspects rely upon coded metaphors, such as the slow, barely audible, and tonally ambiguous melody to represent the somber mood at the opening of Tosca’s third act. The meaning of real sounds, on the other hand, are directly accessible due to their real-world applications, such as Tosca’s bells. In the blending of the representative and the real, Puccini elevates these static moments of sonic scenery, extending the mere portrayal of a setting into a relationship with the characters who inhabit it. As a precursor to the central analysis of this chapter, a smaller example will serve as further elucidation of the concepts discussed here.

Set in the predawn hours of a frigid February morning at the Paris city gates known as the Barrière d’Enfer (the Gate of Hell), the opening moments of La bohème’s 59

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59 This notion derives from Fleuckiger’s discussion of film, where she indicates “there exists a different strategy in films with psychological depth where an abundance of territory sounds does not primarily characterize a geographical location, but rather a relation between the attitude of a character and his environment.” (Flueckiger, 171) And yet it must be pointed out that Puccini, who adhered to this filmic concept, predated film. This fact further supports Schwartz’s notion that Puccini’s soundscapes and the contemporary reaction to them are indicators that he was ahead of his time (Schwartz, “Rough,” 229).
Act III consist of three basic elements (Fig. 17). The first is the orchestra with a sparse texture of low tremolo strings, flutes in open fifths (Fig. 17, ‘a’), and a diatonic melody (Fig. 17, ‘b’) first heard in the harp. The second element consists of staged voices that center around the gate itself, consisting of a customs official and two groups of people—first street sweepers from Gentilly, then carters and milkwomen—requesting entrance into the city. Offstage voices constitute the third element with a group of rowdy revelers singing from inside the tavern that stands at the side of the stage. Among them, represented by the opening melody to “Quando me’n vo,” is Musetta, who teaches singing to travelers. Together, these three elements produce an aural picture of the pre-dawn setting, the downward contours of the delicate open fifths representing the gentle fall of snowflakes while the low tremolo that continues unabated through most of the scene suggests the discomfort and tension that comes along with the frigid temperatures. The voices provide context for the structures seen on the stage: onstage voices for the gate and offstage for the tavern. The latter of these also offers an occasion for diegetic music in the form of both Musetta’s waltz melody from Act II and the chorus’s drinking song, which adopts the harp melody from the orchestra. This moment that focuses on the scenery comes to an end with one last occurrence of the diatonic harp melody—now in pizzicato strings—before Mimi’s arrival, represented

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60 Sections 4.2.1 and 4.3.1 argue for a diegetic interpretation of “Quando me’n vo,” which is supported by its presence in this scene.
This and all subsequent formal diagrams may employ the following abbreviations as formal structures and space dictate: “Ant” (antecedent), “Cons” (consequent), “CBI” (compound basic idea), “bi” (basic idea), “٪” (repetition of the basic idea), “ci” (contrasting idea), “c/c” or “cont/cad” (continuation and cadence), “exp” expansion, and “ext” (extension). All isolated lower-case letters represent phrases or motives, as appropriate. Prime lower-case letters (e.g. a’) indicate variations on a previously established phrase or motive.
both by her physical entrance on stage and a hint of her “Mi chiamano Mimi” melody in the orchestra, which is altered enough to avoid a direct quotation of the Act I aria.

This passage of less than four minutes’ duration has garnered much attention from scholars. Several choose to characterize this music as “genre-picture” and “mood painting” to align Puccini’s effect here with visual art.\(^\text{62}\) Schwartz even labels this passage a “negative ekphrasis,” its intent to evoke the scene’s stillness rather than enlivening its action.\(^\text{63}\) Other authors latch onto the notion of winter, whether of the heart, spirit, or soul, one even invoking Shakespeare by noting this music as “the winter of the lovers’ discontent.”\(^\text{64}\) Yet others mention a general ambience or tinta, including Schwartz’s suggestion that the music evokes “tomb-like spaces.”\(^\text{65}\) Adjectival choices also align with winter; words like “cold,” “frozen,” and “bleak” frequent authors’ description of the music, as does the notion of “desolation.”\(^\text{66}\) In addition to Schwartz’s evocation of visual art through the idea of negative ekphrasis, Tim Carter similarly likens

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\(^\text{66}\) Ramsden, 51; Marek, 367; Carner, *Puccini*, 374; Osborne, 112; and Specht, 142.
the passage to an “almost Impressionist haze.” And multiple authors also evoke the fragility of ice through such words as glassy, brittle, and delicate.

Beyond this fascination with Puccini’s evocation of frigid temperatures and desolate landscapes through music, the orchestral element constitutes only part of the passage’s aural effect. In his discussion of this passage, Schwartz notes the features of the staged moment that cannot be found in the staves of the score, including unpitched shouts or calls, stamping feet, and the thump of glasses on a table. The published stage directions make reference to even more details that contribute to the overall effect of the soundscape, such as clinking glasses and laughter from within the tavern, and cracking whips and creaking wagons associated with the carters. Even the sung contributions within this scene at times veer away from music and toward speech by virtue of monotone lines that more closely resemble recitative than melody. The great specificity and detail found in the published stage directions indicate an overall sonic effect to be gleaned from the performance that owes its inception entirely to diegetic sounds produced on stage. Puccini shows special care in adding these elements of the soundscape during moments in which the musical texture is thinnest, thus allowing

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67 Schwartz, “Distance,” 168; and Carter, 235.
68 Specht, 142; Carner, Puccini, 374; and Ashbrook, Puccini, 63.
69 Schwartz, Soundscapes, 10–11.
71 Puccini, La bohème vocal score, 170–171.
other sounds to emerge and distinguish themselves even within its midst. The result is a blend of diegetic and nondiegetic that creates the totality of the scene’s soundscape, traditional musical metaphor and realistic everyday experience making equal and complementary contributions to the whole.

4.2 The Soundscape of Christmas Eve

Mosco Carner describes Puccini’s La bohème as “an incessant interplay of action, character, and atmosphere.”\(^7^2\) Nowhere is this better illustrated than Act II. Set in the bustling Latin Quarter of Paris on Christmas Eve, the act serves little dramatic purpose beyond introducing Musetta and her complex relationship with Marcello. With a festive trumpet fanfare, the curtain rises to vendors, shoppers, diners, and families crowding the stage, all contributing toward a frenetic image of one of the busiest days in one of the busiest cities. The four bohemian friends—now joined by Mimì—make various purchases before settling at a table outside the Café Momus. Although Musetta arrives with her current beau Alcindoro, it is quickly apparent that her far greater concern is for Marcello. After failing to garner his attention by her famous waltz, “Quando me’n vo’,” she contrives a broken shoe and demands that Alcindoro rush off to repair the artificial damage, leaving her free to reconcile with Marcello. The gaiety of this act contrasts not only the isolation and poverty of the Act I garret apartment, but also the icy desolation

\(^7^2\) Carner, Puccini, 371.
to come in Act III. Intricately woven into the texture of the act, the Latin Quarter soundscape emerges only little by little, constantly drawing the audience’s focus back and forth between the broad layout of the scene and the narrower action of the bohemian friends. It is a very different approach from the third act introductions in both this opera and Tosca, one that perfectly expresses both the frenetic nature of the setting and Carner’s observation of Puccini’s incessant interplay.

The act’s musico-dramatic structure divides into four broad sections (Fig. 18). The introduction not only establishes the fanfare melody that was briefly foreshadowed in the orchestra when Schaunard suggested a visit to the Latin Quarter (Act I, R16/mm1–31), but also positions the principal characters within the chaotic activity of the new setting. The central sections focus primarily on the principal characters and are divided into two by Musetta’s entrance. With the subsequent arrival of a military parade, the musical score is increasingly dominated by the tattoo melody that calls the city’s soldiers to retreat to their quarters for the evening. Figure 19 presents the distribution of vocal forces throughout the act, calculated as the percentage of each Rehearsal’s total measures in which solo versus choral voices participate.73 This perspective highlights the chorus’s dominance and gradual subsiding at the opening of the act, as well as the reverse effect at its close. The lower percentages of choral participation throughout the

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73 For the purposes of this chart, “Principal Characters” consists of Alcindoro, Colline, Marcello, Mimi, Musetta, Rodolfo, and Schaunard, while “Chorus” encompasses all other voices including the toy seller, Parpignol.
Figure 18: Formal diagram, *La Bohème*, Act II
two interior sections reflects the shift in focus to the principal characters, with the exception of a substantial spike at Rehearsals 12 and 13 to represent the commotion surrounding the arrival of the toy seller Parpignol. This view reveals Puccini’s careful balancing of choral and solo voices as one method of maneuvering the audience’s attention between atmospheric and narrative elements.

Analysis of this act centers upon three categories of music that contribute toward its soundscape, the first of which is quite familiar. The military tattoo’s diegetic status is obvious, supported not only within the libretto by many characters mentioning the sound of the parade, but also within the published stage directions of the vocal score, which indicate its entrance on stage, complete with a drum major who guides the soldiers across the stage (R32). Textual, musical, and dramatic features, however, reveal two additional possibilities for diegetic music: Musetta’s aria “Quando me’n vo’” and
Parpignol the toy seller’s song. Beyond arguing in favor of these passages as instances of fictionally composed music, this analysis also proposes a new type of diegetic music. Based upon J. L. Austin’s speech-act theory and the concept of performative utterance, this new category theorizes the importance of fictional repetition while also proposing realistic-diegetic as a rationale for diegetic-leaning nondiegetic music. Analysis concludes with an assessment of the scene’s nondiegetic themes that function as representational music to express the Latin Quarter setting, as well as an assessment of how these three categories create La bohème’s soundscape of Christmas.

4.2.1 Traditional Diegetic Music

As the clearest example of diegetic music, we begin with the military tattoo, whose arrival within the score marks a decisive shift in the course of the act. Following Musetta’s waltz and her ostentatious display designed to remove Alcindoro as an obstacle to her reunion with Marcello, the concertato based on Musetta’s waltz melody yields to the military music as the friends realize they lack the funds to pay their dining bill. The melody from “Quando me’n vo’” now relegated to piano orchestral timbres, the first hints of the approaching parade emerge with a polymetric effect that equates each measure of the new 2/4 meter to one beat of the former 3/4 meter (Ex. 27). Even more notable from an aural perspective, however, is the brief simultaneity of two disparate keys: the waltz’s E major and the tattoo’s B♭ major. While the approaching drums overlap the “Quando me’n vo’” melody by seven 3/4 beats (i.e. fourteen 2/4 beats) the
Example 27: Poly-meter and -tonality in transition to the military tattoo, *La bohème*, Act II, R26/m9–R27/m18

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The tattoo’s pitched content only does so by two 3/4 beats (Ex. 27, circled). Furthermore, the waltz lingers only in octave violins on a stepwise arch that rapidly fades to silence, the former music thus quickly releasing its hold on the audience’s ear as the military tattoo comes to the fore. While the score appears to suggest a clash of tonalities during this transition, its effect is subdued by its brevity as well as the overriding sense of turning...

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74 In Rehearsal 26, measure numbers refer to 3/4 meter; in Rehearsal 27, they shift to 2/4 meter. This example is adapted from Giacomo Puccini, *La Bohème*, full score, (New York: Dover Publications, 1987), 219–220. Translation: “(So)...soon? Who has asked for it [the bill]? Let’s see! Expensive! Out with the money! Colline, Rodolfo, and you, Marcello?”
one’s attention away from the principals and their E major to the parade and its new B♭
key. For this reason, the first several beats of the tattoo overlapping with the waltz does
not quite achieve polytonality, but rather a multifocal moment.

Based on a French march, the parade music’s diegetic status is conclusively
supported through both musical and dramatic means. The tattoo melody presents a
clear period with half and perfect authentic cadences, although its dimensions are a little
unusual (Ex. 28). While the antecedent and consequent phrases split evenly, their
subphrase structures expose the asymmetry caused by repetitions within the contrasting
idea of the antecedent and the basic idea of the consequent. Removing the expansions
marked in Example 28 reveals normalized eight-measure phrases to confirm the tattoo’s
tight-knit form and support its diegetic status. In terms of the drama, principal and
choral voices initially have little to do with the military melody scored for four piccolos,
six trumpets, and six drums. Instead, the music serves as the tonal foundation for the
foregrounded action of the principal characters dealing with their bills while the crowd
is focused on the approaching tattoo. As the parade draws nearer and its aural presence
grows, attention turns fully toward the military spectacle until the final iteration of the
tattoo melody features the crowd singing along in tribute to the drum major.

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75 Julian Budden, *Puccini: His Life and Works* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 170; and
76 On the origin of the tattoo melody, see Carner, *Puccini*, 373.
77 Eccolo là! Il bel tambur maggior! La canna d’or, tutto splendor! Che guarda, passa, va! Tutto splendor! Di
Francia è il più bell’uom! Il bel tambur maggior! Eccolo là! Che guarda, passa, va! (Translation: “There he is! The
Example 28: Classical form and phrase expansions in the military tattoo, *La bohème*, Act II, R27/m9–R28/m1

A group of friends join the singing, however, they fit their own words to the melody in praise of Musetta and the Latin Quarter. Both the crowd’s and the principals’ words, while fitting the rhythm and pitch of the tattoo, present some conflict in terms of their own diegetic status. The bohemians’ praise of Musetta reflects their current circumstances and therefore suggests a nondiegetic affiliation. The crowd’s text, on the other hand, may be interpreted as spontaneous and therefore nondiegetic, but the words could also derive from a common and repeated association with the tattoo melody and beautiful drum major! The baton of gold, all splendor! Who looks, passes, goes on! He is the most handsome man of France! The beautiful drum major! There he is! Who looks, passes, goes on!”

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78 *Viva Musetta! Cuor biricchin. Gloria ed onor, onor e gloria del quartier latin!* (Translation: “Long live Musetta! Of the roguish heart! Glory and honor, honor and glory to the Latin Quarter!”)
thereby incline toward a diegetic orientation. Either way, the diegetic status of the music itself is undeniable.

While text presents a stumbling block to the diegetic status of the military music, it poses the opposite effect when it comes to Musetta’s waltz. “Quando me’n vo’” is not commonly regarded as a diegetic song and with good reason. The aria’s text exposes none of the usual markers for diegetic music and in fact firmly asserts a nondiegetic status through its description of events, its first- and second-person pronouns that indicate interpersonal conversation, and its use of mundane rather than poetic language. As is often the case with Puccini, however, other characters intrude upon the solo aria, providing commentary or action peripheral to the central musical focus. Alcindoro provides one such comment with “Quel canto scurrile mi muove la bile!” (That scurrilous song sickens me!). This explicit reference alone is sufficient to declare the aria diegetic to some extent; however, his grumbling also suggests a level of familiarity, as though this is a song he has heard before. Perhaps this is the same melody with which Musetta once seduced him, or maybe she routinely uses it to manipulate him into seeing things her way by reminding him how easily she could replace him with another admirer. Since the libretto offers no further explanation, actors and audiences are free to speculate on the precise meaning of Alcindoro’s complaint and apply any interpretation

79 Section 4.2.2 (p. 327) further explores the notion of repetition supporting a diegetic interpretation.
they wish. The salient point for our current purposes, however, is that familiarity suggests repeated hearings, which in turn means repeated performances, and thereby implies diegetic music. While perhaps not composed in the same manner as the military tattoo, the history of repetition implied by Alcindoro’s peevish comment nevertheless conveys a degree of compositional intent upon Musetta in creating and repeatedly performing the song.\textsuperscript{80}

While a single interjection provides an unstable foundation for a diegetic interpretation, further evidence arises in both the libretto and the score to confirm the initial supposition. As mentioned already, the same waltz melody returns in the Act III introduction as part of the mid-winter soundscape, heard from offstage within the tavern where both Marcello and Musetta are then employed (Act III, R3/mm18–30). Not only does the melody signify Musetta’s presence inside the tavern, but it also confirms the supposition that her performance of this melody is a recurring feature in her life. Back in Act II, the aria’s clear formal structure also provides evidence of its diegetic status (Fig. 20). The aria’s rounded ABA form is reflected in its tonal structure, melodic content, and tight-knit themes, all of which change in the contrasting middle section. Constructed entirely of eight-measure segments, those in the B section form two complete Hybrid 4 themes and combine to create a sixteen-measure period, while the

\textsuperscript{80} Further discussion of this aria—including all associated text—appears in Section 4.3.1.
Figure 20: Formal diagram, “Quando me’n vo,” *La bohème*, Act II, R20/m23–R23/m15
two A section segments each function as the antecedent or consequent phrase of a single period.\textsuperscript{81} Subphrase ideas in both sections create asymmetric structures, the A sections requiring nearly a full-measure anacrusis to identify the contrasting ideas (Ex. 29a) while the B section phrases feature eight-beat basic ideas against four-beat contrasting ideas (Ex. 29b). The fluid temporality that is a hallmark of Puccini’s vocal style—including liberal use of ritardando, rallentando, and allargando tempo markings—balances these lopsided elements by lengthening the performance time of the shorter segments. Ultimately, “Quando me’n vo’” exhibits a sense of equilibrium and predictability that yields a fine example of tight-knit Classical form within its Romantic idiom.

The last example of traditional diegetic music from this act centers on the character of Parpignol even though he does not sing his own song. Instead, it is the children who enthusiastically and rambunctiously proclaim the melody built on repetitions of two-measure motives, completed with an exuberant introduction and a tonic-prolonging coda (Ex. 30).\textsuperscript{82} Brief conversations between the principal characters follow, then an interlude from the children’s mothers before Parpignol’s song repeats in the orchestra, altered by a different introduction and with the children joining in on the


\textsuperscript{82} The two-measure ‘a’ motive and eight -measure phrase length make it tempting to interpolate a sentential structure for the eight-measure phrase, but the inconclusiveness of the cadence as well as the ‘b’ motive’s dual attempts to cadence undermine such a reading by eliminating the continuation function of the sentence. The formal deficiencies inherent in such a reading are consistent with the interpretation of Parpignol’s song as diegetic music, his amateur status as a musician rationalizing the absence of clear sentential structure and an authentic cadence.
Example 29: Tight-knit themes in “Quando me’n vo,” La bohème, Act II

a. Sixteen-measure period, A section, R21/mm1–15

Translation: “When I go alone on the street, people stop and look, and they seek all my beauty from head to foot.”

b. Eight-measure Hybrid 4, B section, R21/mm17–23

Translation: “And then I savor the subtle desire that breathes forth from their eyes, which know how to appreciate the hidden beauties of my obvious charms.”

83 Translation: “When I go alone on the street, people stop and look, and they seek all my beauty from head to foot.”

84 Translation: “And then I savor the subtle desire that breathes forth from their eyes, which know how to appreciate the hidden beauties of my obvious charms.”
Example 30: Motivic repetition in Parpignol’s jingle, *La bohème*, Act II, R12/mm3–20

latter half of the melody (R14). The quick, jaunty tune ends on the tonic F (Ex. 30, R12/m14), but the accompaniment—which primarily doubles the voices—provides insufficient evidence to claim an authentic cadence. The preceding repetition features off-beat chords that hint toward a V7-I progression despite 3 in the melody (Ex. 30, R12/mm11–12), but the concluding version precludes a potential authentic cadence with

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85 Translation: “Parpignol! Here is Parpignol! With the flowered cart! Here is Parpignol! I want the trumpet, the horsey, the drum, the tambourine, I want the cannon, I want the whip, the troop of toy soldiers.”
the addition of grace notes on C and E to form \(\text{iii}^6\) (Ex. 30, R12/m13). Regardless, the omission of the retardation from A to F in measure 12 from the concluding repetition at measure 14 provides the sense of closure that suggests a complete phrase. The coda then prolongs the tonic F major through parallel triads that step down to the dominant then return to the tonic twice (Ex. 30, R12/mm14–19), although the inclusion of B\(^\flat\) in these triads suggests a dominant tonicization that is not supported by the structural harmonies.

In spite of a few harmonic peculiarities that undermine a strictly Classical reading, Parpignol’s music is simple, straightforward, catchy, and memorable, just like an advertising jingle. Reading the music this way, its structure fulfills objectives common to any vendor: an introduction that both announces his presence and promotes name-recognition through repetition (Ex. 30, R12/mm3–5), a jaunty tune that further reiterates his name and provides information regarding how to locate him within the crowd (Ex. 30, R12/mm8–10), and a coda that specifies some of his goods for sale (Ex. 30, R12/mm14–20). Unlike modern marketing jingles that reach potential buyers through television and radio, Parpignol’s advertising strategy would rely on his own voice to build his customer base, and we can imagine he has spent many a day wandering the streets of Paris, pushing his flowered cart ahead of him while singing his song. This supposition also explains why Parpignol does not sing his own jingle in this instance. After all, why should he expend the effort himself when the children will happily do it
for him and to greater effect due to their intimate relationship with those who have money to spend (i.e. parents)? The first-person grammar in the jingle’s coda presents a challenge to this interpretation, suggesting the music in fact belongs to the children requesting the toys, rather than the vendor selling them (Ex. 30, R12/mm14–20). Two possible resolutions to this enigma are that Parpignol deliberately chose these words as a marketing gimmick to not only inform customers of what he sells but also implant the idea that this is what they want, or that the children themselves have adjusted Parpignol’s original text to express their own desires. Either way, the effect of Parpignol’s jingle is made clear when the mothers, who only moments ago had been scolding their children for running off to see the toys, relent and purchase those very toys.86 We may not witness the creation of Parpignol’s marketing strategy in this staged instance, but we definitely witness its effects.

4.2.2 Realistic-Diegetic Music

The traditional diegetic passages discussed above reflect varying positions along the diegetic spectrum, ranging from the military tattoo that presents the clearest example of the three, to Parpignol’s song interpreted as a marketing jingle. On the other end of the spectrum lie three clearly nondiegetic passages: the solo episode in the

86 The published stage direction prior to the jingle’s second iteration at Rehearsal 14 reads, “Le mamme, intenerite, si decidono a comperare da Parpignol” (The mothers, moved [by the children’s weeping], decide to buy from Parpignol). (Puccini, La bohème vocal score, 109.) The mothers’ scolding is discussed below in Section 4.2.2.
introductory section that shows the four friends plus Mimi within the crowded scene before they gather at Café Momus (R4/m13–R7/m24), and a pair of ariettas for Rodolfo ("Questa è Mimi," R10) and Mimi ("Una cuffietta a pizzi," R15) that introduce their relationship to the other three friends prior to Musetta’s arrival. Figure 21 positions these passages within the diegetic spectrum. To this point, analysis has focused upon passages whose musical features support a diegetic reading of its textual and dramatic context; that is, diegetic music whose textual, musical, and/or dramatic features weaken its status and cause it to lean toward the middle of the spectrum due to the presence of nondiegetic factors. Now, in order to further expand our understanding of the Latin Quarter soundscape, we must consider the opposite: music whose nondiegetic status leans toward the middle due to the presence of some diegetic factors, represented by the question mark in Figure 21. The passages under consideration here lack the conscious compositional effort of a fictional composer that defines diegetic music but nevertheless pose some measure of diegetic musicality, what I call realistic-diegetic music.

The best example of realistic-diegetic music, and the reason why it is especially

87 The solo episode relies primarily upon the orchestra for its formal structure while the voices alternate between recitative textures and doubling fragments from the orchestral melody. Familiar ABA structures guide both the solo episode and Mimi’s arietta without resorting to tight-knit themes. Of the two, the arietta is more complex with ABA reflected at multiple structural levels. Rodolfo’s arietta, on the other hand, employs a traditional recitative/aria dichotomy to achieve its familiar dimensions without periodic or sentential structures. Since the text, music, and drama for each of these passages clearly reflect their nondiegetic context, further explanation of these forms is omitted here in deference to my continued focus upon diegetic music.

88 See Section 2.1.2 for a discussion of Cone’s theory, and Section 2.3.1 for clarification of how my approach to diegetic music differs from it.
important to consider in the context of *La bohème*’s second act, is the vendor’s calls that both open and reappear throughout much of the act. Example 31 provides some of these calls that advertise goods for sale, which includes everything a last-minute Christmas shopper could need. Although many of these cries are lost in the aural shuffle of the various other activities within this scene—including excited children, adults complaining about the crush of people, and diners calling impatiently for waiters at the Café Momus—the relationship between pitch and rhythm in relation to syllabic stress in each of these cries demonstrates the care with which Puccini set these vendors’ hawking cries to the language of music. Nowadays relegated to the visual dimension with text that flashes and scrolls boldly across our computer and television screens, the shouts of these vendors remind us of a time when the power of their voices posed a vendor’s primary means of attracting attention and making a sale. Such street cries were an integral part of Paris’s soundscape throughout the nineteenth century, although its slow
Example 31: Assorted vendors’ calls, La bohème, Act II

a. Venditori, R1/mm1–15\textsuperscript{89}

\begin{align*}
\text{(1)}
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
A-ran-ci, \ dat-ter! \ Caldi \ i \ marroni. \ Nin-noli, \ croci. \ Torro-ni. \ Pan-na \ mon-ta-ta.
\end{align*}

b. Venditori e un venditore ambulante, R4/mm23–27\textsuperscript{90}

\begin{align*}
\text{(2)}
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
\text{Dat-te-ri!} \ Tro-le! \ Marcello: \ Fac-ciamo \ in-sie-me \ fac-ciamo \ a \ vendere \ e \ a \ comprare! \ Prugne \ di \ Tours!
\end{align*}

c. Alcune venditrici, R5/mm1–4\textsuperscript{91}

\begin{align*}
\text{(5)}
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
\text{Nin-no-li, spi-
\text{let-te!} \ Dat-te-ri \ e \ ca-ra-mel-le!} \ \text{Fi-o-ri \ alle \ bel-le!}
\end{align*}

d. Parpignol, R9/mm6–8\textsuperscript{92}

\begin{align*}
\text{(8)}
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
\text{Ec-co \ i \ gio-cat-to-li \ di \ Par-pignol!}
\end{align*}

The decline beginning in the 1830s following France’s Industrial Revolution.\textsuperscript{93} Whether or not Puccini included the vendors’ shouts in La bohème as an expression of nostalgia for a

\textsuperscript{89} Translation: “Oranges, dates! Hot chestnuts. Trinkets, crosses. Nougats. Whipped cream.”

\textsuperscript{90} Translation: “Dates! Trout! Plums from Tours! [Marcello: Let’s play together, let’s play at selling and buying!] Plums from Tours!”

\textsuperscript{91} Translation: “Trinkets, brooches! Dates and candies! [Children: Ah!] Flowers for the beauties!”

\textsuperscript{92} Translation: “Here are Parpignol’s toys!”


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slowly dying practice, they pose a prominent feature that ties the aural experience of the opera to its corresponding reality. They are not \textit{music}, exactly—not consciously composed with the intent of producing a musical work—but they contain a realistic musicality that is inseparable from the aural experience of the major European city.

Puccini was neither the first nor the last to incorporate street cries into an aural depiction of a crowded public scene. Michele Girardi posits the opening of Act IV of Bizet’s \textit{Carmen} as a model for Puccini’s depiction of the Latin Quarter, although Puccini’s depiction is more diverse with his addition of consumers, children, and principal characters to the vendors to create the chaotic scene.\footnote{Girardi, 126–127.} Julian Budden also draws a correlation between Puccini’s Paris scene and Igor Stravinsky’s depiction of a Shrovetide fair in his 1911 ballet, \textit{Petrushka}, noting that the vendor’s cries in both works include a prominent perfect fourth interval.\footnote{Budden, \textit{Puccini}, 166. Edward Greenfield also notes the similarities between Stravinsky’s Shrovetide Fair and Puccini’s Latin Quarter (Howard Greenfeld, \textit{Puccini} [New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1980], 188).} Whether or not Bizet inspired Puccini or either inspired Stravinsky, all three composers produce a musical representation of a specific performative utterance. Popularized by A. L. Austin’s \textit{How to Do Things With Words}, performatives—in direct contrast to constantives—cannot be qualified as true or false and moreover accomplish an action through their very utterance.\footnote{J. L. Austin, \textit{How to Do Things With Words}, 2nd ed., ed. J. O. Urmson and Marina Sbisà (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), 5.} For a performative to be deemed successful—or, in Austin’s language, “felicitous”—it must
occur in a proper social context with the proper persons, follow an established
procedure correctly and completely, and reflect the sincere intent of the person uttering
the pertinent words.\textsuperscript{97} For Puccini’s vendors, all the required criteria are present,
including vendors and consumers within a shopping district engaged in the social
contract of selling and buying. When they call out “Oranges, dates, roasted chestnuts,”
rather than merely describing things they see, they are locating themselves within the
crowd, announcing their wares available for sale, inviting buyers to peruse their
products, and promising to engage in the sale of goods. None of this is stated explicitly,
but the environment provides the necessary social context for the vendors’ meaning to
be understood.\textsuperscript{98}

Through Austin’s very terminology of \textit{performative}, speech acts imply a
correlation with diegetic music. Just like newsboys of a bygone era who cry out from the
street corner, the vendors’ shouts are not consciously composed as music but they
nevertheless exhibit qualities of pitch and rhythm that make them readily adaptable to
musical notation (Ex. 32). Aimée Boutin reinforces this connection between street cries
and music when she notes that the products and services provided by a particular

\textsuperscript{97} Austin, 14–15.
\textsuperscript{98} Actually, by Austin’s rationale, the vendors’ cries would constitute an infelicitous or void utterance
since the staged portrayal precludes its sincerity. The vendors on stage actually have no goods for sale and
could not fulfill the promise their words imply were members of the audience to appear before them
requesting oranges in exchange for currency. Of course, audience members are also engaged in the social
context of a performance and therefore recognize and accept the implied insincerity of everything they
observe, which makes the notion of someone mounting the stage and expecting to purchase oranges absurd.
Example 32: Musical rendering of newsboy’s cry

![Musical notation for newsboy's cry](image)

A vendor could be identified by the distinctive words and tune of his or her cry. While a vendor’s cry fails the minimum criteria to qualify as diegetic music, however, the infinite gradations permitted by the diegetic spectrum mean we can recognize and account for the diegetic features within its nondiegetic representation. On the other hand, it would be foolish to suggest any performative utterance within an operatic setting must necessarily connote some measure of diegetic music. For example, Rodolfo’s arietta “Questa è Mimi” opens with just such a performative utterance that introduces his new companion rather than merely describes her presence at his side, and yet is firmly fixed textually, musically, and dramatically as nondiegetic. How, then, might we reconcile the suggestion of a diegetic status with performative utterance? The answer lies with repetition. Since Rodolfo only met Mimi prior to his arrival in the Latin Quarter and she is meeting his friends for the first time, we may safely assume we

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99 Boutin, 35.

100 To be accurate, some elements of the arietta’s text suggest a poetic bent that could imply diegetic music (“Dal mio cervel sbocciano i canti, dalle sue dita sbocciano i fior, dall’anime esultanti sboccia l’amor!” From my brain blossom the songs, from her fingers blossom the flowers, from exultant souls blossoms love!), but its presence is fully explained by Rodolfo’s introduction of Mimi as a source of inspiration for his poetic muse. Just as Edmondo in Manon Lescaut could be excused for employing more poetic language in his nondiegetic text given his predilection for composing songs (see Section 3.1.2), Rodolfo’s identity as a poet explains the fanciful imagery and parallelism in his text better than a diegetic interpretation, given the absence of any other supporting factors.
observe the first time Rodolfo has ever introduced Mimì in this manner, which therefore reinforces the notion that his arietta is nondiegetic. If, however, he continues to use the same text and melody to introduce Mimi in future situations, such repetition causes the introduction to acquire a greater degree of diegetic status even though it was not originally conceived as a song. Furthermore, he might refine either the words or the melody of his introduction as time goes on, thereby applying some measure of conscious compositional effort to the music after the fact. Finally, if others—Mimì, for example—repeatedly hear the same introduction, they could anticipate and recognize the consistent unification of text, pitch, and rhythm that constitutes Rodolfo’s introduction of Mimì and therefore recognize it as music. By this process, nondiegetic music acquires diegetic inflections over time, which in turn leads to the following equation:

\[
p\text{performative utterance} + \text{habitual repetition} = \text{realistic-diegetic music}
\]

All the vendors’ calls shown in Example 31 pose examples of realistic-diegetic music since all are performative utterances that are habitually repeated. The equation that these examples fulfill, however, can also be realized in longer segments of music. Looking back at the preceding discussion of “Quando me’n vo’” and the interpretation of Alcindoro’s objection to Musetta’s song as an indication of its repetitive presence in her life, we can now apply Austin’s concept to recognize that her aria also constitutes a performative utterance. In fact, through the preceding description of how Rodolfo’s “Questa è Mimì” could evolve from its clearly nondiegetic status as presented in Act II
of the opera to a realistic-diegetic status in the future, we can also gain a clearer understanding of how “Quando me’n vo’” could have achieved the same transformation. Unlike the vendors’ cries, however, the implied seduction and manipulation that undergirds Musetta’s words reveal an infelicitous performative since both these objectives suggest some measure of insincerity. Furthermore, Alcindoro’s concern for what observers will think of her scurrilous song highlights its inappropriateness to the context in which Musetta performs it. While the aria employs the same equation that connects performative utterance with habitual repetition to identify realistic-diegetic music, Alcindoro’s description of her act as a song and its use of Classical tight-knit forms moves it along the spectrum onto the diegetic side. The mothers’ scolding of their children in the wake of Parpignol’s arrival, however, poses another example of realistic-diegetic music but without the benefit of an explicit textual reference (Ex. 33). In this case, the performative utterance is felicitous since both the context and the individuals involved are entirely appropriate to the action, and the act of scolding is performed both correctly and completely. As for its habitual repetition, who among us never heard some variation of “Go to your room!” or “Wait until your father

101 Peter Kaminsky likewise uses speech-act theory to support an analysis of Mozart’s Don Giovanni that suggests the eponymous character indeed adopts Donna Elvira’s musical style in “Ah taci inguisto core” as a means toward her seduction but also mutilates it in accordance with the linguistic abuse he commits through the insincerity of his performative utterance. (Peter Kaminsky, “How to Do Things With Words and Music: Towards an Analysis of Selected Ensembles in Mozart’s Don Giovanni,” Theory and Practice 21 [1996]: 68–73.)
Example 33: Parallel phrases in mothers’ scolding, *La bohème*, Act II, R13/mm2–25

gets home!” during our childhoods? The sole factor in its textual and dramatic presentation that challenges a realistic-diegetic interpretation of the mothers’ scolding is that they all employ the same utterance at the same time. While we can point toward the operatic environment and the ways in which its inhabitants differ from reality as we did

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102 Translation: “Ah! Bunch of devilish rascals, what are you coming to this place for? Home! To bed! Off, nasty brawlers, the slaps you get will be too few for the way you’re behaving! [One boy: I want the trumpet, the little horse!]”
in Chapter 2, we can also turn to the music in search of further evidence to support its realistic-diegetic status.

Like Parpignol’s jingle that both precedes and follows it, the mothers’ scolding poses some challenges in applying Classical tight-knit structures. While the melody clearly divides into two parallel phrases (Ex. 33, R13/mm2–9 and 9–22), the harmonies do not contribute toward that impression. IAC’s are implied by the IV-V-I progressions (Ex. 33, R13/mm7–9 and 15–17), but their clarity is undermined by the added 3 in the melody during the dominant chord and its resolution to a first-inversion tonic. Additionally, the identical harmonic presentations thwart the expectation for a weak-strong configuration of cadences in a period, but the melodic structure does not support a pair of sentential structures either. The only possible salvation for a tight-knit theme is the melodic extension of the tonic chord (on “questo loco,” R13/mm9–10) that is shortened to one beat (on “poco,” R13/m17) then immediately repeated twice, suggesting a slightly more emphatic IAC than the first and therefore a possible period. However, although such an analysis implies that the mothers’ scolding concludes with a coda that reaffirms the local D major, the music does not achieve that objective (R13/mm17–23). Instead, the melody suspends on a curious half-diminished chord that reveals itself after a couple measures as a modally mixed predominant to a half cadence (Ex. 33, R13/mm22–25). Despite the absence of a clear Classical form, the parallel melodic structure provides sufficient support in this case since the objective is only to
move this passage further along the diegetic spectrum, rather than to argue in favor of a
diegetic status. If we assume the same trajectory as “Quando me’n vo’” for the mothers’
scolding from a first-time nondiegetic performative utterance to habitual repetition, then
the mothers’ music can miss the Classical mark since their status as a fictional composer
is more accidental than intentional. For now, though, the music’s parallel melodic form
is enough to at least minimally support this passage as realistic-diegetic.

Throughout this study I have worked from the premise that diegetic music is
defined as having two composers: one fictional and one real. Furthermore, I have
stipulated that diegetic music reflects a conscious compositional effort on the part of the
fictional composer. While the notion of realistic-diegetic music does relax these
foundational premises somewhat, the objective is not to broaden our understanding of
diegetic music but rather of nondiegetic music. From the start, differentiating between
strong and weak diegetic statuses has been emphasized through the textual and musical
markers proposed in Chapter 3. The new designation of realistic-diegetic now allows us
to differentiate between strong and weak nondiegetic statuses, thus filling in the full
diegetic spectrum. Figure 22 provides a revision of the diagram that appears at the
beginning of this discussion (Fig. 21), both adding the relative positions of the mothers’
scolding music and the vendors’ calls, and labeling ranges of values along the spectrum.
While it may seem odd to allocate any sort of diegetic label to the nondiegetic half of the
figure, doing so acknowledges that even a small argument in favor of a diegetic status is enough to shift a passage of music to the right.

**Figure 22: La bohème Act II passages on the diegetic spectrum, reworked**

![Diegetic Spectrum Diagram]

4.2.3 Assembling the Pieces

Figure 23 provides a recounting of the full act, now with the different types of music marked. Nondiegetic passages are left blank and clearly dominate the scene. All diegetic passages—whether traditional or realistic—are shaded, with the exception of the vendors’ cries since they are not restricted to a specific formal structure. Instead, they sound throughout the first two sections, but especially during the introductory fanfare and interspersed throughout the solo episode.\(^{103}\) What remains, then, are the patterned areas, which have yet to be accounted for. In the introductory section, this equates exclusively with the opening trumpet fanfare. First heard during the Act I in

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\(^{103}\) Choral voices identified as various types of vendors do appear in the latter two sections, but no longer calling out their goods for sale. Instead, their text focuses on the scene’s broad subjects: Musetta and the parade.
Figure 23: Formal diagram with diegetic and representational passages, *La bohème*, Act II
muted timbres when Schaunard proposes a visit to the Latin Quarter (Act I, R16/mm1–31), the fanfare reaches its full force here to evoke the joy of the scene and its holiday setting (Ex. 34). Trumpets announce the Latin Quarter with parallel triads in an undulating contour that elides with the vendors’ first cries before the fanfare repeats in the strings. An abrupt E♭ interrupts the F major key to sound the fanfare a third time in A♭ major (R3/mm1–17) before subsiding for the rest of the introductory section until one last iteration back in F major—now in muted trumpets—to close the section (R7/mm9–24). The fanfare’s prominence at the opening of the scene as well as its Act I foreshadowing clearly establish its representational function that correlates with the festive atmosphere throughout the act.

Example 34: Trumpet fanfare, *La bohème*, Act II, R0/m1–R1/m1

![Example 34: Trumpet fanfare, *La bohème*, Act II, R0/m1–R1/m1](image)

The only other passage of representational music occurs between the first and second iteration of the military tattoo in the act’s concluding section (Ex. 35). Here, rather than sharing its aural space with the realistic-diegetic cries of the vendors as in the introductory section, the representational music is intertwined with nondiegetic passages in which Musetta schemes for Alcindoro to pay both hers and the friends’
Example 35: Finale of the Latin Quarter scene, *La bohème*, Act II, R28/m1–R32m1

(28)

Musetta: Il mio con - to da - te a me.

Children: S’av - vi - ci - nan per di qual?

Chorus: No! di là!

**Transition from tattoo**

**Parpignol fanfare**

**Translation**

Children: Are they [the parade] coming closer along here?
Chorus: No! From there!
Musetta: Give my bill to me.

(29)

Chorus: Vien di qua!

Children: S’av - vi - ci - nan per di qual?

No! vien di là!

**Musetta’s theme**  **Parpignol fanfare**

**Translation**

Children: Are they coming closer along here?
Chorus: It’s coming from here!
Children: It’s coming from there!

Musetta: Pre-sto som-ma-te quello con questo!

Children: Vo - glo ve - der! Vo - glo sen - tir!

Musetta: Be - ne!

**Translation**

Musetta: Very well!
Chorus: Make way! Make way!
Children: I want to see! I want to hear!
Musetta: Quickly add up this [bill] with that [one]!

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104 The upper staff of this example presents all vocal elements; the lower staff all orchestral elements.
Musetta: Paga il signor che stava qui con...

Children: Mamma, voglio vedere! Papa, voglio sentir!
Mothers: Lisetta, vuoi ta cer? Tonio, vuoi finir!

Parpignol’s jingle

Translation
Children: Mama, I want to see! Papa, I want to hear!
Mothers: Lisetta, will you be quiet! Tonio, will you stop!
Musetta: The gentleman who was with me will pay!

(Musetta) me!

Bohemians: Paga il signor!

Chorus: S’avvicina qui! Si di qua!

Colline: Paga il signor!

Parpignol fanfare

transition to new material

Translation
Bohemians: The gentleman will pay!
Children: I want to see the retreat!
Mothers: Will you be quiet, will you stop it?
Chorus: They are coming closer along here! Yes, along here!
Children: As soon as the parade arrives, we’ll follow at its pace!
Colline: The gentleman will pay!

(Children) -re mo al pas - so!

Musetta: E dove s’è seduto ri-

Schaunard: Paga il signor!

Chorus: In quel rullo tu senti la

new material

Translation
Schaunard & Marcello: The gentleman will pay!
Musetta: And where he’d been sitting may he find her farewell!
Chorus: In that drumroll you feel the nation’s majesty!
Translation
Bohemians: And where he’d been sitting may he find her farewell!

Translation
Children: Ohé! At-ten-ti, ch-o-co-li qua!
Chorus: Lat-go, lat-go, (31)

Translation
Children: Hey! Watch, here they are!
Chorus: Make way! Make way, here they are!
Marcello & Colline: Here comes the retreat!

Translation
Children & Chorus: Line up!
Marcello & Colline: The old man shouldn’t see us running away with his prey!
Bohemians: Here comes the retreat!
Marcello, Schaunard & Colline: Let’s hide in that packed crowd.
dining bills and the crowd eagerly anticipates the parade’s arrival. Other than transitional material and a single new phrase, none of the music throughout this section is new. Instead, this passage functions like a development, hinting toward various keys without committing to any while assembling established motives and themes to provide a tidy summation of the Latin Quarter soundscape. A two-measure fragment extended by two quick and emphatic IACs evokes two prominent elements of the scene at once (Ex. 35, R28/mm4–8). Although the repeated sixteenth notes mark this fragment as deriving from the tonic prolongation that concludes Parpignol’s jingle (Ex. 30, R12/mm14–16), its contour and parallel triads also match the first four measures of the opening fanfare (Ex. 34, R0/mm1–4). As though to clarify Parpignol’s position as a prominent aural component of the scenic finale, the jingle’s opening I-vi-I progression also appears in a sequential treatment along with its introductory scale (Ex. 35, R29/mm8–13) before yielding once more to the fanfare motive and its forceful IACs. The sole new melody in this passage of music highlights the act’s third crucial element: Musetta. Her incongruously legato line that voices her intention to relieve the absent Alcindoro of both her company and a portion of his money is repeated by the four bohemians prior to one last iteration of the Parpignol fanfare, which extends to the return of the military tattoo (Ex. 35, R30/mm6–18). In addition to initiating the passage’s only new melody, Musetta’s theme appears in alternation with the Parpignol fanfare.
Established earlier in this act along with her entrance on stage (R16/mm1–7), the light, skipping theme appears twice in this closing passage: first in a brief motive between statements of the Parpignol fanfare (Ex. 35, R28/mm8–10), then in an extended version that prepares Parpignol’s primary melody (Ex. 35, R29/mm1–6).\textsuperscript{105}

Rather than merely filling time between the first two iterations of the military tattoo, this passage of music with its mosaic of themes and motives highlights not only significant contributions to the scene, but also the soundscape’s central role within the act. With its close association to the Latin Quarter and its festive Christmas Eve atmosphere, the rationale behind the fanfare’s presence is obvious. After all, no summary of the act’s aural effect could possibly be complete without it. Parpignol, on the other hand, seems a little odd considering his relatively small role within the act; however, the toy seller is also the only named vendor and the only one to receive a fully realized melody to associate with his trade. For these reasons, he becomes an ideal representative not only of the vendors as diegetic characters, but also of their contribution toward the scene’s soundscape. In this light, Parpignol’s motives lose their original diegetic status and instead acquire a representational function within this passage. As for Musetta, the presence of her theme in this summarizing passage draws attention not only to her current role in rescuing the bohemians from the threat of an

\textsuperscript{105} The melody’s association with Musetta is later confirmed in both remaining acts when it accompanies her offstage laughter (Act III, R25/mm1–8) and when Mimi’s comments upon Musetta’s goodness to Marcello (Act IV, R17/mm1–9).
unpaid bill, but also to her position within the scene as a whole. Act II is, after all, Musetta’s act, encompassing her theatrical entrance, her only solo aria, her reconciliation with Marcello, and her triumphant exit carried by him and Colline. Nowhere else does the dramatic or musical spotlight shine on her quite so directly. More than that, though, her carefree exuberance and lighthearted joy perfectly encapsulate the setting’s festive mood, making both her and her theme ideal representatives of the act.

With the addition of these representational passages to both traditional and realistic-diegetic moments, La bohème’s Christmas soundscape is complete. The nondiegetic stretches, while certainly significant contributors to the scene’s overall sound, make no impact upon the aural representation of its Latin Quarter setting and instead focus upon advancing the characters and relationships that drive the opera’s plot. Table 12 summarizes the elements that contribute toward the soundscape, listed in order of diminishing narrative clarity. Traditional diegetic music, with its conscious effort by a fictional composer to create a musical work, pose the most direct contributors toward the Latin Quarter soundscape since these constitute melodies that the fictional denizens also hear and recognize as music. Realistic-diegetic music also poses a direct contribution to characters’ aural experience of the space, though perhaps without recognizing its latent fictionally musical qualities. Of the three, only representational music is entirely nondiegetic, reflecting no contribution of a fictional composer and never heard by fictional characters at all, regardless of whether or not they recognize the
Table 12: Soundscape components, *La bohème*, Act II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Musical Category</th>
<th>Passages</th>
<th>First Occurrence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Diegetic</td>
<td>military tattoo</td>
<td>R27/m9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Musetta’s waltz</td>
<td>R21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parpignol’s jingle</td>
<td>R12/m3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realistic Diegetic</td>
<td>vendors’ calls</td>
<td>R1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mothers’ scolding</td>
<td>R13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representational</td>
<td>trumpet fanfare</td>
<td>R0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parpignol fanfare motive</td>
<td>R28/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Musetta’s theme</td>
<td>R16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

sounds as music. These last contributors to the scene’s soundscape are entirely for the real-world audience and therefore gain a symbolic attachment to the soundscape, rather than a performative one.

Combined, these three factors produce a quintessential soundscape, thereby explaining occasional criticisms such as that by George Marek: “The opening of the second act is dull music. It doesn’t matter much. If the scene is well staged, we are not particularly conscious of the music, as the crowds and their cries, the street vendors with their wares, and the general gaiety are diverting enough.”106 Perceiving the music as dull and the action merely diverting betrays the author’s inability to recognize that the music is the scene and the scene is the music. It serves a different purpose from Puccini’s usual attentiveness to beautiful and emotionally evocative melodies, one that is perhaps his greatest contribution to verismo and its oxymoronic quest for operatic realism. While Marek finds Puccini’s efforts toward creating a crowd scene wanting in comparison with

106 Marek, 365-366.
Verdi’s, however, Michele Girardi notes the younger composer’s greater accomplishment in sustaining the depiction of “a modern metropolitan world” throughout the entire act.\textsuperscript{107} Furthermore, Girardi acknowledges the dramatic impetus behind the act, the soundscape of joy reflecting the blossoming of Rodolfo and Mimì’s love just as surely as the desolation of Act III’s soundscape portrays its demise.\textsuperscript{108} When we recognize that nothing inhabits Puccini’s opera out of whimsy or carelessness, the methodical means by which traditional and realistic-diegetic as well as representational music constitute his depiction of Christmas Eve in Paris becomes all the clearer.

Although diegetic music is not an essential requirement for an operatic soundscape, it is the easiest to both recognize and rationalize. Puccini’s accomplishment in creating the aural scenery for a Christmas Eve in nineteenth-century Paris lies not in his use of diegetic music, but in his accomplishment of layering diverse elements, creating what Claude Debussy is credited with claiming as the best representation of 1830s Paris.\textsuperscript{109} Carl Dahlhaus also notes the formal unity that underlies the scene, creating a foundation that provides musical coherence in support of its disparate pieces as reflected in the Act II overview diagram (Fig. 18).\textsuperscript{110} Created primarily by listening for formal structures within the music, the diagram also represents the scene’s evolving

\textsuperscript{107} Marek, 366; and Girardi, 131.
\textsuperscript{108} Girardi, 131.
\textsuperscript{110} Dahlhaus, 355.
Table 13: Mid-level ABA structures, *La bohème*, Act II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Element of Departure &amp; Return</th>
<th>Musico-dramatic Purpose</th>
<th>Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>A: Fanfare</td>
<td>soundscape</td>
<td>introducing the Latin Quarter</td>
<td>R0/m1–R4/m12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B: Solo episode</td>
<td>plot</td>
<td>placing principal characters within the Latin Quarter</td>
<td>R4/m13–R7/m8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A: Fanfare</td>
<td>soundscape</td>
<td>transitioning to the next section</td>
<td>R7/m9–R7/m24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Café Momus</td>
<td>A: Bohemians</td>
<td>principals &amp; plot</td>
<td>introducing Mimi to the friends</td>
<td>R8/m1–R11/m9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B: Parpignol</td>
<td>chorus &amp; soundscape</td>
<td>showcasing one vendor</td>
<td>R12/m1–R14/m16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A: Mimi’s arietta</td>
<td>principals &amp; plot</td>
<td>friends getting to know Mimi</td>
<td>R15/mm1–R18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musetta</td>
<td>A: Introduction</td>
<td>ensemble</td>
<td>introducing Musetta</td>
<td>R16/m1–R20/m22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B: Waltz</td>
<td>aria</td>
<td>baiting Marcello</td>
<td>R20/m23–R23/m16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A: Concertato</td>
<td>ensemble</td>
<td>reuniting Musetta &amp; Marcello</td>
<td>R23/m16–R27/m7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parade</td>
<td>A: Tattoo</td>
<td>tattoo</td>
<td>anticipating the parade</td>
<td>R27/m1–R28/m1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B: Finale</td>
<td>mosaic</td>
<td>summarizing the soundscape</td>
<td>R28/m1–R32/m1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A: Tattoo</td>
<td>tattoo</td>
<td>celebrating</td>
<td>R32/m1–R35/10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dramatic context through its high-level labels of “Introduction,” “Café Momus,” “Musetta,” and “Parade.” Within each of these broad sections, the diagram’s middle level reveals ABA structures that expose Puccini’s careful organization of the act through their adherence to both musical and dramatic factors. Table 13 accounts for every measure of the act to delineate these ABA structures, providing both each passage’s musico-dramatic purpose as well as the element that is highlighted by the
ABA principle of statement, departure, and return. On the surface, the realist perspective of chaos reigns through the overlapping of picturesque details, belying the musical precision that lurks beneath. Better here than anywhere else, Puccini’s demonstrates verismo’s focus on milieu, elevating the opera’s setting to the status of a “musicodramatic ‘agent’” and providing the very subject of the dramatic action, rather than merely a place for it to occur.111

4.3 Musetta’s Waltz: La bohème’s Diegetic Chameleon

From a soprano’s point of view, one of La bohème’s most significant contributions to the world of opera is Musetta’s waltz, “Quando me’n vo’.” Its delicate, graceful lines provide an opportunity to display the voice in all its beauty and finesse while bringing a touch of mischief to the aria’s delivery. The complex nature of Musetta’s character—capable of sly manipulation in Act II, fiery temper in Act III, and deep compassion in Act IV—offers as much theatrical as musical challenge, making her a perennially favorite role. And, yet, the melody positions itself within the soundscapes of both Acts II and III so seamlessly that it comes as a surprise to learn the aria was its third incarnation. Originally written as a piano piece, Puccini later adapted the slow waltz for a ship launching ceremony in Genoa before finding it a permanent home within his

111 Dahlhaus, 354.
latest opera. Given such a background, the aria’s standard form takes on a new light that perhaps undermines its diegetic underpinnings.

Neither its popularity nor any ambiguity in its diegetic status, however, explicates the aria’s worthiness for the insular focus displayed here. Rather, its selection pertains to the melody’s appearance in three distinct diegetic performances within two vastly different public settings. While thematic quotation plays an important role in *La bohème*, it primarily recalls past events (as when Mimi and Rodolfo quote her Act I introduction aria during their final moments together in Act IV) or represents a specific place (as when the orchestra accompanies Schaunard’s mention of the Latin Quarter in Act I with the scalar fanfare that opens Act II) or character (as when Musetta’s Act II entrance theme reappears in both Acts III and IV when she is mentioned by other characters). Only “Quando me’n vo’,” however, finds itself completely transplanted in its diegetic performance from one setting to another, posing distinct dramatic and rhetorical effects in each iteration. In this codetta to the *La bohème* chapter, I therefore examine the aria not only in terms of its conflicted diegetic status, but also as a dramatic device that reflects the changing attitudes of the opera’s characters. Organized by the

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112 Osborne, 112.
113 The Act IV quotation of “Mi chiamano Mimi” occurs at R22/m7–R23/m7, the Act I reference to the Latin Quarter fanfare occurs at R16/mm1–31, and the quotations of Musetta’s theme occurs in Act III at R25/mm1–8 and Act IV at R17/mm1–9. In addition to “Quando me’n vo’,” a second notable exception to Puccini’s usual treatment of thematic quotation is the summary of Act II’s Latin Quarter soundscape as discussed in Section 4.2.3.
melody’s three diegetic performances, discussion begins with Musetta’s solo, expanding upon the brief analysis provided in Section 4.2.1. to further decipher its diegetic interpretation and establish a baseline for later alterations. Focus then turns to the Act II concertato that culminates in the principal characters’ united expression of the aria’s A theme melody led by Marcello, before shifting to its radically changed manifestation within a dramatically different setting at the Barrière d’Enfer in Act III.

4.3.1 Act II Aria

**MUSSETTA**

A  Quando me’n vo’,  
    quando me’n vo’ soletta per la via  
    la gente sosta e mira  
    e la bellezza mia  
    tutta ricerca in me,  
    ricerca in me da capo a piè

**MARCELLO**

Legatemi alla seggiola!

**ALCINDORO**

Quella gente che dirà?

**MUSSETTA**

B  Ed assaporo allor la bramosia sottil  
    che da gl’occhi traspira  
    e dai palesi vezzi intender sa  
    alle occulte beltà.  
    Così l’effluvio del desio  
    tutta m’aggira,  
    felice mi fa, felice mi fa!

**ALCINDORO**

Quel canto scurrile mi muove la bile!

**MUSSETTA**

A  E tu che sai,  
    che memori e ti struggi,
da me tanto rifuggi?
you flee from me thus?

So ben: le angoscie tue non le vuoi dir,
you don’t wish to confess your suffering,
non le vuoi dir, so ben,
you don’t wish to confess, well I know,
ma ti senti morir!
but you feel yourself dying!

MIMÌ
I see well that that poor girl
Lo vedo ben che quella poveretta.
is all infatuated,
Tutta invaghita ell’è,
all infatuated with Marcello,
tutta in vaghita di Marcel,
all infatuated she is!
tutta invaghita ell’è!

ALCINDORO
What will those people say?
Quella gente che dirà?

As mentioned briefly in Section 4.2.1, “Quando me’n vo” exhibits a straightforward Classical form with only a few surprises. Excluding the minimalist introduction of three solitary Bs, the aria occupies forty-eight measures that divide evenly into sixteen-measure sections with two cadences each (see Fig. 20 above). The two A sections each consist of a sixteen-measure period with parallel melodic constructions, weak-to-strong cadences, and subphrase basic and contrasting ideas (see Ex. 29 above). The B section offers contrast not only through its subdominant tonal relationship but also its formal structure, consisting of two eight-measure Hybrid 4 themes that also exhibit an antecedent-consequent relationship, thereby producing a sixteen-measure period. Asymmetric subphrases undermine the surface-level impression of precise order (see Ex. 29 above), although Puccini’s fluid temporality
balances these structures.\textsuperscript{114} Of the aria’s unusual features—compound sixteen-measure themes built upon eight-measure phrases (A sections), the missing thematic cadences that reveal a pair of Hybrid 4 themes (B section), and asymmetric subphrase structures throughout—only the first two reflect theories and examples found in Caplin’s study of Classical form.\textsuperscript{115} Between its defined form and lyrical melody, the aria easily fulfills the musical markers of diegetic music as proposed in Chapter 3.\textsuperscript{116} The Age of Enlightenment’s predilection for balance and order also addresses Robbert van der Lek’s music-based determinants for diegetic music: formal position and style.\textsuperscript{117} Puccini’s anachronistic adherence to Classical ideals in this aria not only contrasts with his usual late Romantic style that prioritizes passion and emotion in nondiegetic passages, but the ABA form also dictates the formal dimensions of the aria with zero ambiguity. In addition, the aria’s formal independence from the surrounding music is expressed through the three preceding B’s that transition from the preceding music, serve as an introduction to the aria, and facilitate its shift from B to E major, as well as the score’s inclusion of a double barline, new key and time signatures, and \textit{tempo di valzer lento} notation, all of which coincide with the onset of the aria’s first phrase (Ex. 36).

\textsuperscript{114} See Section 4.2.1. “Fluid temporality” refers to Puccini’s liberal use of \textit{ritardando}, \textit{rallentando}, and \textit{allargando} to lengthen the short contrasting ideas, which is why they appear roughly balanced with the basic ideas in the aria’s recording-based formal diagram (Fig. 20).

\textsuperscript{115} Caplin, 61–65.

\textsuperscript{116} See Table 5 in Section 3.1.1.

By both my own and van der Lek’s criteria, there is very little in the music to challenge a diegetic reading of Musetta’s aria. Only the asymmetric orientation of the basic and contrasting ideas within each phrase finds no precedent within Caplin’s comprehensive study. Although I suggested within my Act II analysis that this lopsided structure reflects the composer’s Romantic context, the instability that lurks beneath the aria’s eight-square surface also suggests Musetta’s carefree nature, which leads directly

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118 Puccini, *La bohème* vocal score, 129–130.
to consideration of the aria’s text. As the greater obstacle to a diegetic interpretation in this case, the libretto indeed requires a nuanced analysis in order to untangle its ambiguities and complexities. On the surface, the text of Musetta’s famous waltz bears all the hallmarks associated with nondiegetic music: describing events, employing first- and second-person pronouns that indicate interpersonal conversation, and adhering primarily to everyday language though a poetic turn of phrase does appear here and there. Only a single grumbling comment muttered by Alcindoro as an aside during the aria explicitly identifies the aria as a song and implicitly defines Musetta’s singing as a performance.119 Further textual evidence arises in Act III when Marcello reveals that Musetta is teaching singing to travelers inside the tavern. Although he never specifically refers to the “Quando me’n vo’” melody, his explanation not only confirms Musetta’s offstage presence after having heard her sing the tune prior to Marcello’s entrance, but also offers teaching as a rationale for her to be singing inside the tavern at such an early hour.120

Despite this textual evidence, “Quando me’n vo’” does not comfortably satisfy my own definition of diegetic music as requiring a fictional composer who, at one time or another, engaged in a conscious compositional effort to produce the music in question. Instead, both Alcindoro’s familiarity and the melody’s reappearance in Act III

119 See Section 4.2.1 for further discussion of Alcindoro’s comment.
120 See Section 4.3.3 for further discussion of the Act III iteration.
pose the aria as an example of realistic-diegetic music due to both its implied and explicit repetition within Musetta’s life.\textsuperscript{121} J. L. Austin’s concept of performative utterance also supports a realistic-diegetic reading since the aria’s Act II context exposes Musetta’s efforts to manipulate and seduce rather than to merely describe the effect she has upon those who observe her when she goes out in public.\textsuperscript{122} To further explicate the fictional origins of realistic-diegetic music, we may suppose that the first time Musetta expressed the aria’s observations, her singing indeed represented speech within the operatic diegesis and therefore posed a nondiegetic status. Once she repeated it, however, her meaning began to shift away from a descriptive—what Austin calls \textit{constative}—function, subsumed by whatever objective she hoped to achieve through the reiteration of her original statement. In other words, with that very first repetition, her observations became a performative utterance, even if her only objective was to tell a story. From that point onward, the more she repeats the same words with the same melody the further she strays from its original constative nature.\textsuperscript{123} When the description

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{121} See Section 4.2.2 for further discussion of realistic-diegetic music.
  \item \textsuperscript{122} See Section 4.2.2 for further discussion of performative utterance and its correlation with diegetic music.
  \item \textsuperscript{123} A real-world analogy to this process is when I describe a car accident I experienced more than a decade ago. The first time, I stated facts, describing what I saw, heard, and felt. When I use the same words and sequence of events to describe the event a second time, my utterance begins to acquire familiarity. Eventually, with repeated utterances that employ the same details in the same order, I am no longer describing what happened so much as narrating a story. The once-constative utterance has become performative enough that any inadvertent omission or reordering of specific details disrupts the story, especially if it has been awhile since I’ve spoken about the accident and thus forgotten the narration I once knew so well through repetition. At that point, my description of the accident feels disjointed and I am overcome by the nonsensical suspicion that I am telling the story wrong, even though it is my story to tell.
\end{itemize}
of an event becomes more like a performance than information, the line of demarcation between singing-as-speech and singing-as-singing is blurred. Realistic-diegetic not only serves as a means of categorizing music that falls within that ambiguous space without undermining the premise of a fictional composer, but it also demonstrates how nondiegetic passages can lean toward the diegetic side of the spectrum.\textsuperscript{124}

Tim Carter observes that the linguistic structure of “Quando me’n vo’” aligns with its form with the A section focused on an unspecified “they” who admire Musetta as she walks in the street, a shift to “I” in the B section as she expresses her enjoyment of this attention, and the return to A’s theme with a new focus on Marcello as “you.”\textsuperscript{125} In terms of rhetoric, this structure suggests Musetta’s argument as it progresses in stages: “People stare at me when I go out and I enjoy their attention, but you avoid me and would rather die without me than admit you love me.” Carter suggests that the thematic return of A for the third section—as opposed to presenting a through-composed ABC structure for the aria—contrasts the reactions Musetta receives from random people against Marcello’s behavior.\textsuperscript{126} While the first two sections are generic enough to apply to any narrative circumstance, the last is specific to the staged action and therefore

\footnotesize{Since it has now been years since I have spoken in detail about the accident, the narrative I used to employ is gone, lost through my neglect of its habitual repetition. Now, when I speak of the accident, my statement is once again constative, describing what I still recall of the event rather than telling a story.}

\textsuperscript{124} See Figure 22 in Section 4.2.2.
\textsuperscript{125} Carter, 229
\textsuperscript{126} Carter, 229.
undermines a realistic-diegetic interpretation. On the other hand, the closed formal structure with the return to A suggests a complete rhetorical process. One resolution to this apparent contradiction is to imagine a different focus for the third section in other presentations of this aria. For example, after describing peoples’ reaction and her enjoyment of it, Musetta might argue her lover could also enjoy the peoples’ stares since they would recognize him as the object of her desires. Or she could rationalize that, despite all the options presented to her on a daily basis, she has chosen him above all others. Speculating upon an alternative text to the aria’s third section permits us to imagine both its united performative function of seduction or manipulation under ordinary circumstances, and Musetta’s adaptation of the text to apply to the current situation with Marcello. In that case, the text presented in the opera becomes an instance of adapting new words to a familiar tune. The words may not align with a diegetic interpretation, but the melody still can, thus supporting the notion of the aria as a whole as realistic-diegetic.

Although Alcindoro’s explicit reference to “Quando me’n vo’” as a diegetic song is often overlooked or even outright denied, I am not alone in reaching this conclusion. Tim Carter notes that Musetta’s waltz is “performed as ‘real’ music,” his phrasing nevertheless leaving the aria’s status rather ambiguous, as though suggesting Musetta
performs it as diegetic even though it actually is not.\textsuperscript{127} Carter acknowledges the substantial evidence provided by Alcindoro’s commentary, but otherwise does not delve into the song’s diegetic nature. Likewise, Michele Girardi characterizes the arias as “function[ing] as stage music: a ‘real’ song sung to seduce Marcello.”\textsuperscript{128} While Girardi, like Carter, allows space for interpretive leniency regarding the music’s diegetic status through his use of the phrase “functions as,” his description of Musetta’s intent also recognizes the aria’s status as a performative utterance. The aria’s direct correlation to the stage action makes it difficult to recognize and accept it as diegetic when operating within the guidelines of a black-or-white choice. On the other hand, the flexibility of my approach, both through the diegetic spectrum and realistic-diegetic music as a blend of the spectrum’s two extremes, allows us to comprehend and overcome the conflict between the text of the third section and the aria’s staging, particularly Alcindoro’s comment. However, recognition of at least some diegetic features within Musetta’s famous aria becomes essential when considering its later appearances within the opera.

4.3.2 Act II Concertato

The preceding analysis of “Quando me’n vo’” elucidates its dramatic function, illustrating not only Musetta’s narcissistic nature, but also her goal of making it

\textsuperscript{127} Carter, 228. Another similarly brief acknowledgement of the aria’s diegetic status appears in (Girardi, 129).

\textsuperscript{128} Girardi, 129–130.
impossible for Marcello to continue ignoring her. It does not, however, reveal the results of Musetta’s ploy. Unlike the aria’s introduction, which separates its formal structure from the preceding music, the conclusion merges with its successor. Four of the men promptly comment upon Musetta’s display, Alcindoro expressing shame and embarrassment, Schaunard and Colline guessing how Marcello will react, and Rodolfo explaining the couple’s history to Mimi. She soon joins in, expressing sympathy for Musetta before turning to proclaim her affection for Rodolfo. Musetta enters with soaring descents marked espressivo and espansiva as she observes her effect upon Marcello. Her vocal texture then changes to a more syllabic, percussive style as she berates Alcindoro and demands he leave her alone. A pause occurs as Musetta realizes her objective requires another tactic, leading her to contrive a pain in her foot with great showmanship both to rid herself of Alcindoro and to provoke Marcello’s sympathies. Finally, Marcello—who has remained silent since begging his friends to tie him to his chair during Musetta’s aria, erupts in a forte rendition of the waltz melody while Musetta sets Alcindoro to his task of retrieving a new pair of shoes for her (Table 14). Once Alcindoro departs, the melody sounds once more in the orchestra as Musetta and Marcello embrace before the waiter brings the friends their bill and the military tattoo makes its first entrance.

Set in the same key with the same harmonic, melodic, and formal structures, Marcello’s evocation of Musetta’s melody closely adheres to the model she has already
Table 14: Text by phrase and character, Concertato on “Quando me’n vo,’ La bohème, Act II, R25/m9 – R26/m1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FORMAL POSITION</th>
<th>MARCELLO</th>
<th>MUSETTA</th>
<th>ALCINDORO</th>
<th>SCHUNARD &amp; COLLINE</th>
<th>MIMI</th>
<th>RODOLFO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bi</td>
<td>Gioventù mia,</td>
<td>Sciogli, slaccia, rompi,</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>straccia, te ne implore.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antecedent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ci</td>
<td>tu non sei morta</td>
<td>Laggiù c’è ur calzolaio.</td>
<td>Imprudente!</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>nè di te morto è</td>
<td>Corri, presto! Ne voglio</td>
<td>Quella gente che</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>il souvenir!</td>
<td>un alto paio. Ah! che</td>
<td>dirà?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>fitta, maledetta scarpetta</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consequent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bi</td>
<td>Se tu battessi alla mia porta,</td>
<td>Or la levo. Ecoola quà.</td>
<td>Ma il mio grado!</td>
<td>La commedia è</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>stupenda,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ci</td>
<td>t’andrebbe il</td>
<td></td>
<td>Vuoi ch’io</td>
<td>La commedia è</td>
<td>Io vedo ben ell’è</td>
<td>Io vedo ben la</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mio core ad</td>
<td></td>
<td>comprometta?</td>
<td>stupenda!</td>
<td>invaghita di</td>
<td>commedia è stupenda!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>aprir, ad aprir!</td>
<td></td>
<td>Aspetta! Musetta!</td>
<td></td>
<td>Marcello!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Vo’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Abbreviations: “bi” = basic idea; “ci” = contrasting idea. Translations: Marcello (“My youth, you’re not dead and neither is the memory of you! If you knocked at my door, my heart would go to open it!”), Musetta (“Loosen, unlace, break, tear, I implore you. There’s a shoemaker down there. Run, quickly! I want another pair from them. Ouch! What pain! Cursed narrow shoe! Now take it off. Here it is. Run, go, quickly!”), Alcindoro (“Imprudent one! What will those people say? But my rank! Do you want me compromised? Wait! Musetta! I’m going.”), Schunard & Colline (“The comedy is stupendous!”), Mimi (“I see well that she is infatuated with Marcello!”), and Rodolfo (“I see well that the comedy is stupendous!”).
established. Table 14 shows the additive nature of the passage, as well as the separation of characters into pairs. As Marcello stands alone both melodically and dramatically, Musetta insists upon Alcindoro’s fool’s errand while he attempts to calm her, Schaunard and Colline react with amusement to the situation, and Mimi and Rodolfo make parallel observations. Of these pairings, the last is the least conclusive. While the beginning of Mimi and Rodolfo’s contribution aligns both textually and melodically on “Io vedo ben” (I see well), the remainder of their text diverges from one another both in music and meaning. Mimi demonstrates her empathy with Musetta through both her words and joining with her to conclude her waltz melody in unison, but Rodolfo not only breaks from her melodically but also echoes Schaunard and Colline’s assessment of the comedy before them. Musically, balanced voicing for the triple-forte cadence certainly legitimizes Rodolfo’s departure from the melody, and his textual split from Mimi makes sense dramatically since it foreshadows the tensions that come to the fore in the next act. From a diegetic perspective, though, Rodolfo’s greater alliance with his friends over Mimi is understandable considering he only met her no more than a few hours ago. Within the fictional reality of the scene, while his burgeoning relationship with Mimi is new and exciting, he yet retains far greater emotional attachment to his friends by virtue of their prior acquaintance. Furthermore, he possesses greater knowledge and understanding regarding Marcello’s past struggles with Musetta than Mimi does, facilitating his agreement with Schaunard and Colline regarding the situation’s farcical nature.
The central question within this concertato, however, is whether or not Marcello’s enthusiastic rendition of the “Quando me’n vo’” melody constitutes a diegetic performance. While it is certainly true that Puccini made a wise choice in this respect given the aria’s immense popularity even a century later, is the composer’s desire to create a grand and climactic oration for Marcello and Musetta’s reunion the only explanation? If we are to adopt the perspective that “Quando me’n vo’” is indeed an example of realistic-diegetic music, we may also assume that, given his history with Musetta, the tune is as familiar to him as it is to Alcindoro. In which case, Marcello’s quotation becomes another instance of adapting new words to a familiar tune. The symbolic and emotional meaning behind his use of her melody is not lost upon the opera’s commentators who interpret this as Marcello’s capitulation to Musetta’s charms.130 Given their embrace that immediately follows the triple-forte cadence described in the published stage directions as con grande entusiasmo (with great enthusiasm), it is difficult to interpret Marcello’s quotation any other way. Recognizing Musetta’s melody as a diegetic song, however, further supports this conclusion, emphasizing Marcello’s conscious choice to set his words to a tune that all too recently brought him much pain and angst. We may, however, also interpret his singing in the manner of a theatrical aside, a moment of private introspection shared directly with the

130 Carner, Puccini, 373; Ramsden, 50; and Budden, Puccini, 170.
audience rather than the characters onstage. While such an interpretation is supported by Marcello’s exteriority to the passage’s otherwise consistent pairing of characters through their vocal lines and textual sentiments, it also challenges the impression of his quotation as a diegetic performance. Staging can have a significant impact on how audiences read this moment. If Marcello’s text is to be interpreted as a performative utterance in which he capitulates to Musetta’s beckoning, he may be portrayed as breaking free from his emotional restraints by standing suddenly and perhaps even leaping atop a table, his arms spread wide in exuberant declaration of his acceptance. If, however, a more introspective effect is desired, he might remain seated, his face turned away from Musetta and directly to the audience as he expresses his lingering desire to answer her call, thereby emphasizing his statement’s constative nature and his quotation of the melody as more an expression of angst than a public declaration. Either way, the reflexive relationship between the aria and Marcello’s quotation reinforces each one’s interpretation: it makes more sense for one iteration to present a diegetic performance if they both do, even retrospectively.

The matter shifts in the wake of the grand cadence that elides with a second statement of the waltz melody in the orchestra. As Marcello and Musetta embrace and the remaining bohemians turn their attention to the dilemma presented by their bill, the orchestra begins with three grand fortissimo chords that coincides with the antecedent’s basic idea before the prominent brass swiftly subsides into softer string and harp
timbres. As with Marcello’s statement, this orchestral reprise adheres to the standard set by Musetta’s aria in terms of harmony, melody, and form, but a significant intrusion occurs during the consequent phrase. Unremarked upon by the characters and sounding from offstage, the military tattoo’s percussion overlaps the orchestra as shown previously in Example 27. The three-measure basic idea of the waltz’s consequent phrase is clearly heard over the snare drums, but the contrasting idea is quickly lost once the offstage trumpets and piccolos begin to play on the second beat of the next measure.\textsuperscript{131} In addition to the polytonal effect created by the clash of E major against B-flat major, this multifocal moment is significant for its diegetic implications. Although I have argued in favor of at least a minimally diegetic reading of both Musetta’s aria and Marcello’s quotation of her melody, such an interpretation cannot sustain in this orchestral reprise since it clearly serves a nondiegetic function as the bohemians turn their attention away from Musetta and toward other matters. At best, we may regard the orchestra’s music in this transitional moment as echo of the diegetic moment that sustains its emotional affiliation but with no performative aspects, either linguistically or dramatically. As if in confirmation of its shift from diegetic to nondiegetic status, the final perfect authentic cadence to the waltz’ periodic melody is entirely absent, lost in

\textsuperscript{131} The misalignment of downbeats in this transition presents no aural conflict since the score specifies each measure of the tattoo’s 2/4 meter equals one beat of the waltz’s 3/4 meter.
the rise of the tattoo’s new sonic focus and yielding its staged performance
unmistakably to the military parade music.132

4.3.3 Act III Opening

While the diegetic context of Musetta’s waltz melody changes as Act II
progresses, the musical and dramatic setting remain consistent. In Act III, however,
everything except the melody’s diegetic status changes. Heard from offstage between
two choral passages in the act’s opening moments, Musetta sings only the antecedent
phrase of the A theme: the basic idea on a wordless vocalise and the contrasting idea on
a text that complements the choral drinking song. The melody’s tonal center is a whole
step lower than the original—reflecting its diegetic position of being heard outside from
within the tavern—and the waltz’s 3/4 meter is entirely absent, subsumed by the
drinking song’s 2/4. Puccini manages the shift from triple meter by taking advantage of
the new time signature’s hypermeter, which groups two duple measures into a single
quadruple unit. First, the orchestral flourish on the last beat of the original melody’s first
two measures is incorporated into the vocal part, thus adding the extra fourth beat to the
original three (marked by braces below the lower staff in Ex. 37). Secondly, the last note
of both the basic idea (Ex. 37, m3) and the contrasting idea’s first motive (Ex. 37, m5) are
lengthened by two additional beats, thus aligning each motive’s climax appropriately on

132 See Section 4.2.1 for further discussion of the tattoo.
Example 37: Metric comparison of original and adjusted waltz melody, *La bohème*,
Top staff: Act II, R21/mm1–8; Bottom staff: Act III, R3m18-31\(^\text{133}\)

![Example 37: Metric comparison of original and adjusted waltz melody, *La bohème*,
Top staff: Act II, R21/mm1–8; Bottom staff: Act III, R3m18-31\(^\text{133}\)](image)

a hypermetric downbeat (marked by asterisks between the staves in Ex. 37). This metric reorientation allows the two motives that form the contrasting idea to retain its internal structure of eight eighth notes, thereby preserving the melodic essence of the original waltz despite its duple context. The orchestra supports the melody’s metric deception by maintaining a sense of temporal stasis through long, sustained chords and a constant, low tremolo. Though mutated, the waltz melody is still recognizable through the new meter’s hypermetric grouping, with each measure of 3/4 meter equal to two measures of 2/4, or a single measure of 4/4 as shown in Example 37. Not only do the metric adjustments in this iteration of the “Quando me’n vo’” melody accommodate its position in the midst of a duple drinking song without requiring a meter change in the score, but the lengthened temporal structure also suggests music heard at a distance.

\(^{133}\) The Act III melody is represented here in 4/4 meter to better demonstrate the 1:1 alignment with each measure of the original 3/4 meter version. Also, repeated notes have been simplified into single or tied durations, beamed divisions have been retained in favor of flagged notation, and the text has been withheld. These adjustments visually clarify the rhythmic relationship between the two versions, particularly with regard to dotted-half and tied durations.
Like its sagging tonality, the adjustments from the original thus reflect Musetta’s 
offstage location within the music itself.

Even more significant than its melodic adjustments, however, is the tune’s 
change in setting. “Quando me’n vo’” constitutes the musical centerpiece of the entire 
Latin Quarter act, doing what an aria does best: providing a moment of unabashed 
lyricism within the joyfully chaotic activity that dominates the rest of the act. The 
melody’s reappearance in the concertato subsequently claims its emotional import by 
providing the means by which Marcello yields to his affection for Musetta. But what, 
then, does its shift to an entirely new setting at the Barrière d’Enfer mean dramatically?

On some level, its acousmatic setting merely confirms Musetta’s presence inside the 
tavern, providing an aural connection between her and the location just as the presence 
of Marcello’s Red Sea painting hanging outside accomplishes the same for him visually. 
On another level, the distant melody is folded into the new soundscape, above all 
providing additional context for the singing heard inside. In addition to the lyrics that 
provide more than sufficient justification for a diegetic drinking song, Musetta’s voice 
and melody also reflect Marcello’s later claim of her employment there as a singing 
teacher, thereby rationalizing the singing as a direct consequence of her job. The contrast 
in settings, however, provides a third level of significance to the melody. In Act II, 
Musetta’s aria—beyond its intent to seduce and manipulate—carries significant 
implications of frustration and melancholy over Marcello’s refusal to acknowledge her.
Likewise, during the concertato, Marcello’s conscription of the waltz melody suggests his ongoing angst over their separation, as well as some amount of failure in capitulating to her call. Despite the joyous reunion between the two that results, both instances of the melody at the moment of its performance contrast the prevailing mood of its Latin Quarter setting: frustration and melancholy versus vitality and joy. Likewise, the melody’s performance in Act III reflects warmth, happiness, and pleasure through its newly acquired text and its position in the middle of a raucous drinking song, while the setting and its attendant soundscape reflect frigid stagnation. In this way, the “Quando me’n vo’” melody always bears an emotional connotation that lies in direct contrast to its setting.

Throughout the opera, Musetta and Marcello serve as a foil for Mimi and Rodolfo, the two couples consistently representing opposing emotional states. Nowhere is this better illustrated than the quartet that concludes Act III, in which Mimi and Rodolfo use the frozen winter as an excuse to stay together until spring while Musetta and Marcello argue bitterly, their relationship rapidly turning sour and cold until they end up parting while hurling vicious insults at one another. Earlier in the act, though, when Musetta’s waltz melody offers a contrast to the frigid outdoors by associating with the life and warmth found inside the tavern, all is light and happiness for her and Marcello while Mimi and Rodolfo could not even bring themselves to be honest with each other. Likewise, in Act II, the melody highlights the rift between Musetta and
Marcello during the moments in which Mìmi and Rodolfo are closest to one another. Although the dynamic between the two couples frequently shifts throughout the interior acts of the opera, each of the three diegetic performances of Musetta’s “Quando me’n vo’” melody represent a moment in which her relationship with Marcello stands in stark contrast not only to the setting, but also to Mìmi and Rodolfo. In this way, these soundscapes both illustrate the current state of the opera’s principal relationship—festive joy in Act II and frozen desolation in Act III—while the dramatic and emotional context surrounding the diegetic performances of Musetta’s waltz melody foreshadows the changes that await them—bitter separation at the opening of Act III and temporary happiness at its end. On some level, Mìmi seems to recognize this—or at least fear its possibility—when she sympathizes with Musetta’s angst in Act II while the rest of the bohemians merely regard the public display of her waltz melody as comical.

Although staging for the most part lies beyond the dimensions of this study, the visual element bears an essential factor in the analysis of the changing context for the “Quando me’n vo’” melody. After all, an audience’s tendency is to limit its focus to the characters highlighted by either the singing or the staging. In the case of Musetta’s melody, this is especially significant in Act III since this final iteration of the waltz tune eliminates any visual of either couple. In fact, the only visual context specified in the published score is the physical setting itself: street sweepers and carters demanding entrance to the city, customs officials performing their duty, and a tavern whose
glowing windows provide the scenes only hint of warmth. The complete absence of all principal characters further enhances the sense that the waltz melody has been entirely enveloped by the soundscape, combining with attendant tavern sounds of laughter and clinking glasses to contrast the harsh exterior landscape through its promise of warmth and happiness inside. Furthermore, the frivolity of a boisterous drinking song juxtaposes the frigid sense of purpose and financial obligation that assails us through the visual representation of customs officials, street sweepers, milkwomen, and purveyors of various goods for sale. The first principal character to emerge into this scene is Mimì. Although stage directions indicate her entrance well after Musetta’s melody has faded, the waltz tune yet represents a contrast to the character of Mimì by way of its association with the soundscape, whose effects yet linger. In fact, the prominent cough that now afflicts Mimì not only foreshadows her coming death from tuberculosis in Act IV, but also augments the sense of delicacy that the frozen scene has conjured, taking it further into the realm of frailty. Now, with Mimi represented visually on stage and embodying the cold futility of encroaching death, the function of the soundscape reaches fruition, representing the impending demise of her relationship with Rodolfo in sharp contrast to vivaciousness of Musetta’s relationship with Marcello.
5. Autonomous Accord: Diegetic/Nondiegetic Simultaneity in Tosca

In the previous chapter, we encountered a peculiar moment in which diegetic and nondiegetic melodies coincide. Toward the end of La bohème’s second act, an orchestral quotation of Musetta’s waltz melody quickly fades as the approaching parade music—played offstage rather than in the orchestra pit—grasps and maintains its hold on the listener’s ear.¹ The result is a bifocal moment in which two discordant passages meet, an E major triple meter waltz in long, legato lines yielding to an emphatic duple meter march in B♭ major. Puccini manages the potentially chaotic transition from waltz to march through a 1:1 metric relationship in which one slow waltz beat equals one quick march measure. Although the melodic overlap between the two passages of music is brief, the transitional period is elongated through a snare drum that accompanies the parade music, which sounds a full eight measures ahead of the piccolos and trumpets. This transition poses a particularly intriguing moment since it features both a successive juxtaposition of the two melodies as well as their simultaneous overlap. Furthermore, the parade melody—which begins offstage and slowly grows throughout the finale of the act until the parade itself appears onstage—provides a clear instance of diegetic music while the rapidly fading waltz is just as clearly nondiegetic.²

¹ See Section 4.2.1, particularly Example 27.
² While I make the argument in Chapter 4 that Musetta’s waltz aria, “Quando me’n vo’,” is indeed diegetic and reappears twice more in differing diegetic contexts, this particular iteration of Musetta’s
This transition brings to the fore the relationship between diegetic passages and the music that surrounds them. Most often, one music cedes to the other in a successive manner, leading analysts to focus upon the seam between them in assessing their relationship. With *Tosca*, however, Puccini takes a different approach that allocates aural territory to both diegetic and nondiegetic music simultaneously. Just as the concept of diegetic music derives from film, its simultaneous presentation with nondiegetic music also finds expression there. For example, diegetic/nondiegetic simultaneity occurs in *Breakfast at Tiffany’s* (Blake Edwards, 1961) when nondiegetic orchestral accompaniment joins Audrey Hepburn and her guitar in the second verse of her diegetic windowsill performance of Henry Mancini’s “Moon River,” and when a diegetic recording of Bach’s *Goldberg Variations* is temporarily muffled by nondiegetic action music during a violent prison escape in *The Silence of the Lambs* (Jonathan Demme, 1991).³ However, with the loss of control over the visual element and the common real-world composer for both its diegetic and nondiegetic elements, opera’s musical medium presents particular challenges as well as opportunities in the analysis of scenes that employ such simultaneity. *Tosca* is especially rich in such scenes by virtue of both the titular melody is nondiegetic, functioning as an orchestral echo of the grand concertato on the same melody that immediately precedes it. See Section 4.3.2. for further details.

³ In both these examples, the diegetic music is unequivocally established through visual means prior to the nondiegetic music’s entrance. In *Breakfast at Tiffany’s*, nondiegetic orchestral accompaniment supports Hepburn’s diegetic performance, but *The Silence of the Lambs* features a distinct stylistic shift from the calm order of Bach on a diegetic radio to the tempestuous nondiegetic score by Howard Shore.
character’s profession as an opera singer and the plot’s prominent religious themes. Discussion of diegetic/nondiegetic simultaneity begins with an examination of the methods by which Puccini’s manages to separate the two constituent elements, despite that they occupy the same temporal space. Two passages from Tosca’s second act serve as case studies that illustrated these methods of differentiation. Focus then turns toward a formal and harmonic analysis of the opera’s Act I finale, culminating in a double formal complex that details how two disparate structures employ the same music for varying functions. Finally, pertinent historical perspectives yield political and ecclesiastical contexts that elucidate the opera’s dramatic structure through the interpretation of its scenes of diegetic/nondiegetic simultaneity.

5.1 Differentiating the Elements

Robbert van der Lek addresses the relationship between diegetic and nondiegetic passages in terms of how the two are mixed together. He identifies three factors that aid in distinguishing between diegetic music and the other music that surrounds it: formal separation, stylistic distinction, and aural/visual congruence. Each of these poses a negative correlation to the strength of a passage’s diegetic status, as summarized in Figure 24. The more a particular example exhibits formal separation and stylistic

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4 These terms are reversed from those van der Lek employs in order to clarify the diagram and their relationship to diegetic status. Van der Lek summarizes “musical integration” by noting, “[Formal] integration, [stylistic] assimilation, and incongruence [of picture and music] weaken the diegetic status of music” (Van der Lek, 54–55).
distinction from the music that surrounds it, the more strongly that example is perceived as diegetic music. Similarly, the more congruence there is between the music the audience hears and the action they see on stage, the stronger the example’s diegetic status. Van der Lek notes that formal separation is indicated through features that alert listeners to the end of one thing (e.g. nondiegetic music) and the beginning of another (e.g. diegetic music), such as introductions, codas, caesuras, and grand pauses. His focus on the seam that separates the different types of music demonstrates that formal separation in particular relates specifically to their horizontal comparison, or the successive juxtaposition of diegetic and nondiegetic music. *Tosca*, however, consistently

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6 Regarding aural/visual congruence, it is important to recall that van der Lek’s study makes observations and draws conclusions from both film and opera through the work of Erick Wolfgang Korngold. The primarily visual medium of film places a different priority upon such congruence than opera. While certainly pertinent to the matter of diegetic music in opera, as will be seen in upcoming examples, aural/visual congruence is of considerably less value in the context of this study than formal separation and stylistic distinction.
presents true simultaneity of diegetic and nondiegetic music, featuring vertical alignment in which both passages occupy the same temporal space.

Much of van der Lek’s approach to differentiating between diegetic and nondiegetic music in a horizontal orientation must be adapted when addressing Tosca’s vertical context. Aural/visual congruence is the only one of his criteria that applies equally well to both contexts; however, given the scope of this study that considers staging only in relation to published stage directions, its impact here is finite. Stylistic distinction is also of limited use in this circumstance since the diegetic and nondiegetic passages’ coexistence within the same temporal span means they must also present a unified musical effect. Formal separation, meanwhile, must be entirely reinvented from van der Lek’s conceptualization since the dividing tactics of introduction, coda, caesura, and grand pause cannot apply to simultaneous passages. The ensuing discussion assesses Puccini’s method of differentiating between diegetic and nondiegetic music in simultaneous presentation, using two such moments from Tosca’s second act as case studies for analysis. First, instrumental versus vocal forces pose a prominent and logical means of distinguishing between two simultaneous streams of music in opera, as exemplified by Puccini’s diegetic gavotte. However, when both elements employ the same musical forces, other means of contrast and separation must be identified. The diegetic cantata thus becomes the analytical focus for the second part of this discussion, which considers no only van der Lek’s concern with integration, assimilation, and
congruence, but also my own opera-specific definition of diegetic music as fictionally composed.

### 5.1.1 Instrumental vs. Vocal

As thorough as van der Lek’s discussion of the factors that contribute to diegetic/nondiegetic mixture may be, his focus on the works of Erich Wolfgang Korngold leads him to speak in general terms that apply equally to both film and opera. His approach therefore neglects a foundational element especially pertinent to the discussion of diegetic music in opera: instrumentation, specifically instrumental versus vocal. As a clear, definitive, and useful means of differentiating between two musical forces, the division of diegetic and nondiegetic music according to this distinction occurs frequently in opera. A prominent example appears in the Act I finale of Mozart’s *Don Giovanni* (1787) where onstage musicians play an instrumental diegetic minuet while the principal characters advance the plot through their nondiegetic conversations. Extrapolating this particular configuration of instrumental and vocal forces into all possible combinations yields four possible types of diegetic/nondiegetic simultaneity according to this criterion. Table 15 summarizes those configurations and provides representative examples from Puccini’s oeuvre.

Each of these configurations has already been encountered elsewhere in this study. The most prominent instances of diegetic/nondiegetic simultaneity align with the Mozart example from *Don Giovanni*, in which a staged instrumental performance
Table 15: Configurations of vocal and instrumental forces in instances of diegetic/nondiegetic simultaneity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diegetic</th>
<th>Nondiegetic</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>instrumental</td>
<td>vocal</td>
<td><em>Manon Lescaut</em>, Act II, dancing lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>La bohème</em>, Act II, military tattoo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Tosca</em>, Act II, gavotte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>instrumental</td>
<td>instrumental</td>
<td><em>La bohème</em>, Act II, transition to military tattoo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Tosca</em>, Act III, bells</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Turandot</em>, Act II, fanfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vocal</td>
<td>vocal</td>
<td><em>La bohème</em>, Act II, Musetta’s Waltz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Tosca</em>, Act II, l’alba vindice appar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vocal</td>
<td>instrumental</td>
<td><em>La bohème</em>, Act II, Musetta’s Waltz</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

provides a diegetic underscore to the vocal parts engaged in nondiegetic conversations.

Both the minuet that accompanies the dancing lesson in Act II of *Manon Lescaut* and the tattoo performed by the military parade that crosses the stage at the end of *La bohème’s* second act exemplify this first configuration. A gavotte played offstage during the second act of *Tosca* presents a third example, which is discussed in detail below.

Configurations in which both diegetic and nondiegetic elements appear in instrumental timbres are decidedly less common and have been encountered so far in this study only once, with the final iteration of the “Quando me’n vo’” melody in Act II of *La bohème*.

Here, the tune—which had begun as a diegetic aria and since shifted to a nondiegetic context following its repetition in the scene’s grand concertato—is overlapped by the military parade’s diegetic tattoo. The diegetic/nondiegetic simultaneity in this case,

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7 See Section 3.3.1. for *Manon Lescaut* and Section 4.2.1. for *La bohème*.

8 See Section 4.3.2. for the concertato and Section 4.2.1. for the transition to the tattoo.
however, is brief, as are instances of the same configuration in which bells announce
dawn at the opening of Tosca’s third act and fanfares herald the riddle ceremony in Act
II of Turandot. By contrast, diegetic/nondiegetic simultaneity that relies solely upon
vocal forces is much more common, even warranting its own operatic terminology. As
long as the aria is diegetic and the other characters’ interjections are not, the result is
simultaneity of the vocal/vocal variety, such as in Act II of La bohème when Alcindoro
grumbles his displeasure over Musetta singing “Quando me’n vo’,” Marcello pleads
with his friends to restrain him from responding to Musetta’s seduction, and Mimi
sympathizes with Musetta’s longing for Marcello. Act II of Tosca presents two additional
instances of this configuration, which are discussed elsewhere in this dissertation:
Cavaradossi’s brief “L’alba vindice appar” when Tosca and Scarpia make their
nondiegetic interjections during his second strophe, and Tosca’s offstage cantata that
underscores Scarpia’s interrogation of Cavaradossi.

This leaves one last configuration: vocal diegetic music in simultaneous
presentation with instrumental nondiegetic music. Due to the particular nature of opera,

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9 Tosca’s bells figure prominently in the scene’s soundscape and Turandot’s three ministers acknowledge
the fanfares by commenting, “Udite le trombe!” (Listen to the trumpets!). While both of these examples are
definitively diegetic since they emerge from and represent each setting’s environment, they only marginally
satisfy diegetic music’s requirement for the conscious effort of a fictional composer. In the case of the bells,
conscious effort may be allocated to those who ring the bells, while the fanfares acquire a realistic-diegetic
status through repetition. See Section 4.1.3. for soundscapes and Section 4.2.2. for realistic-diegetic music.

10 Grove Music Online defines pertichini as “small interventions by other characters into an aria sung by a

11 See the Introduction for “L’alba vindice appar” and Section 5.1.2. for the cantata.
the first configuration shown in Table 15 makes logical sense since characters need only continue to speak-via-singing as they normally do while the dramatic context of the orchestral music that supports them shifts to reflect a diegetic status. This last configuration, however, poses a new complication. When opera characters sing a fictionally composed song, is their orchestral accompaniment diegetic or nondiegetic?

Until now, we have operated under the default assumption that orchestral accompaniments align with their vocal designations. But the opposite argument can also be made: that the orchestral support is not diegetic since no dramatic context is provided through a visible orchestra, textual reference, or some other means. The issue therefore refers back the question from Chapter 2 of where opera’s orchestral music comes from, whether a product of each individual character’s psyche or simply “how it is” in an operatic world. Furthermore, does a character’s mind or even the portrayed world itself constitute a diegetic origin and therefore qualify as diegetic music?¹² My definition of diegetic music as the conscious effort of a fictional composer eases these logical complications by providing a more conclusive criterion than that supplied by either the music’s source or fictional audibility.¹³ This approach therefore supports the conclusion that the orchestral accompaniment to a diegetic song is not necessarily itself diegetic. For example, if Musetta’s waltz in La bohème acquires a diegetic status through her repeated

¹² See Sections 2.1.2 and 2.1.3.
¹³ See Section 2.3.2 for further discussion of these topics.
use of the song as a manipulative tool, we may conclude that she made no conscious
effort toward composing and arranging the orchestral accompaniment that doubles and
harmonically supports her melody.\textsuperscript{14} Therefore, her aria presents an example of vocal
diegetic music that occupies the same temporal space as instrumental nondiegetic music.
All this is to say that this particular variety of vocal diegetic/instrumental nondiegetic
 simultaneity carries the potential to be interpreted as the standard convention for all
diegetic music in opera, regardless of era or composer.\textsuperscript{15} Therefore, beyond merely
noting its potential for universal application, this last configuration of
diegetic/nondiegetic simultaneity is ultimately of limited interest.

Act II of \textit{Tosca} features two distinct instances of diegetic/nondiegetic simultaneity
that serve as the case studies for this discussion, one here and the other below in Section
5.1.2. As an example of instrumental diegetic against vocal nondiegetic music, the first
\textit{Tosca} example distinguishes itself from \textit{Manon}’s dancing lesson and \textit{Bohème}’s military
tattoo in that its visual aspect is minimized, pared down from staged musicians to an
open window that admits the sound of the diegetic music. Set in Roman police chief

\textsuperscript{14} See Section 4.3.1. for my argument in favor of this interpretation.
\textsuperscript{15} A counterexample appears in the first act of Puccini’s \textit{La rondine} where both the vocal melody and the
piano accompaniment to “Chi il bel sogno di Doretta” are diegetic since the explicitly identified composer is
seated at the piano on stage, playing and singing his composition. Even then, the question of the orchestral
enhancement that is added to the piano accompaniment after the song’s introduction arises. In the absence
of a staged orchestra, we may attribute the orchestration we hear to the fictional composer’s imagination,
but is that sufficient to ascribe it a diegetic status? At some point such ponderings become pedantic and
cease to contribute toward any meaningful understanding of the music or its dramatic context, hence my
claim that the vocal diegetic/instrumental nondiegetic configuration of simultaneity is of limited interest in
opera.
Baron Scarpia’s office within the Palazzo Farnese, Tosca’s second act is dominated by the character’s power-hungry and abusive nature as he conducts his investigation to locate and recapture an escaped political prisoner. Music from a party held by the Queen in honor of Napoleon’s defeat at Marengo can be heard through the open window until Scarpia tires of the distraction and slams it shut.\textsuperscript{16} Within the fictional diegesis, the music drifts into the office from elsewhere in the building while, by a real-world perspective, it comes from backstage. The first nine minutes of the act consist primarily of a diegetic gavotte, Scarpia’s nondiegetic aria “Ha più forte sapore,” an officer’s report on his failure in recapturing the escaped prisoner, and a diegetic cantata.

Like scenes in which musicians appear onstage, this scene features published stage directions that relate specifically to the aural/visual correspondence that supports diegetic interpretations of particular passages. Table 16 features all stage directions pertaining to the diegetic music, drawn from the second Italian edition of the opera’s vocal score, published by Ricordi in 1899.\textsuperscript{17} In addition to these stage directions, the libretto provides further textual support for the music’s diegetic status when Scarpia notes that the gavotte music indicates celebrated singer Floria Tosca, who is to perform a cantata there, has not yet arrived at the party.\textsuperscript{18} This textual detail ensures that audiences

\textsuperscript{16} See Table 16 below for published stage directions and translations.
\textsuperscript{17} See the introductory chapter for a full explanation regarding the choice of this edition for all stage directions.
\textsuperscript{18} Scarpia: “Alla cantata ancor manca la Diva, e strimpellan gavotte.” (The cantata is still missing its Diva, and they’re strumming gavottes.) This and all following translations of the libretto are adapted from
Table 16: Published stage directions pertaining to the offstage diegetic performance, *Tosca*, Act II, R2/m4–R19/m1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Stage Direction</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R3/m1</td>
<td>dal piano inferiore, ove la Regina dà una grande festa in onore di Melas, si ode il suonare di un’orchestra.</td>
<td>an orchestra is heard playing from the lower floor, where the Queen is giving a big party in honor of Melas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R13/m2</td>
<td>[Scarpia] passeggia meditando: ad un tratto si arresta – dall’aperta finestra odesi la Cantata eseguita dai Cori nella sala della Regina. Dunque Tosca è tornata – è là – sotto di lui gli balena un’idea e subito dice a Spoletta: “Introducete il Cavalier.”</td>
<td>[Scarpia] paces then suddenly stops. From the open window the Cantata performed by the Choirs in the Queen's room is heard, so Tosca is back [at the party]. He is suddenly struck by an idea and immediately says to Spoletta: “Bring in the gentleman [Cavaradossi].”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R15/m9</td>
<td>[Tosca] interno</td>
<td>[Tosca] offstage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R15/m11</td>
<td>[Cavaradossi] udendo la voce di Tosca, esclama commosso: “La sua voce!”</td>
<td>hearing Tosca’s voice, [Cavaradossi] exclaims, moved: “Her voice!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R15/m12</td>
<td>[Scarpia] all’udire la voce di Tosca che prende parte alla Cantata, si interrompe… riprendendosi</td>
<td>upon hearing Tosca’s voice taking part in the Cantata, [Scarpia] stops himself [then] recovers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R18/m7</td>
<td>[Scarpia] irritato e disturbato dalle voci della Cantata va a chiudere la finestra</td>
<td>irritated and disturbed by the voices of the Cantata, [Scarpia] closes the window</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R19/m1</td>
<td>[orchestral a tempo] Precisamente in questo punto Scarpia chiude con grand violenza la finestra</td>
<td>Precisely at the point when Scarpia closes the window with great violence, [the orchestra enters a tempo]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

recognize not only the diegetic source of the music, but also its significance to the foregrounded scene since Tosca is the lover of Mario Cavaradossi, Scarpia’s primary suspect in the ongoing search for the escaped prisoner. Furthermore, Scarpia’s explicit

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19 This and all following stage directions are drawn from Giacomo Puccini, *Tosca: Melodramma in tre atti*, Carlo Carignani, piano reduction (Milan: G. Ricordi & Co., 1899). Translations are my own.
interest in Tosca’s whereabouts offers a second explanation for the lengthy absence of
diegetic music between the end of the gavotte and the beginning of the cantata. Rather
than reflecting the implausible assumption that the party features no musical
entertainment throughout that span of time, the absence of diegetic music in the interim
demonstrates Scarpia’s mastery over his environment. Since this scene is all about the
police chief overseeing his realm to his own satisfaction, the score only reflects his
awareness of the Queen’s party if and when its progress is pertinent to his goals. He
knows he cannot expect Tosca to appear before him until after she has fulfilled her
performance obligations, so the party is dismissed from his mind once he has dispatched
an underling to deliver a note that will draw her into his malicious web. And when the
cantata music intrudes upon his space, it not only alerts him to her looming arrival, but
also provokes him into conducting his interrogation of Cavaradossi while her voice
floats through the open window, perhaps as a subtle reminder of what lies at stake for
him. By this interpretation, the diegetic music acquires psychological relevance since
whether or not we the audience hear the unseen party is determined by Scarpia’s limited
interest in the event.

While these textual references provide the most definitive evidence in favor of
the gavotte’s diegetic interpretation, its musical features offer additional support
through its contrast to the music that surrounds it, both horizontally and vertically. An
excellent example of Puccini’s late Romantic idiom, the act’s opening consists of a
descending thirds motive, repeated in three octaves, that recurs frequently throughout the act. Interspersed between them are quotations of themes from Act I, including those associated with Cavaradossi, Tosca, Angelotti, and Scarpia himself. Vocal contributions are primarily in a recitative style, with lots of text, few if any sustained notes, and many repeated pitches that primarily outline foundational chords. The first vocal line at all resembling a lyrical melody emerges only after the gavotte has come and gone.\(^\text{20}\) The gavotte itself, on the other hand, features not only thin orchestration of solo flute with viola and harp accompaniment that is entirely uncharacteristic of the lush textures that surround it, but it also completely independent motivic content (Ex. 38).\(^\text{21}\) Furthermore, the steady eighth-note bass pattern recalls old-fashioned accompanimental patterns far more appropriate to the opera’s 1800 setting than its 1900 premiere. Stylistic differentiation is further emphasized by the extramusical fact that Puccini borrowed this melody from his deceased brother Michele.\(^\text{22}\) In terms of vertical simultaneity, the nondiegetic score is restricted to Scarpia, whose part maintains the surrounding recitative-like textures unabated. His irregular and sporadic interjections span a total of

\(^{20}\) That line is the first of Scarpia’s aria (R6/mm1–4): “Ha più forte sapore la conquista violent ache il mellifluo consenso” (Violent conquest has a stronger flavor than mellifluous consent).

\(^{21}\) The first measure of the gavotte’s primary headmotive does echo in the orchestra’s piccolo, clarinet, and bassoon successively during its third coda (see Ex. 38, R5/mm1–5), but its motives are heard no more after the final PAC.

Example 38: Expanded sixteen-measure diegetic gavotte with nondiegetic vocal interjections, *Tosca*, Act II, R3/m1–R5/m5

Unless otherwise noted, this and all following music examples are adapted from Giacomo Puccini, *Tosca: Opera in Three Acts (After the play by Victorien Sardou)*, vocal score; Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica, librettists; John Gutman, trans. (New York: G. Schirmer, 1956). Translation: “The night is late. The cantata is still missing its Diva, and they’re strumming gavottes. You [Sciarrone] will wait for Tosca at the entrance. Tell her I await her once the cantata is finished… Better yet… Give her this note.”
a fifth with the substantial majority of his notes occurring on either the tonic D or the dominant A, which leaves the gavotte to bear all the melodic and rhythmic interest in this passage.

True to expectations, the gavotte exhibits the Classical proportions that herald
diegetic music in Puccini’s oeuvre (Fig. 25). An elided deceptive cadence to IV\textsuperscript{6} (Ex. 38, R3/m8) adds some harmonic interest to the otherwise simplistic melody while also providing the impetus for a sixteen-measure period that concludes with the expected PAC (Ex. 38, R4/m1).\textsuperscript{24} A variation and extension of the gavotte’s head motive prolongs the deceptive cadence to a plagal cadence with a passing tone through \( \frac{2}{3} \) in the bass (Ex. 38, R3/mm8–11). The gavotte ends with a succession of three codas that mimic its periodic structure through its progression from a plagal cadence (Ex. 38, R4/m5), to an IAC (Ex. 38, R5/m1), and finally to a PAC (Ex. 38, R5/m5). In its last coda, the gavotte melody further liquidates to only the measure-long head motive, which is repeated three times as an echo in the pit orchestra rather than the offstage ensemble (Ex. 38, R5/mm1–5). This curious feature problematizes the precise location of the shift back to nondiegetic music since the concluding PAC occurs in the orchestra, but the immediate return of full orchestral textures and hints toward various motives found throughout Act I clearly mark the succeeding music as wholly nondiegetic. The gavotte’s nearly consistent four-measure phrases is entirely independent of Scarpia’s vocal part, whose own utterances bear no such structural consistency (Ex. 38).

By any measure, the diegetic status of the instrumental gavotte could hardly be more definitive. In addition to the explicit references within the stage directions and

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{24} On sixteen-measure periods, see William E. Caplin, \textit{Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 65.}
This and all subsequent formal diagrams may employ the following abbreviations as formal structures and space dictate: “Ant” (antecedent), “Cons” (consequent), “CBI” (compound basic idea), “bi” (basic idea), “٪” (repetition of the basic idea), “ci” (contrasting idea), “c/c” or “cont/cad” (continuation and cadence), “exp” expansion, “ext” (extension), “intro” (introduction), and “cad” (cadence). All isolated lower-case letters represent phrases or motives, as appropriate.
libretto, a *Tempo di Gavotta* marking and temporary replacement of the surrounding meter and key signature render the shift equally clear in the score. The music’s dramatic context also supports its diegetic status through its light and airy mood, which contrasts with the dark weight of Scarpia’s explicitly stated plans for both Cavaradossi and Tosca. Additionally, the offstage ensemble suggests that inhabitants of the fictional diegesis are engaged in performing a piece that was consciously composed at some point in the past. While we can only speculate on the specific identity of the gavotte’s composer since this information has no bearing upon the plot and therefore is understandably absent, we can also clearly imagine a festive celebration in which a small cohort of musicians perform a gavotte as entertainment for the royal party attendees. Whether or not the attendees actively listen to the music, whether or not the gavotte’s composer is among them or even aware of the event, its presence suggests the existence of a fictional composer whose efforts are rewarded by its inclusion at a royal fete. Therefore, the gavotte fulfills the diegetic taxonomies of a premediated composition, both written and performed by undefined fictional characters, and supported by explicit textual references.26

### 5.1.2 Location, Style, and Timbre

Beyond instrumentation, opera provides a convergence of medium and tradition...
that offers ample opportunity for differentiating between simultaneous expressions of
diegetic and nondiegetic music. First, the stage itself poses many differences in terms of
physical location, including onstage versus offstage, horizontal dimensions between
stage left and stage right, and even possibly vertical aspects when the set includes
balconies or other elevated structures. Secondly, opera’s long history has produced
conventions and traditions pertaining to vocal style (e.g. speech-like recitative, legato
lyricism, angular coloratura, melismatic runs, percussive staccato, etc.) that can likewise
be utilized in distinguishing between simultaneous musical elements. Finally, the
genre’s intimate relationship with the human voice yields still other timbral contrasts,
including male versus female, solo versus ensemble, or even thin versus heavy. Each of
these contrasts can have some bearing over how we perceive particular passages of
music in terms of their relation to one another. As we saw already, the physical location
of the diegetic gavotte music in the offstage wings provides separation not only from the
interior setting of Scarpia’s office, but also the larger pit orchestra that supplies the
nondiegetic music. And the motivic/melodic content of the gavotte contrasts with the
recitative-like texture Scarpia employs. In the following analysis, however, contrasts
pertaining to vocal styles and timbres come to the fore since voices occupy both the
diegetic and nondiegetic elements in the next example of simultaneity.

The offstage cantata begins immediately after Scarpia’s officer Spoletta reveals
his suspicions regarding Cavaradossi’s knowledge of the escaped prisoner’s location,
drifting in through the open window from the Queen’s ongoing celebration below.

Having just learned of Cavaradossi’s arrest, Scarpia then decides to interrogate him immediately, using the sound of Tosca’s voice as leverage against his suspect. The music in this passage consists of four simultaneous elements. Foremost is the offstage cantata, itself consisting of a five-part mixed chorus and the soprano solo supplied by the opera’s eponymous character. Given the various references to the Queen’s party and Tosca’s impending performance even in Act I, the cantata’s diegetic status is explicit and without doubt. The second element consists of solo voices as Scarpia first prepares then commences his interrogation of Cavaradossi over his involvement in the prisoner’s escape from the Castel Sant’Angelo. The quick back-and-forth of their dialogue, as well as both characters’ brief acknowledgement of the diegetic performance in the background, marks their contributions to the scene as nondiegetic music. The two remaining elements appear in the orchestra, the most distinctive of which is a low, subdued flute melody traversing a minor third from F# to A above sustained string tremolos (Ex. 39, upper staff). Characterized by Mosco Carner as an “ominous march,” the recurring theme is consistently associated with Scarpia’s interrogation of

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27 This is the party Tosca mentions that would prevent her from meeting Cavaradossi that evening (“Ed io venivo a lui tutta dogliosa per dirgli: invan stassera il ciel s’infosa, l’innamorata Tosca è prigioniera…dei regali tripudi prigioniera!” Translation: And I was coming all sorrowful to tell him this evening the sky grows dark in vain, that the loving Tosca is a prisoner…of the royal festivities a prisoner!), and the cantata that the Sacristan notes was specially written for the Queen’s celebration (“…ed un’apposita nuova cantata con Floria Tosca!” Translation: …and a specially written cantata with Floria Tosca!).
Example 39: Orchestral elements of the cantata passage, *Tosca*, Act II, R14/1–3

Cavaradossi and operates independently from the passage’s vocal elements during the diegetic/nondiegetic simultaneity.29 This interrogation theme appears seven times in total, the first five occurring within the confines of this simultaneity, aligned either just before the cantata’s entrance or in pauses that result from its cadences (at R13/m1, R14/m1, R15/m1, R17/m1, and R18/m1).30 Finally, the last constituent element of this simultaneity appears in the bass clef of Example 39: off-beat staccato octaves that provide sparse harmonic support. With only occasional deviations that insert an additional octave on a downbeat, the rhythmic profile of the bassline continues unabated throughout the entirety of the cantata passage. In the absence of textual

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28 The second instance of the interrogation theme is reproduced here rather than the first due to the change in key signature that occurs at R13/m7.
30 The sixth iteration of the interrogation theme occurs after the diegetic/nondiegetic simultaneity has concluded, just after Tosca’s entrance on stage and corresponding with Scarpia’s decree that Cavaradossi is to be handed over to the executioner for “le forme ordinarie” (the ordinary methods), in other words, torture (R22/m1). In this instance, the cantata is gone and the soft flute theme has transformed into barbaric full brass, a dark portend of the pain and misery that awaits both Cavaradossi and Tosca. The final iteration occurs later in the act after Tosca has revealed the escaped prisoner’s hiding place and Cavaradossi is brought in following his torture (R40/m1). Now the theme sounds in sorrowful string timbres that reflect both Tosca’s unspoken guilt in betraying Cavaradossi’s confidence and his weariness in the wake of his travails.
guidance, however, the diegetic status of the two orchestral parts is less obvious than the vocal contributions at the outset and instead requires additional musical information.

Given the textually explicit nature of the cantata’s diegetic status as well as the opera’s 1800 setting, the offstage music’s characterization in scholarly literature as a pastiche of eighteenth-century vocal music is indeed most apropos.\textsuperscript{31} The text of the stage play by Victorien Sardou—upon which Puccini’s opera is based—specifies the music for Tosca’s performance as composed by Giovanni Paisiello (1740-1816) and even features a character to portray the real-world composer.\textsuperscript{32} Classical elements are therefore to be expected in this case and, while the eighteenth-century style is ambiguous enough for Julian Budden to characterize Puccini’s music as “mock-Renaissance” instead, it is certainly quite distinct from the remainder of the opera.\textsuperscript{33} Peppered with sustained high notes, Tosca’s solo addresses practical concerns, allowing her voice to soar above the close harmonies of the chorus and to be heard clearly despite the singer’s position offstage. At the same time, those soaring high notes offer an opportunity for both the fictional Tosca and the real-world singer who portrays her to shine. In distinct contrast, however, are Cavaradossi and Scarpia’s parts, largely engaged in the vocal style associated with recitative: a plethora of words in

\textsuperscript{32} Schickling, 130.
\textsuperscript{33} Budden, \textit{Puccini}, 212.
rhythmicized speech spread across sparse pitch content. Eighth notes are especially prevalent in these nondiegetic voices, particularly in syllabic configurations and often on repeated notes. The cantata, meanwhile, primarily employs eighth notes in melismatic slurs and never in monotonous repetitions of the same pitch. Both Tosca and the choral ensemble’s vocal style are melodic and lyrical while Cavaradossi and Scarpia’s are syllabic and speech-like, thereby creating a definite aural distinction between the two groups and aiding in their conceptual delineation.

In light of its designations as both eighteenth-century pastiche and diegetic music, the cantata’s Classical form is unsurprising. Even its text yields an ABA structure in which the third section provides a partial repetition of the first.

Sale, ascende l’uman cantico,  The human anthem rises, ascends,  varca spazi, varca cieli,  crosses spaces, crosses heavens,  per ignoti soli empirei,  through unknown empyrean suns,  profetati dai Vangeli,  as prophesied by the Gospels,  a te giunge, o re dei re!  to reach you, o king of kings!

Questo canto voli a te;  May this song fly to thee;  quest’inno di gloria voli a te,  May this hymn of glory fly to thee,  sommo Iddio della vittoria,  great God of victory,  Dio che fosti innanzi ai secoli.  God who was before the centuries.  Alle cantiche degli angeli s’unisca e voli a te.  May it fly to thee with the songs of the angels.  Or voli questo umano inno di gloria a te!  May this human hymn of glory fly to thee!

Sale, ascende l’uman cantico,  The human anthem rises, ascends,  varca spazi, varca cieli,  crosses spaces, crosses heavens,  A te giunge o re dei re!  To reach you, o king of kings!

The score also reflects this structure with a return to the opening melody as well as its A minor tonality (at R17/m5) following the B section’s excursion to the relative C major.
In addition to the contrasts offered by their differing physical locations and vocal styles, the diegetic cantata and nondiegetic interrogation are also visually separated in the score through the use of two separate time signatures. Although Puccini’s use of cut time for the cantata and 2/4 meter for the interrogation at first seems trivial due to their close relationship, the resulting shift in which each measure of the offstage cantata encompasses two measures of the staged interrogation yields important implications. First is the continuity that the 2/4 meter affords with the passages that immediately precede and succeed the cantata, further emphasizing the offstage music as an intrusion upon an ongoing scene that results in overlapping simultaneity. The second implication refers back to the cantata’s Classical context since its doubled duration for each measure yields eight-measure phrases that combine into sixteen-measure periods. Were the cantata to proceed in 2/4 meter, its cadences would outline a sixteen-measure phrase and a thirty-two-measure period rather than the more Classically plausible sixteen-measure version.

Despite its nineteen-measure duration, the cantata’s A section presents a normative Classical period. Constructed of consistent four-measure segments that correspond with the antecedent and consequent sub-phrase structures, the overall

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34 The presence of two different meters throughout this simultaneity (cut time for the diegetic cantata and 2/4 for the nondiegetic interrogation) complicates the matter of identifying specific measures in the score since each measure of the cantata encompasses two measures of the interrogation. For the remainder of this discussion, all measure numbers correspond with the nondiegetic music’s smaller 2/4 measures, whether discussing the cantata or the interrogation.
Figure 26: Formal diagram with interrogation themes (#1, #2, etc.), diegetic cantata, *Tosca*, Act II, R13/m1–R19/m1
length of the period is altered by a cadential extension that recasts the concluding IAC into a PAC (Ex. 40, R14/m16 – R15/m4). The first three iterations of the interrogation theme further delineate the periodic structure by outlining its two phrases (Ex. 40, R13, R14, R15; also see interrogation themes marked #1, #2, and #3 in Fig. 26). The interrogation theme’s half-diminished seventh chord on F# functions entirely independent of the cantata’s straightforward A minor tonality, instead suggesting the E minor that is emphatically confirmed immediately upon Scarpia closing the window and eliminating the cantata’s intrusion (R19/m1). The polytonal moments posed by the interrogation theme’s nondiegetic simultaneity with the diegetic cantata occur during moments of harmonic stasis, and the cantata’s tonicization of V during the basic idea of the consequent phrase even creates a common-tone resolution of the interrogation theme’s implied ii to its modally mixed tonic (Ex. 40, R14/m7). The A section’s periodic structure—complete with the polytonal punctuation provided by the recurring interrogation theme—returns in the cantata’s third section. Initially, the only adjustments from the original are the inclusion of Tosca’s soprano solo on the melody

35 Although the double cadential structure here fails to exhibit the specific characteristics Caplin assigns to an abandoned cadence, it does reflect his general assertion that “the open-ended quality of the former [IAC] cadence effectively motivates the later [PAC] one” (William E. Caplin, Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998], 107).

36 The interrogation theme also explicates the addition of an essentially empty measure to the end of the cantata’s consequent phrase. This addition accommodates the third iteration of the interrogation theme before the cantata music moves onto the B section, resulting in a three-measure cadential extension (Ex. 40, R15/mm3–4).
Example 40: Cantata/interrogation simultaneity, A section, *Tosca*, Act II, R13/m1–R15/m6

Translations appear in Section 5.1.2.
and the new embellishments on the bass octaves in the orchestra. In the consequent phrase, however, the arpeggiated chord that comprises its basic idea begins its ascent on the second half note instead of the third, allowing it to rise higher than the first time within the same four-measure span (Ex. 41, R18/mm1–8). Due to Scarpia’s abrupt closing of the window, the diegetic cantata is cut short and we never hear its conclusion; however, the few chords of the consequent phrase’s contrasting idea that do appear suggest a return to the period’s opening melody. Motivated by the idea of a small-scale rounded binary structure, Example 41 poses a hypothetical conclusion to the cantata, one that features immediate closure to the PAC as well as an echo of the primary melody that fills the remaining space of an expected sixteen-measure period.

Compared to the A sections, the cantata’s B section is considerably less traditional in its formal construction. With the addition of the soprano soloist, the chorus acquires an introductory function to her entrance while retaining the overall four-measure duration for the basic idea (Ex. 42, R15/mm5–9); however, the expected half
Example 41: Cantata/interrogation simultaneity, A' section with hypothetical ending, *Tosca*, Act II, R17/m1–R19/m1

**Antecedent**

**basic idea**

**contrasting idea**

interrogation theme #4
cadence arrives two measures early in the contrasting idea (Ex. 42, R15/m15). To compensate for this, the chorus provides echoes of the soloist’s melodic line as an extension that preserves the eight-measure antecedent phrase (Ex. 42, R15/mm16–20). Initially, the same construction appears to apply to the consequent as well, although the first measure of the choral introduction is condensed to a single-beat anacrusis (Ex. 42, R15/m20). The early cadence is missing in the consequent phrase, however, and the soloist instead continues her melodic line, embarking on a eight-measure expansion (Ex. 42, R16/mm9–24). Through its destruction of the cantata’s balanced four-measure

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38 Throughout this discussion of the cantata’s B section, measure counts refer to the local cut time meter while references to the measure numbers in Example 42 still refer to the nondiegetic music’s 2/4 meter. This means each measure referenced in the prose of this paragraph corresponds with each visual measure of the upper two staves in the example.
Example 42: Cantata/interrogation simultaneity, B section, Tosca, Act II, R15/m1–R17/m6\textsuperscript{39}

Translations appear within this section of prose: the diegetic cantata prior to Figure 26, and the nondiegetic interrogation after Example 42.
C: V \hspace{1cm} V \hspace{1cm} HC

**Consequent**

21 intro \hspace{1cm} (16) basic idea \hspace{1cm} contrasting idea

Contrasting idea

extension

- st'in - no a
te!

Sommo Iddio

al

le

-gi-to da Ca-stel San - t'An-gelo?

S: Ep - pur si pre - ten - de che voi l'abbiate ac-
proportions, this expansion undermines the formal expectations produced by both the A section and this section’s first phrase. Nevertheless, the parallel melodic structure and relatively strong tonicized half cadence preserve the sense of an antecedent-consequent relationship, albeit with substantially asymmetric dimensions of eight against eighteen measures. As confirmation of this interpretation, removal of the expansion entirely by
skipping directly from the consequent phrase’s contrasting idea (Ex. 42, R16/m8) to the
downbeat of the cadential extension (Ex. 42, R16/m25)—in other words, eliminating the
fifth and sixth systems of Example 42—yields a ten-measure phrase with a conclusive
PAC. Although still asymmetric with a three-measure basic idea (due to the shortened
choral introduction) and a seven-measure contrasting idea (including an empty measure
to accommodate the fourth iteration of the interrogation theme: Ex. 42, R17/mm3–4), the
parallel structure of the B section and its progression from half to perfect authentic
cadences confirms its hidden periodic form.

The preceding analysis of the diegetic cantata demonstrates the interrogation
melody’s function in defining its Classical form. Having already noted the nondiegetic
status for the remaining elements of this simultaneity, logic dictates that Cavaradossi
and Scarpia’s conversation will reveal no such musical structure. Noting the position of
the interrogation theme’s five iterations (marked by boxed ordinals below), however,
suggests they instead reflect the scene’s dramatic structure.

1

SCARPIA
Meno male!

SPOLETTA
Egli è là.

2

SCARPIA
Introducete il Cavalier.
A me Roberti e il Giudice del Fisco.

CAVARADOSSI
Tal violenza!
SCARPIA
Cavalier, vi piaccia accomodarvi…

CAVARADONI
Vo' saper…

SCARPIA
Sedete…

CAVARADONI
Aspetto.

SCARPIA
E sia!

CAVARADONI
La sua voce!

SCARPIA
v'è noto che un prigione oggi è fuggito da Castel Sant'Angelo?

CAVARADONI
Ignoro.

SCARPIA
Eppur si pretende che voi l'abbiate accolto in Sant'Andrea, provvisto di cibo e di vesti…

CAVARADONI
Menzogna!

SCARPIA
…e guidato ad un vostro podere suburbano…

CAVARADONI
Nego. Le prove?

SCARPIA
Un suddito Fedele…

SCARPIA
Cavaliere, please take a seat…

CAVARADONI
I want to know…

SCARPIA
Sit down…

CAVARADONI
I'm waiting.

SCARPIA
So be it!

CAVARADONI
You know that a prisoner…

CAVARADONI
Her voice!

SCARPIA
You know that a prisoner escaped from Castel Sant'Angelo today?

CAVARADONI
I know nothing of it.

SCARPIA
Yet it is claimed you greeted him in Sant'Andrea, gave him food and clothing…

CAVARADONI
Lie!

SCARPIA
…and led him to a suburban farm of yours…

CAVARADONI
I deny it. The proof?

SCARPIA
A loyal subject…
CAVARADOSSI
Al fatto. Chi m’accusa?
I vostri birri invan frugàr la villa.

SCARPIA
Segno che è ben celato.

CAVARADOSSI
Sospetti di spia!

SPOLETTA
Alle nostre richerche egli rideva…

CAVARADOSSI
E rido ancor.

SCARPIA
Questo è luogo di lacrime! Badate!

Or basta! Rispondete!

CAVARADOSSI
To the facts. Who accuses me?
Your spies searched the villa in vain.

SCARPIA
A sign that he is well hidden.

CAVARADOSSI
Suspicions of a spy!

SPOLETTA
He laughed at our searches…

CAVARADOSSI
And I still laugh!

SCARPIA
This is a place for tears! Be careful!

Enough! Answer!

Analysis of the text in relation to the appearances of the interrogation theme reveals a change of motivation and, consequently, mood for each section. The first section, between the first and second interrogation themes, serves a preparatory function, Spolletta and Scarpia working together to assemble all the necessary participants in the interrogation to come. The text offers nothing explicitly of the mood, but, based on Scarpia’s malevolent nature as revealed both in the Act I finale and in his Credo aria at the opening of this act, we may infer his malicious anticipation over Cavaradossi’s imminent interrogation. The next section (between the second and third interrogation themes) features Scarpia’s efforts to establish a veneer of civility at the outset, which

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40 For discussion of the Act I finale, see Section 5.2. below.
Cavaradossi consistently and insistently thwarts. When Scarpia relinquishes the attempt, the third interrogation theme sounds and he moves into the next stage. Now, the questioning begins, Cavaradossi initially proclaiming his ignorance before attempting to turn the tables on Scarpia and demanding to know the proof behind his accusations. Until this point, the interrogation has centered on the missing prisoner but now, after the fourth iteration of the interrogation theme, the focus shifts. No longer are Scarpia’s accusations filtered through an absent spy, but both he and Spoletta accuse Cavaradossi of direct involvement in the matter. When Cavaradossi attempts to wrest control of the confrontation from Scarpia by maintaining his silence, the head of police becomes angry and resorts to making threats. After the theme sounds once more, Scarpia abruptly slams the window shut on the sound of Tosca’s voice and his interrogation of Cavaradossi begins in earnest.

Although it accomplishes the goal in very different terms, the interrogation theme ultimately serves the purpose of measuring time. With respect to the diegetic cantata, time is measured in relation to its Classical form, and the theme outlines that process, both in terms of the A themes’ periods as well as the larger ABA structure. For the nondiegetic scene, the passage of time reflects a more dramatic process, one in which Scarpia seeks to control his environment by controlling Cavaradossi. The interrogation theme therefore aligns the two primary functions of this particular diegetic/nondiegetic simultaneity, providing a consistent means of measuring each one’s progress so that
they may advance in tandem. In this way, the temporal function that Luca Zoppelli allocates to some instances of diegetic music is transferred from the cantata’s Classical form to the nondiegetic plot via the interrogation theme that punctuates both. In direct contrast to the sense of temporal flexibility that often prevails in the operatic medium, such as when recitative propels the plot forward while arias pause for reflection, Zoppelli notes the utility of diegetic music as a measure of time in various dramatic instances—including “expectation,” “suspense,” or “psychological progression”—and even specifies its offstage position while foreground characters pose a few short phrases. While citing examples from Rossini and Verdi rather than Puccini, these descriptions certainly describe the effect of diegetic/nondiegetic simultaneity in Tosca’s second act. Indeed, both the gavotte and cantata emphasize the passage of time as Scarpia awaits the diva’s arrival.

The new complexity behind the simultaneity between Tosca’s Act II diegetic cantata and the nondiegetic interrogation scene lies in its use of voices to articulate both elements. Whereas the preceding gavotte benefitted from the timbral contrast between voices and instruments to differentiate its constituent parts, this second example of simultaneity requires other means of perceiving its disparate elements. Beyond the dramatic premise of the Queen’s party and Tosca’s performance, the cantata’s

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acousmatic nature provides the clearest means of separation from Cavaradossi and Scarpia’s foregrounded confrontation, the diegetic music’s visual context reduced to only an open window. Vocal quantity and range likewise serve a categorizing role, the choral ensemble of many voices and Tosca’s soaring soprano both in stark aural contrast to the two principal characters’ onstage voices in tenor and baritone ranges. Style also separates diegetic from nondiegetic with the cantata employing long, legato phrases while the staged conversation features short durations, syllabic delivery, and many repeated pitches. Lest we forget the combinatorial nature of the scene’s simultaneity, however, the interrogation theme unites the disparate elements, drawing them together into a whole that facilitates both elements’ fictional drama as well as the wholly practical matter of their real-world performance. The simultaneity also suggests a power struggle between the two types of music since Tosca’s voice is able to distract and temporarily usurp control over Scarpia, though the moment proves fleeting. After all, Tosca’s onstage position allows him to conquer her voice by simply closing the window and silencing it. Puccini’s musical representation of the scene further suggests an additional power struggle, one epitomized by the tonal clash between A and E minor that recurs with the interrogation theme’s persistent F♯, an aural depiction of “piety behind the

42 The published stage direction that informs this interpretation occurs just after Cavaradossi comments upon hearing Tosca’s voice. Scarpia’s direction reads, “all’udire la voce di Tosca che prende parte alla Cantata, si interrompe” (Hearing Tosca’s voice taking part in the cantata, he interrupts himself).
scenes, brutality before our eyes,” as Julian Budden puts it. Of course, this is not the first time Puccini has portrayed this particular dynamic within this opera, which brings us now to the famous Act I finale.

5.2 The Double Formal Complex in Tosca’s Act I Finale

Tosca’s Act I finale—a scene of Puccini’s original conception without precedent from the source play by Victorien Sardou—has received much attention in scholarly literature. Its dramatic scoring and impressive dimensions alone warrant such consideration, but it is the scene’s direct exposition of Scarpia’s malignant intent set against a backdrop of religious fervor that consistently turns scholars’ heads. While this juxtaposition of evil and divine, secular and sacred will return for more thorough consideration in the final section of this chapter, the immediate discussion focuses on the moment’s diegetic/nondiegetic simultaneity. Following Tosca’s final exit from the church of Sant’Andrea della Valle, the finale begins with Scarpia’s instruction that Spoletta should follow the singer then report back to him at the Palazzo Farnese. Once he departs, Scarpia begins a monologue in which he reveals his dual intent. Meanwhile, the chorus enters to fill in the scene behind him, assembling to recite prayers and sing a Te Deum led by the cardinal.

SCARPIA
Tre sbirri, una carrozza

SCARPIA
Three policemen, a carriage.

43 Budden, Puccini, 212.
Presto, seguila dovunque vada…
Non visto…provvedi!

Quickly, follow her wherever she goes…
Unseen…see to it!

SPOLETTA
Sta bene. Il convegno?

SPOLETTA
Very well. The meeting place?

SCARPIA
Palazzo Farnese!
Va, Tosca! Nel tuo cuor s’annida Scarpia!
Va, Tosca! È Scarpia che scioglie a volo il falco della tua gelosia.
Quanta promessa nel tuo pronto sospetto!
Nel tuo cuor s’annida Scarpia. Va, Tosca!

SCARPIA
The Farnese Palace!
Go, Tosca! Scarpia is nesting in your heart!
Go, Tosca! It is Scarpia who releases in flight the falcon of your jealousy.
How promising your prompt suspicion!
Scarpia is nesting in your heart. Go, Tosca!

THE CARDINAL (spoken)
Adjutorum nostrum in nomine Domini…

THE CARDINAL (spoken)
My help is in the name of the Lord…45

LA FOLLA (con voce parlata)
Qui fecit coelum et terram…

THE CROWD (spoken)
Who made Heaven and earth…

IL CAPITOLO (con voce parlata)
Sit nomen Domini benedictum
Ed hoc nunc et usque in seculum.

THE CROWD (spoken)
May the name of the Lord be blessed
from here and unto all eternity.

SCARPIA
A doppia mira tendo il voler,
nè il capo del ribelle è la più preziosa.
Ah di quegli occhi vittoriosi veder la fiamma illanguidir con spasimo d’amor,
fra le mie braccia illanguidir d’amor.
L’uno al capestro, l’altra fra le mie braccia…

SCARPIA
I aim my desire to a double goal,
nor is the rebel’s head the more precious.
Ah, to see the flame of those victorious eyes languish with a spasm of love,
to languish with love in my arms.
One to the noose, the other in my arms…

LA FOLLA
Te Deum laudamus, te Dominum confitemur!

THE CROWD
Thee Lord, we laud, and profess that Thou art our Lord!

SCARPIA
Tosca, mi fai dimenticare Iddio!

SCARPIA
Tosca, you make me forget God!

45 Latin texts and translations are underlined.
The text alone bears many implications regarding the scene’s blend of diegetic and nondiegetic associations, both from within the opera itself and outside it. Scarpia begins the scene with direct communication through his instructions to Spoletta, then adopts the sense of a soliloquy or monologue as he expresses his inner thoughts despite his words ostensibly directed toward the absent Tosca. Although he describes events that have yet to occur, Scarpia’s text fulfills expectations for nondiegetic associations by elucidating his twin goals in primarily direct and nonpoetic language. The sole diegetic implication appears in his fanciful personification of Tosca’s jealousy as a falcon, but this is consistent with his later characterization of Tosca herself as a falcon as she attempts to evade his officers. Such consistency demonstrates this particular poetic bent as a manifestation of Scarpia’s personality rather than the text of a diegetic song. Additionally, his use of poetic imagery for fiery gazes and post-coital exhaustion describe observable effects rather than abstract ideas, further limiting his text’s applicability to diegetic music. The Latin texts of the crowd and cardinal, on the other hand, pose the opposite effect, the centuries-long Western cultural precedent of setting Catholic texts to reciting tones, chant melodies, and composed works lending an inherent potential for diegetic music despite the lack of any other textual markers. The

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46 See Section 3.1.1. and Table 4 for textual markers of diegetic and nondiegetic music.
care with which Puccini selected this religious text—going so far as to enlist the aid of a Roman priest to ensure the prayer’s historical accuracy—further augments this association with real-world applications. Even in the absence of any other reference to music or song, the implication of a diegetic status remains strong, but further textual support does occur with the chorus’s previous appearance on stage. Scarpia’s earlier dismissal of the chorus by stating “Apprestate per il Te Deum” (Make ready for the Te Deum) suggests they retreat offstage for a rehearsal of the very performance they now present upon their return during the finale. Thus, not only cultural tradition but also other textual details confirm the diegetic status of the Latin text and its associated music.

While the text is straightforward, a preliminary analysis of the music’s form quickly proves more elusive in making a case for its diegetic affiliation. Consisting of two parallel phrases, the choral Te Deum at first seems to adhere to the Classical expectations fostered by the formal dimensions of diegetic passages examined thus far, but there are significant problems with such a reading (Fig. 27). First, both phrases end in an identical manner with a $8\ 7\ 6\ 5$ descent, thwarting the expectation for a weak-to-strong progression of cadences in a tight-knit period. Secondly, the proposed consequent concludes on a questionable half cadence, any sense of completion entirely overshadowed by three emphatic statements of the oppressive chords that open the

\[47\] Schickling, 129.
Figure 27: Preliminary formal diagram, choral *Te Deum, Tosca*, Act I, R87/m1–R89/m9

Period?

Antecedent?

Scarpia's "cadenza"

Consequent?

R87

bi

Scarpia motive

88

PAC

in E♭

bi

Scarpia motive

89

HC

in E♭

Scarpia motive extended

HC?

in E♭

PAC

in E♭
opera and are generally associated with Scarpia.\footnote{Michele Girardi, \textit{Puccini: His International Art}, Laura Basini, trans. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 164; Schwartz, \textit{Soundscapes}, 65.} The two phrases are also interrupted by Scarpia’s final solo expression, which functions like a cadenza by suspending the dominant harmony prior to the entire finale’s first conclusive cadence in E\# major. Despite its challenges to a diegetic interpretation, this structure does demonstrate how Puccini uses adjacency to distinguish between two simultaneous elements with Scarpia’s nondiegetic interruption of the diegetic chorus. However, until Scarpia joins the \textit{Te Deum’s} second verse, solo and choral elements—while occupying the same stage—are not truly simultaneous, the passage instead presenting consistent shifts in aural focus, from choral diegetic to solo nondiegetic before uniting in the performed \textit{Te Deum}.

In addition to these challenges to a Classical reading, the finale’s choral contribution appears only at its end and the earlier prayer occurs only in a spoken context. The promise of diegetic/nondiegetic simultaneity as suggested by the libretto therefore appears to be thwarted. Were this to constitute the extent of the scene’s simultaneity, it would prove very disappointing, indeed. Fortunately, Puccini resolves this concern through the inclusion of an organ that parallels the orchestral melody shortly after the finale begins (at R81) and sustains throughout the scene until Scarpia and the chorus unite in the second verse of the \textit{Te Deum}. Like Latin text, the organ carries strong real-world associations with church music and therefore identifies its
Figure 28: Double formal complex, Finale, *Tosca*, Act I, R80/m5–R89/m9

Diegetic Orchestra & Chorus

Nondiegetic Scarpia
melody—and, by association, that of the orchestra—as diegetic. The ensuing analysis demonstrates how the orchestral and choral diegetic music on the one hand, and Scarpia’s nondiegetic aria on the other, each express their own structural logic while occupying the same musical space, resulting in a double formal complex (Fig. 28). Discussion advances in three sections, seeking first a comprehensive understanding of each contributing element before determining how they work together simultaneously. Analysis of the full scene’s sacred diegetic music as represented by the organ and the religious texts yields a full-scene perspective that resolves the formal complications arising from a narrow focus on the *Te Deum* alone. This section also features a small example of a double formal complex that clarifies the concept and its analytical utility. Focus then turns toward the secular nondiegetic music exemplified by Scarpia and the malicious intent expressed in his aria, “Va, Tosca.” Finally, additional factors demonstrate how the two disparate elements of diegetic and nondiegetic music work together within the same musical space, yielding some preliminary conclusions regarding the scene’s dramatic context.

### 5.2.1 Sacred Diegetic Music

The key to reconciling the challenge posed by the absence of Classical form for the diegetic *Te Deum* is to expand our understanding of the scene’s diegetic component. Facilitated by the organ’s association with church music, this expanded conceptualization yields a familiar AABA structure, of which the *Te Deum* is only one
part (Fig. 29). Like the gavotte from Act II, the absence of any visual counterpart
weakens the case for instrumental diegetic music at the beginning of the finale. The
comprehensive form therefore reinforces the diegetic argument, as does the church
music’s structural and stylistic independence from the music that precedes it. Following
a brief introduction of alternating bells, the church music adopts a four-measure phrase
rhythm that remains consistent throughout the scene until the final coda. Such
unwavering uniformity contrasts sharply with the previous music, whose ebb and flow
is dictated by the text and its dramatic implications far more than by such finite
notational concepts as measures. An examination of the score even suggests that Puccini
worked hard to adapt his aural vision of the preceding music to the exacting demands of
musical notation, such as when a single measure of common time is followed by a single
measure of 9/8 meter before settling into 6/8 (R79, mm1–3). By contrast, not only does
the finale music adhere to cut-time meter and consistent four-measure phrases
throughout, but the dynamics are also predictable: a sustained crescendo extending
through the conclusion of the act from pianissimo to triple forte. The score also provides
clear indications of a stylistic shift through double barlines, new meter and key
signatures, and an abrupt change to a sharply diminished texture consisting only of the
low bells that introduce the finale. But the score’s clearest indication that the orchestra
constitutes diegetic music immediately with the opening of the finale is the tempo
marking of Largo religioso that coincides with the onset of the bells, explicitly aligning
Figure 29: Formal diagram, diegetic instrumental music, Finale, *Tosca*, Act I, R80/m5–R89/m9
the music with an expression of religious faith. Finally, the church music’s new emphasis on E♭ major that sustains throughout the scene also separates it from the preceding music’s B♭ focus.49

Although the absence of cadences throughout the first half of the scene precludes any tight-knit forms, the church music’s deployment of its four-measure segments creates form through their grouping on multiple levels. Three motives shown in Example 43 form the backbone of the finale’s formal structure. The first two are closely related by their rhythmic profiles and melodic contours, the second version merely extending the initial triadic ascent to include a seventh (Ex. 43). The third motive reverses the a segment’s original contour, loses its distinctive string of triplets, and alters the opening implied harmony from IV to vii♭, thus warranting its own designation as b (Ex. 43). These melodies appear at the beginning of the finale in an a a’ b b configuration that also suggests a mid-level a b construction (R80/mm10–21).50 Repetition of the same structure only four measures later confirms a high-level A and its repetition, which is reflected in Figure 28 (R82/m1–R83/m8). One last iteration of these melodies appears near the end of the scene. Here, a is hidden within octaves and countermelodies—not to

49 Tonality is a complex matter in this scene since the church music and Scarpia’s aria suggest two different keys: E♭ and B♭ major, respectively. Here and in the following section, tonality is considered locally—in relation to the independent diegetic and nondiegetic elements—before examining how the broad scope of the scene’s music unites them in a holistic manner.

50 Throughout this discussion, low-level units are identified by italicized lower-case letters (e.g. a and b), mid-level units by bold lower-case letters (e.g. a and b), and high-level units by unaltered capital letters (e.g. A and B).
mention Scarpia’s dominating solo line—but its basic melodic outline remains, as shown in Example 44 (R86/mm5–8, circled). Rather than repeating itself, however, this iteration of the a melody extends its string of triplets through the first segment of the Te Deum while the b melody then underscores the rest of the chorus’ first verse (Ex. 44, R87/mm1–8). An extension of b provides the sustained V that supports Scarpia’s cadenza-like exclamation before the orchestra is subsumed by the final, tutti unison (Ex. 44, R87/m9–R89/m1). A particular curiosity of this analysis that accounts primarily for the orchestra is that it violates the formal integrity of the Te Deum’s two phrases, splitting the first between an extension of a and the scene’s last statement of b. The b extension, meanwhile, underscores Scarpia’s cadenza which, from the perspective of the Te Deum, interrupts and expands the full choral expression of the music. The result is a double
Example 44: A'' section and Te Deum with outlines of a circled, Finale, Tosca, Act I, R86/m5–R89/m9

Translations appear in the introduction to this section of prose.
formal reading of this last high-level A, one whose structure depends upon whether we focus on the orchestra or the chorus (Fig. 30).
Beyond the core melodic motives, only contrasting elements remain within the scene’s orchestral part, which are found at two levels: the mid-level c that concludes each of the A sections, and the B section that defines the diegetic church music’s AABA form. In both cases, the harmonic and melodic simplicity found in the A sections is utterly lost. Eschewing functional harmony entirely, the first mid-level c consists of two descending chromatic tetrachords of augmented triads (Ex. 45). Similarly, the second mid-level c proves ambiguous in its sense of key, suggesting D minor through accidentals and melodic emphases on D and A. But when a fully diminished seventh chord suggests an impending cadence, its resolution is evaded and the tonal center slips down to D♭ via enharmonic reinterpretation of the chordal root (Ex. 46, R84/m8–R85/m1). D♭ major is never confirmed, however, and a lower chromatic neighbor to ♭5 pushes up a step higher to B♭, rather than completing its ornamental function or
Example 45: Harmonic complexity in first mid-level c, Finale, *Tosca*, Act I, R81/ mm5–8

Pivoting to F major (Ex. 46, R85/mm4–5, identified by an asterisk). This unexpected shift in tonality, however, is more successful, at last culminating in the scene’s first conclusive cadence: a PAC on B@ (Ex. 46, R86/mm3–4). Starting with the unexpected denial of D minor, this tonal meandering occurs within the diegetic music’s B section, appropriately contrasting the A sections’ harmonic and formal simplicity. Its melody also provides contrast through the staid quarter notes that pose a marked departure from the dominating triplets (e.g. Ex. 46, R85/m2). As for motivic content, the mid-level c in A’ features a blend of a and b motives that align it with all A sections, beginning with a familiar triadic outline that leads to an undulating tail spanning a sixth in stepwise triplets (Ex. 46, R84/mm1–8). The B section, however, consists of motives that have no correspondence elsewhere in the form, further distinguishing it from the A sections.

52 Translations appear in the introduction to this section of prose.
Example 46: Harmonic complexity in second mid-level c and section B, Finale, *Tosca*, Act I, R85/m1–R86/m4

Vocal Form

Scarpia

Organ

Orchestra

Instrumental Form

\[ \text{Vocal Form} \]

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\[ \text{Vocal Form} \]

\[ \text{Scarpia} \]

\[ \text{Organ} \]

\[ \text{Orchestra} \]

\[ \text{Instrumental Form} \]

\[ \text{Vocal Form} \]
Ah di quegli occhi vittoriosi veder la

flam - ma il-langui - dir con spa - si - mo d'a - mor

V⁶/F  B♭: Ff
evaded cadence

...evaded
This analysis of the finale’s diegetic content presents two notable strengths. This first is the grouping and repetition of melodic content that overcomes the music’s dearth of cadences to realize its Classical form. The harmonic complexity of its contrasting elements, however, is surprising within that context and therefore threatens in some small measure to undermine the music’s diegetic status. Developmental function explicates the B section’s tonal ambiguity and evaded cadences as well as its emphatic conclusion on B♭, which both facilitates Scarpia’s subsequent cadenza-like passage and reinterprets B♭ major as the dominant of E♭, which the church music has projected all along. Of the three mid-level c’s, this last one is the most harmonically stable despite its shift from

53 On Classical developmental function, see Caplin, 139–159. The cadence in B♭ is also essential since, as discussed below, Scarpia’s part adheres to that key more than the diegetic music’s E♭. This cadence therefore serves as both the concluding PAC to Scarpia’s nondiegetic aria and a strong tonicized HC in the diegetic church music.
the melody’s original Phrygian mode to major tonality.\textsuperscript{54} The first two sections’ mid-level \textit{c}, on the other hand, lack both harmonic stability and a Classical explanation for it, and therefore warrant further consideration as our analysis of the scene progresses. The second and greater strength within this analysis, however, is the formal conflict between the orchestra and the choral \textit{Te Deum} in the final A section. The double formal complex presented in Figure 30 offers the best possible perspective for this span of music since adhering to either one of the two possibilities creates irreconcilable contradictions when considering the opposing musical element. This solution previews the overall perspective toward which this analysis is building, one that yields new insights into the musical and dramatic dynamic on display within this famous example of diegetic/nondiegetic simultaneity. In order to fully comprehend the complexity of this finale-long double formal complex, however, we must first investigate Scarpia’s secular contribution to the scene.

\textbf{5.2.2 Secular Nondiegetic Music}

As is often the case in staged performance media, \textit{Tosca}’s libretto leaves much to the imagination when it comes to its characters’ backgrounds. The original play by Victorien Sardou, however, offers more information. At the time of the portrayed events, Sicilian policeman Vitellio Scarpia is new to Rome, having arrived in the city only a

\textsuperscript{54} Girardi, 163.
week earlier. Appointed by the King of Naples to manage and subdue Napoleonic sympathizers in the city, his loyalties have suddenly fallen under suspicion due to his renowned proclivities for beautiful women. Specifically, rumors have spread that the former Consul Angelotti’s escape from Castel Sant’Angelo was facilitated by Scarpia himself as a means of gaining the approval of the prisoner’s lovely sister, the Marchesa Attavanti.⁵⁵ Whereas the police chief’s swift recapture of the prisoner would go far toward reclaiming his reputation in Sardou’s version, Puccini’s libretto provides no such context for his unswerving and violent dedication to his task. This leaves audiences to interpolate a personal vendetta between Scarpia and any combination of Angelotti, Cavaradossi, and Tosca, or to simply assign a particularly sadistic nature to the opera’s antagonist. Indeed, Puccini’s music reinforces the latter impression throughout the opera with low timbres and heavy brass that routinely lend Scarpia an ominous and oppressive air.

The first order of business in advancing our analysis is now to determine what portion of the Act I finale aligns with Scarpia’s nondiegetic aria. While his vocal part is easy to allocate and the orchestra’s church music is already spoken for, this still leaves the oscillating bells that underscore the majority of the scene.⁵⁶ Ordinarily, bells project a

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⁵⁵ Carner, 384-385.
⁵⁶ In addition to the vocal, orchestral, and bell parts, the score also calls for a cannon that fires twelve times from the first mid-level c to the second verse of the Te Deum (R81/m5–R88/m2). Since it punctuates the downbeat of nearly all four-measure units consistently and without deviation, I consider the cannon a
diegetic affiliation since they draw definitive associations with the diegesis beyond the visual parameters portrayed onstage. The dramatic context of this scene supports this conclusion since church bells are not only often associated with celebrations, but also appear in a diegetic sense at the beginning of Act III with its soundscape of the Roman dawn. However, the music of the Act I finale suggests a different conclusion. The bells create an ostinato from two constantly alternating pitches that outline the tonic and dominant of B, but that interpretation of their harmonic relationship conflicts with the diegetic church music’s orientation toward E major. Meanwhile, Scarpia’s vocal lines pose yet another alternative. With no cadences to confirm any key, Scarpia’s vocal line suggests F minor with its insistence on F throughout the recitative, as well as the arioso’s consistent outlining of F minor triads and seventh chords (Ex. 47, R80/mm19–21, R82/mm2–4, and R82/m7). The relative sparsity of B and the near total absence of E in the solo vocal also lead Scarpia’s music to reject the church music’s tonality and align itself more with the bells. Once we have concluded that the bells align more with the secular nondiegetic music than its sacred diegetic counterpart, however, an additional percussive accent to the hypermetric organization of the orchestra and bell parts, rather than an independent contributor to the scene’s musical landscape.

57 This assumption is reflected in Arman Schwartz’s description of bells as an example of “sounding architecture.” (Schwartz, Soundscapes, 52.)

58 Although the key signature is missing the D for F minor, all D’s are flat except at R81/m6 where the harmony is dictated by the chromatically descending augmented triads, rather than F minor. Alternatively, the centrality around F can also be understood as the reciting tone of the Te Deum that concludes the scene. However, the choral Te Deum’s temporal separation from the recitative and arioso sections of Scarpia’s solo, as well as the repeated melodic outlining of F minor triads, lead me to this F minor conclusion.
Example 47: Scarpia’s nondiegetic vocal music with diegetic motives and ostinato bells, Finale, Tosca, Act I, R80/m5–R89/m1

Scarpia

Diegetic Motives

Bells

Recitative

Tre sì. Una carrozza. Presto, segui la donna. Vada, non visto, prov-

Motives: a

(Arioso)

Vedelli? (Sta bene, il con-vegno?) Palazzo Far- nese!

a'

Nel tuo cor s'anni-da Scarpia. Va, Tos-ca! 

b

È Scarpia che

(81)

scioglie a volo il falco del-la tua ge-lo-sia. Quanta promessa nel tuo pronto sospetto!

c

a

(82)

Nel tuo cuor s'anni-da Scarpia. Va, Tos-ca!

b

(83)
Aria (84)

A dop-pia mi-ra ten-do il vo-ler, nè il capo del ri-bel-le

(85)

è la più pre-zio-sa. Ah di quegli occhi vit-to-rio-si ve-der la fiamma il lan-gui-dir con

(86)

spa-si-mo d’a-mor fra le mie braccia illanguidir d’a-mor. L’uno al ca-pe-stro, l’altra fra le mie

Chorus (87)

brac-cia. (Te Deum la-uds mea: De-\n

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question arises: is it Scarpia’s words or the bells that yield a stronger case regarding their united diegetic or nondiegetic status? Since the first offers concrete thoughts and the other only assumed associations, I read the bells more as a feature of Scarpia’s nondiegetic music than vice versa. That said, the diegetic connotation of the bells is not utterly lost and instead serves to weave Scarpia more intimately into the religious context of the scene, aligning his music with the church despite his denial of that entity’s music.

Scarpia’s music divides into four sections, tracing a common progression for a solo vocal scene from recitative to arioso to aria and concluding with a choral component (Fig. 31). The recitative encompasses his instructions to Spoletta and represents stylized speech, precisely rhythmicized and entirely on F (R80/mm8–16). The arioso section is anchored by the “Va, Tosca” motive that repeats three times, always dropping from B♭ to F and always aligned with the moment in which the alternating
bells make the same pitch transition (Ex. 47, R80/m17–R83/m4). The arioso’s internal dimensions, however, are asymmetrical and unpredictable, with two statements in reversed order (Ex. 47, R80/mm–21 and R82/m6–R83/m3) framing Scarpia’s own perception of his effect upon Tosca (Ex. 47, R81/m5–R82/m5). Following a brief transition during which the chorus begins its spoken prayer, Scarpia’s aria begins in earnest, characterized by his first truly lyrical expressions that fall into pairs of four-measure units (Ex. 47, R84/m1–R86/m4). Beginning with a complementary countermelody, Scarpia’s line soon merges with the orchestra (at R84/m7) then builds toward the PAC in B♭ that concludes the aria proper. His first and only statement of the church music’s head motive then transitions into the choral section, which he joins in a fervent fortissimo after accusing Tosca of causing him to forget God (Ex. 47, R86/m5–R89/m1). This breakdown of Scarpia’s nondiegetic contribution to the scene refutes Mosco Carner’s broad assertion that the aria follows the orchestra in its “essential outline and rhythm,” demonstrating that this applies to only one section of the vocal music. Of greater interest is the recognition that Scarpia’s alignment with the diegetic music increases over the course of the scene, first ignoring, then complementing, and finally aligning with the church’s melody. Not until he stops and makes a conscious effort, though, do his words also align with the religious music that has accompanied him all along.

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59 Circles in Example 44 demonstrate how Scarpia’s vocal line traces the original a head motive (R86/mm5–8).
60 Carner, 395.
Figure 31: Formal diagram, Scarpia's vocal music, Finale, *Tosca*, R80/m5–R89/m1\textsuperscript{61}

Parenthetical labels indicate passages in which Scarpia does not sing.

\textsuperscript{61} Parenthetical labels indicate passages in which Scarpia does not sing.
The aria section presents the core of Scarpia’s vocal contribution to the scene. His double statements of the \(ab\) and \(d\) units reflect the \(aab\) structure of the orchestra’s \(A\) sections, although a parallel mid-level \(c\) fails to manifest. After that, Scarpia’s form shifts to align directly with the chorus, adopting the structure shown in the lower part of the \textit{Te Deum’s} double formal complex (see Fig. 30). With the recitative and arioso sections delaying the aria proper until Rehearsal 84, Scarpia’s central statement of his goal to see Cavaradossi executed and Tosca in his arms aligns with the most harmonically advanced passage in the finale. Here, the arioso section’s \(F\) minor implications are abandoned for new hints toward \(D\) minor (at R84), \(D\) major (at R85), and finally \(B\) major (at R85/m5). Although only the last of these is confirmed by a cadence, all three feature a harmonic reinterpretation of the continuous \(F/B\) bell ostinato as shown in the lower section of Table 17. Additionally, the upper section of this table demonstrates how the same chords support both the church’s \(E\) major and Scarpia’s \(F\) minor by expanding the \(F\) minor and \(B\) major triads to incorporate a chordal seventh (Table 17). Following the aria proper, however, the harmonic content of the scene is greatly simplified both vertically and horizontally. Not only do half and perfect authentic cadences conclusively confirm \(E\) major from here to the end of the act, but Scarpia’s music now also aligns with the church’s, both parts united in their mutual tonality.

The last portion of the finale to be taken into consideration is the coda (see Ex. 44, R89/mm1–9). Centered around two direct quotations of the Scarpia motive (Ex. 44,
Table 17: Harmonic reinterpretations of ostinato bells, Finale, *Tosca*, Act I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Passage</th>
<th>Key</th>
<th>Ostinato Bells and Associated Chords</th>
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|                   | Aria                   |         | d♭ f a♭   | g♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭♭تبادل  

R89/mm1–2 and mm3–4) and a third transposed statement (Ex. 44, R89/mm5–6),

Puccini’s musical bookend to the act reveals the purpose behind his adjustment of the original *Te Deum* melody. By shifting up a third and beginning on the last note of the first verse to create a ♯5-♭1 anacrusis, Puccini reorients the original Phrygian melody to E♭ major. This adjustment allows the chorus to end on ♯5, thereby facilitating its elision with the Scarpia motive’s first chord on B♭ major. The tritone relationship between the motive’s first and last chords means that, by beginning on the original motive’s final E major tonality, the transposed version circles back around to end on B♭ major. With the addition of a seventh (Ex. 44, R89/m7), the heavy brass chord once again reorients itself

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62 On Puccini’s changes to the original Roman *Te Deum*, see Girardi, 163.
to the overall Eb major tonality and creates a PAC with all the emphasis necessary to conclude the first act. The motive’s close association with Scarpia throughout the opera—as well as its complete departure from the form and style that have sustained throughout the scene—shifts the orchestra’s diegetic orientation at this point, abandoning the sacred diegetic music for a nondiegetic representation of Scarpia’s corrupt intent. The vigor of this presentation with heavy, low brass, fortissimo dynamics, and tutta forza marking in the score also symbolizes the policeman at his strongest and most malevolent: a fitting precursor to the second act where he dominates.

5.2.3 All Together Now

The great achievement of this scene lies in that, despite the clarity of each element as a separate and individual piece that reflects its own idiomatic form according to instrumental and vocal standards, they still work together. Various factors contribute toward uniting the diegetic and nondiegetic elements, including its staging. Unlike the diegetic/nondiegetic simultaneities of Act II, the published stage directions for this finale explicitly call for both elements to occupy the same physical space, at least as far as the vocal/vocal simultaneity is concerned (Table 18). These directions position Scarpia in the foreground while the chorus of worshippers fills the area behind him. Although surely realized in a variety of ways in Tosca’s many productions, this general outline for the staging suggests a visual analogy to the scene’s musical effect: two separate entities in the same space at the same time. The stage directions also suggest Scarpia’s effort to
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Stage Direction</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R80/m5</td>
<td>la folla si aggruppa nel fondo, in attesa del Cardinale; alcuni inginocchiati pregano</td>
<td>The crowd gathers in the background, waiting for the Cardinal. Some pray, kneeling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R81/m1</td>
<td>esce il corteggio che accompagna il Cardinale all’altare maggiore: i soldati svizzeri fanno far largo alla folla, che si dispone su due ali</td>
<td>The Cardinal’s entourage enters and accompanies him to the high altar. The Swiss Guard make way through the crowd, which arranges itself in two wings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R83/m4</td>
<td>Scarpia s’inchina e prega al passaggio del Cardinale</td>
<td>Scarpia bows and prays as the Cardinal passes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R83/m5</td>
<td>il Cardinale benedice la folla che reverente s’inchina</td>
<td>The Cardinal blesses the reverently bowing crowd [as they pray aloud in unison].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R86/m6</td>
<td>Tutta la folla è rivolta verso l’altare maggiore; alcuni s’inginocchiano</td>
<td>The whole crowd turns toward the high altar [as they prepare to sing]. Some kneel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R87/m1</td>
<td>resta immobile guardando nel vuoto</td>
<td>[Scarpia] remains motionless, staring into the void [as the Te Deum begins].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R87/m9</td>
<td>riavendosi come da un sogno</td>
<td>[Scarpia] recovering, as if from a dream [to sing his cadenza-like interruption before joining the Te Deum’s second verse].</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

align himself with the worshippers through his kneeling for a blessing as the cardinal passes. However, his ensuing text—centered on destroying Cavaradossi and seducing Tosca—exposes his devotion as false, his mind not at all upon matters of religion or faith. This visual detail demonstrates the extent to which Scarpia’s inward and outward realities are out of phase with one another, and the scene’s double formal complex therefore illustrates the music’s function as an aural representation of that misalignment (see Fig. 28). The consistency of the diegetic music’s formal structure, in conjunction

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63 Bracketed additions within the translations position the stage directions within the activity of the scene.
with the stylistic variability found within each section of Scarpia’s vocal part, suggest that it is he who adjusts and adapts to the church music’s structure when they begin to align around Rehearsal 85. However, lest we imagine this implies true Christian piety on Scarpia’s part, both his final outburst accusing Tosca as the cause behind his neglect of God and the act’s conclusion with its heavy, oppressive chords expose the fraudulent nature of his unity with the choral music, a disguise behind which he obscures his true intentions.

In addition to visually representing how diegetic and nondiegetic elements of the scene employ the same music to their own formal ends, the double formal complex also encourages reconsideration of the music’s relationship to each element’s dramatic entity, especially its harmonic content. The preceding analysis of the sacred diegetic music concluded that Puccini’s more complex harmonic passages reflect its form on two levels: 
the mid-level c’s that draw a structural parallel between the first two A sections (R81/mm5–8 and R84/mm1–8), and the high-level B that provides optimal contrast to those A sections (R85/m1–R86/m4). Scarpia’s music, on the other hand, formally unites two of these instances as the core of his aria and claims them for the first direct revelation of his true intent (R84/m1–R86/m4). For the church, harmonic complexity is

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64 Although the last A section is excluded from this reading that unites the previous A sections, the last mid-level c displays its own harmonic uniqueness through the scene’s only instance of tutti unison (R88/m2–R89/m1). Rather than complicating the church music’s dominating Es major, this last mid-level c takes the opposite approach by eliminating all explicit harmonic context.
marked and serves as a moment of contrast, as though to declare, “This is what we are not.” But for Scarpia, tonal ambiguity and inconsistency suggest the groundlessness and variability of his nature, revealing a man who has no qualms with taking any advantage—whether just or corrupt—to achieve his goals. Expanding this association between Scarpia and harmonic complexity, we may also reconsider the church music’s first mid-level c (R81/mm5–8). This passage of chromatically descending augmented triads falls within the middle portion of Scaripa’s arioso, just after his second statement of “Va, Tosca.” Although not yet adopting the transparency displayed in the aria proper, Scarpia’s text in this moment exposes the first hint of his nefarious design: “È Scarpia che sciglie a volo il falco della tua gelosia” (It is Scarpia who releases in flight the falcon of your jealousy). The orchestra’s adoption of the dissonant chords and their non-functional parallel descent thus suggests an intrusion of Scarpia’s instability upon its benign musical landscape, as though his malevolence infects the church music. Though brief at first, with the first mid-level c’s single four-measure departure from tonal blandness, the expanded dimensions of the sacred diegetic music’s second foray into harmonic complexity suggests a closer connection with Scarpia than is at first apparent. The notion of the church as an accomplice to Scarpia’s schemes—whether complicit or unwitting—is further strengthened by the emphatic PAC in B♭ major that both parts achieve through melodic and harmonic unity.

Nicholas Baragwanath presents yet another means of drawing the church and
Scarpia together through first- and second-position compound cadences in the
partimento method. A Neapolitan species of counterpoint considered in Puccini’s Italian
tradition to be rudimentary training for all composers, such cadential formulae were
considered old-fashioned and suitable only for “the most conservative ecclesiastical
styles” by the end of the nineteenth century. Partimento cadences appear in three
varieties that outline the dominant and tonic of a particular scale in the bass. Of those
three, compound cadences feature suspensions and can be notated in one of three
positions, depending upon which scale degree appears in the soprano. Baragwanath
draws a direct connection between compound cadences and the two versions of the
head motive from the church music, noting that “Puccini goes beyond any mere pastiche
of ecclesiastical style by reducing an entire tradition of church music to its most basic
and fundamental pedagogical exercise.” In addition to corroborating the diegetic
music’s association with the church, Baragwanath’s study of Italian compositional
traditions ties together two aspects of the scene’s music that have heretofore remained
separated. Whereas the preceding analysis of the diegetic church music focuses upon
harmonies implied by its melodic content, Baragwanath’s Example 2.3 (reproduced in
Ex. 48) focuses upon the relationship between the melodies and the constant F/B

65 Nicholas Baragwanath, The Italian Traditions and Puccini: Compositional Theory and Practice in
66 Baragwanath, 60.
Example 48: Comparison between compound *partimento* cadences and diegetic head motive, Finale, *Tosca*67

![Comparison between compound partimento cadences and diegetic head motive, Finale, Tosca.](image)

 alternating bells.68 Example 48 not only reproduces Baragwanath’s illustration of compound cadences, but also demonstrates how motives $a$ and $a'$ reflect the first- and second-position illustrations, respectively. Circled pitches in Puccini’s melodies trace the stepwise descent of the *partimento* cadences in first and second positions that lead Baragwanath to characterize the finale’s music as “mindless repetitions of the cadence formula, devoid of feeling or purpose.”69 Baragwanath’s perspective not only explicates the bitonal aspect of my analysis by reconciling the E♭ major implications of the melodic head motive with the F and B♭ ostinato bells, but also highlights the multifaceted nature

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67 Compound *partimento* cadences in three positions reproduced from Baragwanath, 60, Example 2.3.
68 Baragwanath, 60.
69 Baragwanath, 60.
of this scene. In drawing associations along a different set of criteria, Baragwanath’s approach joins with my diegetic/nondiegetic focus to emphasize the depth of Puccini’s accomplishment in this finale.

In the process of assessing how the two separate elements of diegetic and nondiegetic music work together within the same scene, questions inevitably arise regarding each one’s dramatic entity and how they relate to one another. Most commentary upon the scene focuses on the juxtaposition of contrasting sacred and secular elements with little to no effort toward reconciling the two.\footnote{Examples include: Carner, 395–396; DiGaetani, 85–86; Budden, \textit{Puccini}, 209.} Arman Schwartz, however, postulates a different way of interpreting the scene’s two dramatic entities, of “good and evil marching together.”\footnote{Arman Schwartz, “Rough Music: \textit{Tosca} and \textit{Verismo} Reconsidered,” in \textit{Nineteenth Century Music} 31, no. 3 (Spring 2008): 240.} Adapting Schwartz’s notion to my own analytical observations, the diegetic music represents goodness through its religious affiliation, harmonic stability, and Classical formal clarity, while Scarpia’s harmonic complexity and textual revelations align the nondiegetic music with evil. Figure 28’s visual representation of the scene’s double formal complex illustrates how these two elements stroll side-by-side throughout the scene, each advancing their own objectives independently of the other until the end, when they indeed unite through their conjoined forms, melodies, and texts. While retaining Schwartz’s association of each dramatic entity with good and evil, I offer an alternative reading, of good \textit{corrupted} by \ldots
The notion of the orchestra’s tonal clarity infected by Scarpia’s malicious intent suggests a particular dynamic between secular and sacred authority, as does the idea of Scarpia’s disguising himself in false piety. If, as seen in the music of the Act I finale, the evil intent of a single powerful individual is capable of subverting the good intent of the church, what refuge does that leave for victims caught in his sights? An effort to fully comprehend the implications of this question and its significance to the opera as a whole therefore leads us to matters of history, politics, and religion.

5.3 Tosca’s Triangle

Both scenes of Tosca’s diegetic/nondiegetic simultaneity juxtapose sacred diegetic music against a secular nondiegetic counterpart. In the Act I finale, the religious music exemplified by the organ and the choral Te Deum provide the diegetic backdrop to Scarpia’s solo expression of his malign intent for the opera’s protagonists. And in Act II, the sound of Tosca’s cantata on a religious theme floats in through an open window to intrude upon Scarpia’s interrogation of Cavaradossi. The consistency with which diegetic religious music undergirds singing-as-speech that advances the opera’s secular plot leads to questions of the association between the two. As the dramatic driver and sole principal character involved in both scenes, Scarpia serves as the focal point for the secular nondiegetic elements. Furthermore, his status as a servant of the crown—the head of the Roman police, appointed by the King of Naples and answerable only to the Queen—associates him with secular authority. The diegetic elements, meanwhile, align
with the sacred authority of the Church. Thus, both moments of simultaneity suggest a latent relationship between sacred and secular authority in which one or the other affects its counterpart. In the Act I finale, this manifests through Scarpia’s complex harmonies infecting the diatonic banality of the church music, while Act II poses Tosca’s sacred cantata as a distraction to Scarpia’s objectives.

Although Tosca is not unique among Puccini’s operas for its use of a historical setting, it is unique for its mention of an historic event that impacts the central plot. This is most evident in Act II when Cavaradossi’s outburst upon hearing the news of Napoleon’s victory at the Battle of Marengo influences Scarpia to redouble his efforts toward destroying the recalcitrant painter. However, this event also pertains to both scenes of diegetic/nondiegetic simultaneity since all three diegetic performances occur in celebration of the ultimately mistaken news of Napoleon’s defeat. Given Napoleon’s historical position as a military leader of the French Revolution, an understanding of the real-world historical context is warranted in order to comprehend its impact upon the plot. As is often the case with military history, the political perspective also becomes pertinent, especially given not only Cavaradossi and Scarpia’s clear alignment with opposite sides of the conflict, but also Puccini’s noted avoidance of the subject. No discussion of political power within early nineteenth-century Rome, however, is

72 See full analysis of “L’alba vindice appar” in the introductory chapter.
complete without an equivalent understanding of the Roman Catholic Church.

Furthermore, an understanding of the political atmosphere in the opera’s 1800 setting provides only part of the story, and the discussion therefore expands to include Puccini’s 1900 perspective as well. Finally, the duality of the Roman Catholic Church as a source of both worldly power and religious faith also comes to the fore. The discussion of these historical, political, and ecclesiastical contexts culminates in a triangular diagram to illustrate the dynamics between each of the opera’s principal characters and the prominent themes that recur throughout its plot.

5.3.1 Recurrent History

Victorien Sardou’s historical setting that specifies his play begins on June 17, 1800 positions Tosca at the outset of Italy’s Napoleonic rule (1800-1815); however, this was not the first time French revolutionary ideas had impacted the Italian people. The first period of French influence saw the establishment of the Roman Republic (February 1798 to September 1799). Though short-lived, this era brought significant political change to Rome, eliminating papal rule and establishing a new public government in its

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73 A third, twenty-first century perspective is also implied by my own historical position, an implication that forms the basis of Deborah Burton, Susan Vandiver Nicassio, and Agostina Ziino’s collection of essays titled Tosca’s Prism: Three Moments of Western Cultural History (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2004).

74 Schickling, 121.

place.\textsuperscript{76} Although subject to the imperial oversight of French authorities, the most significant change both in terms of Italian history and operatic plot was the replacement of local ecclesiastical rule with secular figures, most notably the Roman Consul who served as the executive head of the republic.\textsuperscript{77} Among those secular figures was Liborio Angelucci, a doctor and staunch supporters of French liberalism in Rome.\textsuperscript{78} Arrested on suspicion of an attack against Pope Pius VI in 1794, he spent several months imprisoned in the Castel Sant’Angelo before being relegated to home arrest following a suicide attempt. Three years later, he met Napoleon and made his case for the liberation of Rome and subsequently became its first consul in 1798. Upon the Roman Republic’s fall, Angelucci fled to France, returning to Italy in 1800 following the Austrian defeat at Marengo, and to Rome in 1809 after the city’s re-occupation by the French. Although these historical facts preclude Angelucci’s direct correlation with Tosca’s escaped prisoner, the former consul Cesare Angelotti, the similarity of their names and political positions is perhaps not so coincidental.\textsuperscript{79}

The Roman Republic was dissolved in September 1799 after the Second Coalition


\textsuperscript{77} Formica, 68–69 and 73.


\textsuperscript{79} Some authors speculate that Angelucci served as Sardou’s model for Angelotti (Girardi, 157; Formica, 73; Anthony Arblaster, \textit{Viva la Libertà!: Politics in Opera} (New York: Verso, 1992), 246), though this supposition appears not to have been confirmed with any certainty.
forces led by Britain, Austria, and Russia defeated the French in Italy. The former papal regime was reinstated, but Pope Pius VI—who had been imprisoned and taken to France when he refused to relinquish power to the Roman Republic—had died a month earlier and the Catholic Church was leaderless. His successor, Pope Pius VII, was elected to the position in March 1800 but had yet to arrive in Rome from the conclave in Venice by the time of the Battle of Marengo. Thus, Tosca’s Rome was as yet without its official leader, and Queen Maria Carolina of Naples—sister of executed French queen Marie Antoinette and member of the Second Coalition—stopped there on her way to Naples following the fall of the Republic and before the new Pope had arrived. With the pope’s rule held in proxy by the Queen and her troops, and otherwise supported only by British allies in the Mediterranean and Austrian forces to the north, papal and royalist authority was tenuous, which therefore fostered a keen interest in eliminating all opposition. Into the midst of this repressive and suspicious environment came the Battle of Marengo on June 14, 1800. Out-numbered, -gunned, and -provisioned, Napoleon’s army was expected to suffer a humiliating defeat, which it did until

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80 Grab, 5.
reinforcements allowed the military genius to launch a surprise counterattack and instead rout the Austrians. Perhaps driven by overconfidence in the expected outcome, General Michael Friedrich von Melas of the Austrian army dispatched word of his victory before the battle’s conclusion, thereby necessitating a later revision of the announcement.\textsuperscript{83} Although the French triumph at Marengo implied the defeat of papal rule and a reestablishment of the Roman Republic, the reality was rather different. With the city occupied by Second Coalition forces and governed by Royalist sympathizers, the results of a battle more than three-hundred-fifty miles away were unlikely to change the former Roman consul’s predicament, and the same is true for the opera’s fictional Republican sympathizers. Indeed, Napoleon would only slowly establish control over the Italian peninsula, Rome coming under direct French rule nearly a decade later in 1809.\textsuperscript{84}

While French imperialism would ultimately prove significant to Italian history by planting the first seeds of Italian unification, its impact upon the plot of \textit{Tosca} lies primarily in the tension and unrest that dominated during the transitional period following the collapse of the Roman Republic.\textsuperscript{85} The months of absent or temporary ruling authorities within the city engendered a lawless environment ripe for abuse by

\textsuperscript{84} Grab, 6.
\textsuperscript{85} On the connection between French imperialism and the Risorgimento, see Grab, 14.
opportunistic individuals: just the circumstances a character like Scarpia would require to impose his will upon unsuspecting citizens. With the policeman’s political alignment with the Queen of Naples, any complaints Tosca or Cavaradossi may have expressed to the city’s only extant ruling authority would likely have fallen upon deaf ears, especially considering the unresolved suspicions regarding the painter’s aid to the deposed consul. The turbulent shifting of governing powers at this historical time and place both facilitates the rise of the antagonist’s power in the opera and complicates the peaceful resolution of the protagonists’ plight.

In addition to rationalizing Scarpia’s despotism and clarifying the circumstances that allowed its rise, the historical context of Puccini’s opera promotes two characters as faces of the era’s opposing political ideologies. Due to his alignment with the city’s ruling authority, Scarpia epitomizes a Royalist who seeks to preserve long-established kingdoms of monarchical and papal rule across Europe, while Cavaradossi is a liberal free-thinker who longs for a Republican system of public government modeled after France. This perspective brings their conflict to a new level, even explaining Cavaradossi’s fervent declaration of victory in “L’alba vindice appar” and Scarpia’s violent reaction against it. Nevertheless, there is remarkably little reference to these

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87 Tosca’s primary connection to the opera’s historical context lies with her religious faith. See Section 5.3.2.
88 For further discussion of this moment from Act II, see the Introduction.
political factions within the libretto. In fact, this constitutes a consistent criticism of
Puccini’s efforts, especially when contrasted with Sardou’s version, which spent much
time and effort elucidating its political aspects.  

Whether a product of lackluster interest, intellectual inadequacy, or outright neglect, Puccini’s minimization of Tosca’s political plot is indisputable. Political historian Anthony Arblaster provides a thorough criticism of the opera’s apolitical essence, situating his discussion around why a composer with such a definitive lack of interest in the subject would choose political subjects for two of his most popular operas: Tosca and Madama Butterfly. Overcoming the logical fallacy that Puccini could not have been assured of these operas’ enduring success when choosing their subjects, a more appropriate line of inquiry arises when Arblaster ponders the composer’s motivation in substantially eliminating the political context from Tosca’s fundamentally political source. Citing moments in the opera that he finds implausible or inexplicable in the absence of characters’ political motivations, Arblaster ultimately attributes such inadequacies to Puccini’s inherent limitations, arguing that “keeping politics out of politics is not a recipe for intelligibility.” Arblaster’s perspective upon one of Puccini’s most famous melodies both exemplifies his complaint and reveals its resolution. While awaiting his execution atop

90 Arblaster, 245.
91 Arblaster, 245.
92 Arblaster, 248.
the Castel Sant’Angelo, Cavaradossi purchases the ability to pen a farewell letter to Tosca by bartering a ring, but, before long, memories distract him and he abandons his writing. Instead, he sings “E lucevan le stelle”, an aria of exquisite pain and remorse generated by his reminiscences. Missing the aria’s point entirely, Arblaster decries the text’s faint eroticism as “grotesquely inappropriate,” finding Cavaradossi’s self-pity improbable for a man condemned to death over his political views. In the process of blithely dismissing the aria’s dramatic value, he willfully ignores its deeper meaning—the intense emotional connection that predicates the painter’s reminiscence—and instead deems Puccini incapable of delivering the Verdian heroism he feels the moment requires. In fact, Puccini was presented with a prime opportunity to pursue such an effect since his librettist Luigi Illica had already gained the great master’s approval over an alternative text for this dramatic moment. When working with another composer on the subject of Tosca prior to Puccini’s involvement, Illica occasioned to read through a portion of his libretto in the presence of the great Giuseppe Verdi, who expressed particular interest in the aria shortly before Cavaradossi’s execution, which was cast at

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93 The full text of the aria reads: “E lucevan le stelle, ed olezzava la terra, stridea l’uscio dell’orto, e un passo sfiorava la rena, entrava ella fragrante, mi cadea fra le braccia. Oh! dolci baci, o languide carezze, mentr’io fremente le belle forme disciolgnea dai veli! SvanÌ in per sempre il sogno mio d’amore, l’ora è fuggita, e muoio disperato! E non ho amato mai tanto la vita!” (And the stars were shining, and the earth was fragrant, the garden gate creaked, and a footstep grazed the sand, she entered, fragrant, and fell into my arms. Oh! sweet kisses, oh languid caresses, while I, trembling, removed the veils from her lovely body! My dream of love has vanished forever, the hour is gone, and I die in despair! And never have I loved life so much!)

94 Arblaster, 248.

95 Arblaster, 248.
that time as a farewell to life and art. Puccini, however, rejected that text in favor of “E lucevan le stelle,” thereby shifting from lofty but somewhat impersonal ideals at the prospect of imminent death to deeply intimate memories of love and passion. In adjusting Cavaradossi’s focus from the abstract to the more concrete, Puccini humanizes the scene and promotes empathy between character and audience. Whereas Arblaster would evidently prefer a stoic expression of patriotic conviction, Puccini instead provides an image of deepest despair and grief, of human suffering that supersedes politics. While Puccini clearly minimized the political elements from Sardou’s original and this process resulted in some questionable plot points, I contend this was a conscious and calculated decision on the composer’s part, as this anecdote portrays. Rather than contorting himself to fulfill the dictates of a Verdiian ideal, Puccini’s aria plays to his strength: the expression of passion and anguish. Tosca’s immense and sustained popularity for over a hundred years ultimately testifies to the wisdom and success of his choice.

5.3.2 Powerful Faith

The preceding historical overview hints toward but does not explicitly reveal the intimate relationship between the Church and State in 1800 Rome. In fact, Rome had served as the capital of the Papal States—the site of the pope’s earthly reign—since the

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96 Carner, 109.
eighth century and would continue to do so until Italy’s unification. Throughout this time, Roman Catholic popes had reigned over the city and the rest of the region in place of a monarch, wielding the empire’s considerable power throughout the rest of Europe and, indeed, the world. Civil service entities like the police gleaned their authority through the pope and therefore represented an intimate intermingling of Church and State, one complicated by the shifting and unstable governance of the city around 1800. In this respect, the matter of religion in Tosca is one of power, of authority and rule that can be abused and corrupted. At the same time, though, religion expresses matters of piety and devotion, of people aiming to live moral lives that honor the glory of God and the sacrifice of his son, Jesus Christ. The following discussion examines both these aspects of religion as they pertain to Puccini’s opera. In order to gain a full understanding, however, we must also consider an additional historical context: Puccini’s 1900 Italy.

Though the Kingdom of Italy was declared in 1861 with Rome as its capital, the Roman Question lingered, causing conflict and strife over whether the city should be governed by the Roman Catholic Church or the new secular monarchy under King Victor Emmanuel II of Sardinia. Strengthened by centuries of precedent, the papacy

97 In 1929, after lingering conflict following Italian unification, the Roman Question of whether the city would be subject to the sacred rule of the popes or Italy’s secular government was at last resolved with the Lateran Treaty and the establishment of the Vatican City as an independent nation under papal rule. (Britannica Academic, s.v. “Roman Question,” https://academic-eb-com.proxy.lib.duke.edu/levels/collegiate/article/Roman-question/473209 [accessed 23 July 2020].)
refused to relinquish control of Rome to the secular government, and the fledgling country’s unification was consequently not complete until Italian troops occupied Rome in 1870. At the time of Tosca’s writing in the last years of the late nineteenth century, the sustained power struggle between Church and State mirrored that of the opera’s late eighteenth-century setting. The political Left favored secular rule and looked upon the brief era of the Roman Republic favorably, while the Right longed for the return of papal rule and cursed the Republican era. The question of who should rule Rome consumed both sides and led to a distinct mistrust of the Church among liberals. Expressing opposition to the political and spiritual domination of the Roman Catholic Church, anticlericalism had fueled the Risorgimento and still remained strong at the turn of the century. Its conceptual partner, secularism, however, was far stronger in France than in Italy, suggesting mistrust of ecclesiastical power drove Italians more than any particular devotion to secular rule. This is consistent not only with the greater emphasis on politics in Sardou’s French play than Puccini’s Italian opera, but also with Puccini’s greater focus on religion.

Tosca, a story of tyranny and corruption facilitated by the power of the Church,

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99 Formica, 73.
100 Davis, 137.
101 Davis, 144.
would certainly appeal to the dominant anticlericalism of early twentieth-century Italy. The portrayal of Cavaradossi and Tosca as innocent victims of Scarpia’s malevolence aligns the plot’s sympathies with liberalism, the narration of both play and opera rooting, as it were, for Napoleon’s triumph over papal rule. Regardless of whether or not he personally aligned himself with that stance, Puccini’s job was then to translate the basic tensions of the plot into music. The question then becomes: how does he accomplish this task? What does the music tell us that the libretto does not? The preceding analysis argues that the diegetic music aligns with religion and the nondiegetic with Scarpia. This choice alone reveals much about what Puccini wished to emphasize in the plot, both instances of diegetic/nondiegetic simultaneity emphasizing the alliance between the entities associated with each type of music. Rather than clashing against one another, the two work together in a very specific manner, the diegetic religious music serving as a backdrop to Scarpia’s nondiegetic music. In the Act I finale, the aural focus on Scarpia is accomplished through his position as a principal solo character accompanied by the chorus. In Act II, however, the nondiegetic focus is achieved by physically relegating the diegetic to an unseen, offstage position. The consistency of the diegetic music’s supportive position symbolizes the same with regard to sources of power, the Church throwing its considerable weight behind Scarpia and lending legitimacy to his authority despite that his objectives are not wholly pure. Whether a case of cooperative collusion between them—each one upholding the other
through mutual support—or of Scarpia’s unethical goals corrupting a benevolent church, the diegetic/nondiegetic simultaneity closely unites Church and State on stage and in the music. From this perspective, the opera becomes a cautionary tale, an example of how individual liberties and lives can be trampled by the tyrannical potential of the old regime.¹⁰²

The pairing of these instances of simultaneity also present a second level of symbolism. The Act I finale, with its setting in the church of Sant’Andrea della Valle, its inclusion of an ordained cardinal of the Catholic church, and its use of official ecclesiastical texts, clearly evokes papal Rome in all its grandeur. Act II, however, conjures a more general faith through the cantata’s words, without even the advantage of bearing an official Catholic text. The grandeur of the music’s physical setting is entirely unseen and, moreover, loses its clerical context since it is performed as part of a party thrown by the Queen of Naples rather than a formal church service. Furthermore, the narrative thrust of the diegetic cantata—as evidenced by its exposition in the first act, as well as the effect it has upon the concurrent interrogation scene taking place on stage—is Tosca herself, not God or the Church at all. In this case, then, the religious focus of the diegetic music is minimal, its physical position and narrative function within the opera’s plot rendering its effect far more secular in nature. Rather than

challenging the perspective advanced above, however, this conceptual progression from Act I to Act II certifies the portrayal of a Church/State alliance through the music, identifying the authoritative entities, one after another, that grant Scarpia his power. In Act I, the diegetic music represents the Roman Catholic Church both musically and narratively; in Act II, the Church is still represented musically, but the narrative component shifts to the State as represented by the Queen. The shift in narrative focus therefore augments the perception of Church and State sharing power, both symbolically supporting Scarpia’s actions and both therefore tainted by his malicious intent.

As audible reminders of the source of Scarpia’s power, the diegetic music in these scenes holds special significance, both 1800 and 1900 historical perspectives validating an interpretation of Church and State as mutual authorities that facilitate Scarpia’s abuses. Whether referencing the French influence and political strife that first broke the Church’s hold on the Roman people around 1800, or the climate of anticlericalism prominent in Italy at the time of the opera’s composition a century later, Tosca’s plot relies upon a mistrust of sacred/secular alliances that would be familiar to Puccini’s audiences. But these scenes also demonstrate the profound impact that attentiveness to diegetic music can have upon our understanding of the opera. An early criticism of Puccini’s choice to undergird the interrogation scene with diegetic music demonstrates the author’s failure to grasp its deeper meaning. Richard Specht
rationalizes that music’s sole purpose in such dramatically powerful scenes is to augment its tension, rendering the question of precisely what music accompanies the scene “almost a matter of indifference.”103 In this case, however, the offstage music cannot be so easily dismissed. Although the unseen celebration adds little to the fictional reality of the moment—other than illustrating Tosca’s professional obligations and degree of success—it contributes substantially to a symbolic representation of both Scarpia’s power and his corruption. In this way, the background diegetic music represents something deeper, something intrinsic to the drama unfolding before us, and something considerably more than indifferent to the foregrounded interrogation.

On some level, this historically informed interpretation of Tosca’s two scenes of diegetic/nondiegetic simultaneity only reiterates what many scholars have already observed. The Act I finale in particular has received much acclaim for its effectiveness in blending sacred and secular elements.104 The novelty of my analysis lies in its focus on diegetic and nondiegetic music as a means of conveying the merger of Church and State power, evident not only in the explicit imagery of the Act I finale, but also with more subtlety in the Act II interrogation that displays Scarpia at his most powerful and

104 Girardi calls the Act I finale a “synthesis…of papal and political Rome” (Girardi, 181). Nicassio summarizes the scene as “the image of tyranny and erotic obsession blended with and amplified by the power of the Church (Nicassio, Rome, 168). And DiGaetani characterizes Scarpia as “the henchman of a religious authority that masks a secular authority” (DiGaetani, 89).
malevolent. But whereas Tosca’s portrayal of the Church’s power relies upon symbolism and interpretation, ecclesiastical faith figures large in the opera. The preceding dramatic analysis that describes Scarpia’s dual source of authority suggests that any religious devotion he displays is false. Even his cadenza-like exclamation at the end of Act I takes the shape of an accusation, blaming Tosca for his neglect of the Te Deum rather than accepting the responsibility for the slight himself. This character embodies the merger of sacred and secular power as well as their mutual corruption as he relies upon the Church not only to augment his civil authority, but also to turn a blind eye when he abuses said authority. For him, religion is a tool, not at all a source of inspiration toward morality and benevolence.

On quite the other end of this spectrum is Tosca, whose piety is genuine and whose misery in the face of her trials is all the more wrenching for her unremitting faith in God. For her, religion is deeply personal and—as the ensuing discussion will demonstrate—she is the only genuinely pious character in this opera. First observed upon her entrance in Act I, where she refuses to kiss Cavaradossi before offering her prayers and flowers to the Madonna, Tosca’s faith is thoroughly tested throughout the course of the plot. Her Act II aria Vissi d’arte expresses heartfelt dismay over the realization that her faithful devotion has not spared her the misery of her lover’s torture.
or the lascivious advances of a despised foe. In soaring and memorable melody, Tosca’s voice speaks to two centuries, voicing the disillusionment with religion that perhaps led Cavaradossi to embrace French liberalism within the opera’s fictional reality of 1800 and that continued to fuel the dominant anticlericalism within Italian society at the opera’s 1900 premiere. This aria has been criticized for its abrupt and incongruous halt in the forward momentum of an otherwise runaway Act II, even Puccini himself having considered omitting it for this reason. But, in addition to the temporary respite it offers, the aria plays an important role from the perspective of religion, highlighting the moment in which the opera’s only genuine and wholeheartedly devout character realizes and comes to accept the limitations of her religion. This failure of Tosca’s faith and her heart-wrenching awareness that life itself is nothing she thought it was makes the remainder of the plot possible, particularly her mortal sins of murder and suicide.

While Cavaradossi counters Scarpia in a political sense, Tosca does so with

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106 Budden, *Puccini*, 216; Girardi, 185-186.
107 DiGaetani defends the aria’s position for the “breathing space” it permits the audience. (DiGaetani, 87).
108 Two additional moments that reveal the depth of Tosca’s faith are her actions following Scarpia’s death, and her final words upon leaping from the Castel Sant’Angelo at the end of the opera. By setting a candle on either side of Scarpia’s head and a crucifix on his chest, Tosca performs a rudimentary death rite for her foe. This action reflects her anxiety not only over having committed the egregious sin of murder, but also over having denied Scarpia his final confession before death. Additionally, her actions reveal the honesty of her faith since she performs this impromptu ceremony entirely unprompted and unobserved. As for her final words in the opera, she cries out, “O Scarpia, avanti a Dio!” (Oh, Scarpia, before God!) before committing suicide. Although the phrase itself is rather perplexing, I interpret it as Tosca’s proclamation that she will meet Scarpia to stand before God’s judgement when He will decide which of their sins to be the greater.
Figure 32: Tosca’s Triangle

regard to faith. These oppositions yield a triangular representation of the opera’s principal characters and three of its prominent themes, as shown in Figure 32. Tosca, Cavaradossi, and Scarpia stand at the three points of the triangle while the themes of Politics, Faith, and Love are represented by its sides. The diverging arrows inside the triangle represent the oppositional relationship that Scarpia bears with Cavaradossi and Tosca in regard to Politics and Faith, respectively, while the converging ones on the Love side indicate Tosca and Cavaradossi are drawn together in unity along that theme. The arrows also represent Scarpia’s two sources of power, both Politics (i.e. secular) and Faith (i.e. sacred) directed toward him as an endpoint. For Cavaradossi and Tosca, however, their commitment to Politics and Faith move through them and then toward each other through Love, producing a more balanced and united front whereas Scarpia is entirely isolated. Finally, the triangle represents each character’s relationship to the three themes by their proximity to the three sides of the triangle. The most
straightforward of the three is Tosca, who is motivated by her Love for Cavaradossi and her Faith in God, but her lack of interest in Politics is revealed through her willingness to expose the escaped prisoner’s hiding place. Cavaradossi is likewise motivated by his Love for Tosca and his interest in Politics, but his attempt to hide his involvement with Angelotti from Tosca reflects a lack of faith in her ability to remain silent. Finally, Scarpia’s indifference to Love is clear throughout the opera, but Politics and Faith only motivate him insofar as they provide him with the authority and power he craves.
Conclusion

The aim of this dissertation has been to advance music scholarship on two fronts, pertaining both to diegetic music in opera and Puccini studies. However, the question remains, to what extent do the proposed advancements in either realm retain validity beyond their mutual association? My new perspective on diegetic music as presented in Chapter 2—that diegetic passages are defined by the compositional efforts of both a real-world and a fictional composer—is accompanied by the disclaimer that this definition cannot be applied to film with the same rigor, and the extent to which it may apply to other composers or perhaps even the operatic genre as a whole lies beyond the scope of my research. My own instinct, however, suggests wide applicability of this definition’s tenets within the genre of opera, and the notion of fictional composers may even offer a new approach for the particularly thorny matter of diegetic passages in musical theater.¹ The alignment between diegetic music and Classical form, however, is markedly narrower in its potential applicability. I have argued in these pages for a close relationship within Puccini’s œuvre, but that is in part only possible due to the composer’s historical position. Naturally, the analysis of Classical-era composers such as Mozart cannot rely upon the detection of forms that are contemporary to his work as a

¹ Nina Penner’s exploration of the diegetic/nondiegetic distinction in film musicals does not consider the notion of fictional composition, but this perspective could enhance her impressive retinue of analytical methods. (Nina Penner, “Rethinking the Diegetic/Nondiegetic Distinction in the Film Musical,” in Music and the Moving Image 10, No. 3 [Fall 2017], 3–20.)
marker of diegetic music, any more than Monteverdi’s Baroque operas could be expected to reveal wholly articulated formal functions that were yet to developed in the future. Even the prospect of utilizing a correlation between diegetic music and Classical form in the analysis of other Romantic-era opera composers seems highly suspect when we consider, for example, Wagner. Rather than disputing this approach in relation to Puccini, however, the limited usefulness of the diegetic/Classical correspondence with respect to Wagnerian opera certifies its fulfillment of Alexandra Wilson’s call for analytical methods that honor Puccini’s work rather than futilely attempt to pigeonhole his operas into ill-suited perspectives.² The question yet remains, however, to what extent a diegetic/Classical correspondence may prove useful in relation to other composers or even genres.

Beyond these questions, my discussions of Manon Lescaut, La bohème, and Tosca demonstrate the topic of diegetic music as fruitful ground for new perspectives on opera. Even in the case of some of Puccini’s most widely discussed music—particularly La bohème’s second act and the Act I finale of Tosca—the focus on diegetic music reveals new ways of understanding not only Puccini’s musical construction, but also how dramatic themes and characters relate to one another and to the opera-going public. Furthermore, the quest to understand Puccini’s deployment of diegetic music in these

scenes ultimately reflects back upon the concept itself, leading toward further refinements of the theory, including realistic diegetic music that blends diegetic and nondiegetic features, and double formal complexes that yield two disparate formal structures within a single span of music.\textsuperscript{3} Such results attest to the value of analytical attention to such an apparently simple notion as music that characters hear as music while also offering a response to the decades of critics and authors who minimized or dismissed Puccini’s contributions to the genre by relying upon charges of inconsistency or inexplicable simplicity. My research has led me to the conclusion that, while Puccini may not have been as pivotal in the development of the genre as Wagner or Verdi, he was no less attentive to opera’s dramatic needs.

Although this study offers a new step toward understanding both Puccini’s oeuvre and diegetic music in opera, it is in the end only one step along either path. At the least, I hope to have demonstrated the utility of approaching both composer and concept from a perspective that seeks understanding rather than dismissal and perhaps inspires others to make similar efforts, to perceive each opera composer’s own dramatic impulse. For Puccini, I have defined that impulse as an effort to change his compositional voice to that of another, to subvert his personal compositional style in deference to the dictates of the plot, or—in a more existential vein—to place himself

\textsuperscript{3} See Chapters 4 and 5, respectively.
within the confines of the world he portrays and to write music as if he were a part of that world. The result is music and drama so intimately entwined that it is difficult if not impossible to accurately express where one ends and the other begins. This is not so different from Wagner’s aesthetic and the tension Carl Dahlhaus observes between his notion in Oper und Drama of music in service to the drama versus his contradictory conclusion twenty years later that drama is “musical deed made visible.” That is not to say, of course, that Puccini and Wagner are alike; only that they are not so different. Each sought, heard, and responded to his own dramatic impulse, as have so many opera composers before and since.

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Biography

Karen Elaine Hovey Messina earned a Bachelor of Arts in Voice Performance from Elon University in 1997. In 2009, Karen returned to her studies by pursuing the Master of Music degree in Vocal Performance at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign, which she completed in 2010. Karen then shifted her focus from performance and earned the Master of Music degree in Music Theory from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro in 2014. From there, she matriculated to Duke University for the Doctor of Philosophy in Musicology, earning a Master of Arts in Musicology en route in 2016. Karen will complete her Doctor of Philosophy in Musicology at Duke University in 2020. In addition to receiving an Inclusiveness Fellowship at the University of North Carolina in 2012-2013, Karen’s honors from Duke University include four summer research fellowships (2015, 2016, 2017, and 2019), membership in the Preparing Future Faculty program (2017-2018), a Bass Instructor of Record Fellowship (2018), and the James B. Duke Fellowship (2015-2018). Karen has served as a Teaching Assistant for six courses at the University of North Carolina and Duke University, and as Instructor of Record for four courses at Duke University. Since Fall 2019, Karen has been employed at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro as a Lecturer in Music Theory.