

PUBLIO AT THE THRESHOLD OF CLEMENCY

《LA CLEMENZA DI TITO》

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Publio at the Threshold of Clemency

Dramaturgy, Compassion, Authority, and Vocal-Scenic Interpretation in
Mozart's *La clemenza di Tito*,

K. 621

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This volume is an independently authored scholarly publication. The author completed the Master's Degree in Opera Performance at the Conservatori Superior de Musica Liceu in Barcelona, where his original artistic and scholarly inquiry into the role of Publio first developed. His master's thesis was supervised by Alicia Daufi Muñoz.

The present publication, however, is a newly written and substantially expanded independent study. It is not an official publication of the Conservatori Superior de Musica Liceu, and its arguments, interpretations, conclusions, and any remaining errors are the sole responsibility of the author. The acknowledgment of the institution and the former thesis supervisor expresses gratitude for their educational and academic contribution and should not be understood as institutional endorsement of this independent publication.

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I am especially grateful to my former master's thesis supervisor, Alicia Daufi Muñoz. Her guidance during the original thesis process encouraged me to organize questions arising from performance practice within a coherent scholarly framework. That experience helped me recognize the importance of distinguishing personal impressions from verifiable evidence and of examining an operatic character through historical documents, libretti, musical sources, and critical scholarship.

The present study is not a reproduction or revision of the thesis submitted for my master's degree. It is a newly conceived, independently, researched, and substantially expanded publication. Nevertheless, the intellectual discipline and artistic curiosity cultivated during my studies at the Conservatori Liceu remain an important part of the path that made this work possible. I therefore record my lasting gratitude to the institution, its teachers, and especially Alicia Daufi Muñoz for their contribution to my development as a singer, performer, and researcher.

This work is offered with respect to everyone who encouraged me to consider Publio not merely as a secondary bass role, but as a dramatically meaningful figure positioned between authority, compassion, political knowledge, and the enactment of clemency.

Abstract

Publio, the bass Prefect in Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Caterino Mazzolà's *La clemenza di Tito* (1791), is often encountered by performers as a short role organized around official duties. Yet brevity does not make him dramatically empty. He controls passages between private and public space, carries information between ruler and senate, arrests Sesto, witnesses suffering that he cannot prevent, and reads Tito's conflict before clemency is enacted. This study argues that Publio should be interpreted as a threshold figure: an officer who executes the law while registering the human cost of its execution.

The argument begins with a textual-critical distinction. Mazzola's adaptation gives Publio an affective and interpretive presence that is not reducible to the mechanics of arrest. In the Act II trio he is moved by Sesto's tears but recognizes that pity has no power to alter his immediate duty. His aria then frames Tito's moral transparency as a vulnerability: a truthful person discovers betrayal late because deception lies outside his own habits. In the later trio Publio identifies the struggles of competing affects within Tito. Across these moments, obedience, compassion, and political knowledge coexist rather than cancel one another.

This study combines libretto and score analysis, historical and textual criticism, voice science, acting theory, psychology of authority and empathy, and written documentation of productions. Video-based visual assertions are excluded unless an independently accessible written source establishes the same point. Performance reflection may generate questions, but it will not replace evidence. The intended result is a historically responsible and practically usable account of how a singer-actor can embody Publio without defaulting either to bureaucratic coldness or to unsupported sentimentalism.

Keywords : Publio; *La clemenza di Tito*; Mozart; Mazzola; opera seria; clemency; compassion; authority; bass performance; dramaturgy

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION: PUBLIO AT THE THRESHOLD OF CLEMENCY

1.1 Historical point of Departure

La clemenza di Tito was first performed at Prague's National Theatre on 6 September 1791 during the celebrations for Leopold II's coronation as King of Bohemia. The premiere cast identified Publio as the Prefect and assigned the role to the bass Gaetano Campi.

This institutional and vocal designation matters. Publio is not simply an unnamed guard or a convenient bearer of messages; he occupies an office located close to the ruler and to the machinery that turns political judgment into physical custody.¹

The Prague opera was not a neutral transfer of Pietro Metastasio's earlier drama. The New Mozart Edition reports that Mazzola shortened the source by roughly one third, cut most of the second act, and revised arias and ensembles with varying degrees of intervention. Publio must therefore be read as part of a deliberate adaptation. The question is not only what a Roman prefect conventionally represents, but why this revised libretto gives this prefect particular words, musical numbers, and points of observation.²

The surviving libretto's dramatic personae gives the compact formula "Publio, Prefect of the Praetorian Guard-bass." Each element creates an interpretive constraint. "Publio" is an individual rather than a generic function; "Prefect" marks delegated state power; "Praetorian Guard" connects him to custody and imperial security; and "bass" establishes an audible register whose authority must be analyzed without treating low pitch as a universal psychological essence. The study will preserve these distinctions instead of collapsing office, voice type, and temperament into a single stereotype.³

¹ Franz Giegling, "Foreword," in New Mozart Edition, Series II, Work Group 5, vol. 20, *La clemenza di Tito*, K. 621 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1970), VII, Digital Mozart Edition PDF

² Giegling, "Foreword," VIII

³ Caterino Mazzola. *La clemenza di Tito*, music by Wolfgang Amade Mozart, transcribed by Dario Zanotti, *Libretti d'opera italiani*, no. 93, rev. 2016, 3, Librettidopera PDF

1.2 The Problem of Structural Marginality

Publio's role is brief, and the opera does not grant him the extended autobiographical disclosure available to Tito, Sesto, or Vitellia. That economy has practical consequences: performers may receive less rehearsal attention, directors may use him primarily to organize entrances, reports, and arrests, and critical commentary may mention his aria without developing an interpretation of the person who sings it. None of these possibilities proves that the character is cold, simple, or dramatically negligible. They show only how easily concentrated characterization can be mistaken for an absence of characterization.

A concentrated role must therefore be studied through the placement and function of its interventions. Publio appears at moments when knowledge changes status: rumor becomes intelligence, suspicion becomes arrest, deliberation becomes sentence, and Tito's inward struggle becomes legible to another person. He also appears when bodies and decisions cross thresholds—from court to custody, from concealment to exposure, and from judgment toward the possibility of pardon. His dramatic value lies less in controlling the final decision than in making the institutional and emotional route to that decision visible.

To describe Publio as structurally marginal is therefore not to describe him as dramatically empty. Marginality refers to his limited duration and restricted power within the action, whereas dramatic function refers to the significance of the moments at which he is permitted to speak, observe, escort, warn, and interpret. A responsible performance must preserve both dimensions. It should neither enlarge Publio into a concealed protagonist nor reduce him to an impersonal mechanism of the plot.

1.3 Mazzola's Affective Intervention

Magnus Tessing Schneider's comparison of Metastasio and Mazzola identifies a decisive change in the Act II trio: at the corresponding moment, Metastasio's Publio remains entirely silent, whereas Mazzola's Publio becomes a compassionate observer whose concern throws Vitellia's evasiveness into relief. This alteration is brief in duration but substantial in dramaturgical function. The officer who must lead Sesto away is also granted an inward response to the accused man's suffering. The adaptation does not release Publio from duty; it makes the human cost of duty audible.⁴

⁴ Magnus Tessing Schneider, "From Metastasio to Mazzola: Clemency and Pity in *La clemenza di Tito*," in *Mozart's La clemenza di Tito: A Reappraisal*, ed. Magnus Tessing Schneider and Ruth Tatlow (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2018), 73, <https://doi.org/10.16993/ban.c>.

The emotional logic of the passage is exact. Publio sees bitter tears, feels his soul moved, and concludes that his pity is powerless.⁵ This line does not announce an absence of emotion; it names a conflict between affect and agency.

Schneider's translation preserves the contradiction between a soul that is moved and a pity that cannot effect change.⁶ Publio feels, but his office does not permit him to convert feeling into a different legal outcome. An actor who presents only hardness therefore suppresses half of the written event; an actor who abandons official control suppresses the other half.

This double demand establishes the interpretive premise of this study. Publio's compassion must be audible without becoming a public repudiation of law, and his authority must remain legible without being mistaken for emotional opacity. The role's difficulty lies not in choosing between empathy and office but in sustaining both at once. That tension will guide the later readings of Publio's recitatives, ensembles, aria, and documented production practices.

⁵ Caterino Mazzola, *La clemenza di Tito*, 21

⁶ Schneider, "From Metastasio to Mazzola." 74.

1.4 Truth, Betrayal, and political knowledge

Publio's exchanges with Tito before No. 16 develop the conflict between affect and office into an act of political interpretation. When Tito insists that he measures Sesto's heart by his own, Publio answers that not every person possesses Tito's heart.⁷ The remark prepares the aria's argument about the difficulty a truthful person faces in recognizing betrayal. Publio does not merely flatter the emperor by naming him virtuous. He identifies a structural vulnerability within virtue itself: the ruler's own fidelity restricts his capacity to imagine another person's treachery. This is practical knowledge spoken upward by a subordinate whose office requires him to read risks that the sovereign's moral self-image may conceal.

The printed libretto identifies No. 16 as an Allegretto in C major, accompanied by strings, two oboes, and two horns.⁸ A later chapter will examine how phrase structure, orchestration, tessitura, cadence, and prosody shape the character of the aria's counsel. At this stage, one methodological point is sufficient: tempo and tonal brightness do not automatically make the number comic, just as bass sonority does not automatically make Publio severe. Musical signs acquire meaning within their local dramatic syntax and must be tested against the critical score rather than converted into fixed character labels.

The later trio, No. 18, gives Publio a second interpretive task. He observes that multiple affects are at war within Tito and infers from the emperor's suffering that Tito continues to love Sesto.⁹ Publio therefore recognizes the possibility of mercy before it becomes a decree. He cannot issue the pardon, yet he perceives the affective conditions from which pardon may emerge. His office places him beside coercive power, while his perception exposes the instability of that power when friendship, betrayal, justice, and pity converge. Across these moments, Publio functions not only as an agent of imperial command but also as an interpreter of the emotional knowledge that command cannot fully contain.

⁷ Mazzola, *La clemenza di Tito*, 22.

⁸ Mazzola, *La clemenza di Tito*, 23.

⁹ Mazzola, *La clemenza di Tito*, 26.

1.5 Central Thesis: The Threshold Figure

This study uses the term “threshold” in three connected senses. Spatially, Publio regulates movement between the court and sites of detention.

Institutionally, he stands between deliberative authority and the bodily enforcement of its decisions. Affectively and cognitively, he perceives what political actors feel and what those feelings may signify, even when he lacks the authority to alter the outcome. The term does not imply neutrality. Thresholds are controlled spaces, and Publio participates in that control. The concept instead explains why delegated power and involuntary sympathy remain simultaneously visible in him.

The central claim is therefore neither that Publio is secretly gentle nor that he constitutes the moral center of the opera. Both formulations would exceed the available textual and musical evidence and inflate the role beyond its written function. The narrower and more defensible claim is that Mazzola and Mozart position Publio as a legally obedient yet affectively responsive witness whose interventions clarify the relations among knowledge, betrayal, punishment, and clemency. His limited agency is not a deficiency to be repaired through invented biography or unsupported staging psychology. It is the dramatic condition that gives his acts of perception their ethical force.

1.6 Research Questions

The central thesis developed above will be examined through the following five research questions.

RQ1. How does Mazzola’s revision of Metastasio transform Publio from a functional officer into an affective and interpretive participant?

RQ2. How do the libretto and the authenticated musical numbers define Publio’s relation to law, loyalty, political knowledge, compassion, and clemency?

RQ3. Which vocal and textual practices are historically and physiologically defensible for Publio’s recitative, diction, registration, and aria, and which commonly repeated prescriptions lack sufficient evidence?

RQ4. How can a singer-actor embody delegated authority and involuntary compassion without inventing a “cold guard” stereotype or sentimentalizing the role?

RQ5. How have documented productions framed Publio, and what can be compared responsibly when only written production evidence is admitted?

1.7 Method and Corpus

The first method is textual-critical comparison. Metastasio's earlier drama, Mazzola's Prague adaptation, the New Mozart Edition, and its critical report will be used to distinguish inherited material, revised text, authenticated musical numbers, and uncertain compositional layers. The second method is dramaturgical analysis: entrances, exits, speech acts, transfers of knowledge, relations of command, and moments of witnessing will be mapped across the opera. The third method is a close musical reading of Publio's recitatives and Nos. 14, 16, and 18, with attention to textual declamation, phrase structure, harmony, rhythm, tessitura, orchestration, and position within the ensemble.

The fourth method is interdisciplinary but claim-specific. Voice science will be used for physiological and acoustic questions; acting and theatre scholarship for objectives, status, gesture, attention, and relational action; psychology for empathy, authority, obedience, moral judgment, and affect recognition; political and legal history for office and clemency; and performance studies for documented acts of interpretation. Each field will answer a bounded question. No discipline will be cited merely to decorate an operatic observation or to supply borrowed authority to an unsupported conclusion.

The project's evidence policy converts these methods into a reproducible procedure. Every cited source must be freely readable without institutional login, and the source register will record the direct link, repository, page or line number, supported claim, Korean translation of the cited passage, reason for citation, and marked evidence capture. These captures will be maintained in a separate verification archive and will not be reproduced as images in the thesis body. A paywalled publication may be used only when a lawful open version of the cited passage is available.

Abstract-only records and unverifiable secondary quotations found in search results will not count as evidence. Personal performance experience may generate research questions, but it will not substitute for textual, musical, historical, scientific, or production documentation.

1.8 Written-Evidence Rule for Production Comparison

Production comparison will be limited to freely and independently accessible written documents: director's notes, production books, theatre programs, rehearsal documentation, performer or creative-team interviews, archival descriptions, and reviews that describe specific staging choices. A reviewer's interpretation will be identified as a review claim and will not be converted into an objective fact about what occurred onstage. Where two documents conflict, the disagreement will be reported rather than silently harmonized.

No claim about gesture, costume, blocking, facial expression, lighting, or actor-to-actor contact will be derived from a performance video. Performance videos will not function as evidentiary sources in the comparative analysis; at most, they may be listed separately as contextual materials, and no analytical claim will depend on them. This limitation narrows the corpus, but it makes the comparison reproducible: the reader can open the same document, inspect the same wording, and contest the resulting inference.

1.9 Authorship and the Secco Recitatives

The New Mozart Edition's critical foreword imposes a further methodological limitation. With the exception of eight bars of transition, the secco recitatives survive in a hand other than Mozart's; the traditional attribution to Franz Xaver Süssmayr composed Publio's aria, since the surviving autograph definitively contradicts it.¹⁰ This study will therefore avoid describing every musical gesture in the secco recitatives as "Mozart's," while treating No. 16 as part of the authenticated musical layer. Textual characterization in recitative and musical authorship are related questions, but they are not identical.

¹⁰ Giegling, "Foreword," X.

1.10 Scope, Limits, and Falsifiability

This study is not a comprehensive political history of ancient Rome, a complete reception history of *La clemenza di Tito*, or a universal vocal manual for all bass singers. It does not infer personality from tessitura alone, reconstruct a private biography unsupported by the libretto, or treat the reported qualities of the first Publio as permanent requirements for every later performer. Historical evidence can constrain interpretation without producing a single mandatory performance. The purpose of such evidence is not to eliminate artistic choice, but to distinguish an interpretation that can be defended from one that depends entirely on unsupported invention.

The central thesis must remain falsifiable. If comparison with Metastasio reveals no meaningful transformation, if the critical score contradicts the proposed musical readings, if written production documents consistently position Publio outside the thresholds described in this study, or if psychological and theatrical sources fail to support the performance implications assigned to them, the argument must be revised. The evidence archive is therefore not an ornamental appendix. It is the mechanism that enables readers to inspect the basis of each claim, challenge the resulting inference, and require correction where the evidence no longer supports the argument.

1.11 Chapter Conclusion

The first chapter has replaced the unsupported opposition between a “cold official” and a “kind human being” with a more precise dramaturgical problem. Publio is both an executor of delegated authority and a witness whose affective perception exceeds his legal agency. Mazzola’s revision allows the audience to hear that excess, while Mozart’s numbered ensembles and aria give it musical form. The chapters that follow will test the threshold model historically, textually, musically, physiologically, psychologically, theatrically, and through written production evidence. The aim is not to enlarge Publio through exaggeration, but to read each of his limited interventions at the highest evidentiary resolution that the surviving sources permit.

CHAPTER 2. HISTORICAL, POLITICAL, AND GENERIC CONTEXT

2.1 Prague, Leopold II, and the Political Commission

To understand Publio’s political function, the opera must first be placed within the ceremonial system that produced it. The first performance did not merely happen near Leopold II’s coronation;

Mozart conducted it in Prague on 6 September 1791 for Leopold's coronation as King of Bohemia, while the French Revolution was still unfolding.¹¹ This temporal conjunction matters because

clemency, loyalty, conspiracy, judgment, and pardon were not politically neutral antique motifs in 1791. They belonged to a vocabulary through which European audiences could contemplate the legitimacy and survival of monarchical authority.

Leopold's own position sharpened that vocabulary. He had inherited a monarchy under pressure from the French Revolution and war with Turkey, as well as rebellion in the Austrian Netherlands and resistance from the Bohemian and Hungarian nobility to Joseph II's reforms. Rice interprets Leopold's successive ceremonies of allegiance and coronation as instruments of gradual consolidation: ancient ritual made enlightened absolutism appear durable at a moment of political instability.¹² The Prague coronation must therefore be understood not as decorative pageantry surrounding an otherwise autonomous opera, but as an enacted claim about political continuity.

The institutional route by which *La clemenza di Tito* reached the stage confirms this ceremonial function. On 29 April 1791, a committee formed under the Bohemian Estates decided that the Prague celebrations would include Italian opera. On 8 July, the impresario Domenico Guardasoni contracted with the Estates to commission and stage a coronation opera. Later that month, he approached Antonio Salieri and then Mozart, while Caterino Mazzola was apparently asked to revise Metastasio's libretto.¹³ The sequence is important: the opera originated within a chain of institutional decisions before it became Mozart's compositional undertaking.

The surviving contract converts that ceremonial intention into a detailed production brief. It calls for a grand opera seria at Prague's National Theatre on the occasion of the imperial coronation, sets the payment at six thousand gulden-or six thousand five hundred if Luigi Marchesi participated-and requires performers of the highest rank. It further obliges Guardasoni to have a libretto prepared according to subjects supplied by the Burgrave and set by a famous composer; if the lack of time made that impossible, the specified alternative was a newly composed opera based on Metastasio's *Tito* or a comparable subject.¹⁴ The choice of *Tito* was therefore neither an accidental late attachment nor an entirely unrestricted act of artistic preference. It emerged from a constrained field of ceremonial requirements, available personnel, time pressure, and politically suitable subject matter.

¹¹ John A. Rice, "Operatic Culture at the Court of Leopold II and Mozart's *La clemenza di Tito*," in *Mozart's La clemenza di Tito: A Reappraisal*, ed. Magnus Tessing Schneider and Ruth Tatlow (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2018), 34, <https://doi.org/10.16993/ban.b>.

¹² Rice, "Operatic Culture," 36.

¹³ Ruth Tatlow and Magnus Tessing Schneider, "La clemenza di Tito: Chronology and Documents," in *Mozart's La clemenza di Tito: A Reappraisal*, ed. Magnus Tessing Schneider and Ruth Tatlow (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2018), 4, <https://doi.org/10.16993/ban.a>.

¹⁴ Tatlow and Schneider, "Chronology and Documents," 7-8.

This documentary sequence corrects two tempting simplifications. Leopold II did not personally hand Mozart a fully formed commission, and Mozart did not independently select an antique drama and then offer it to the coronation festivities. The evidence instead reveals layered agency: the Bohemian Estates, the Burgrave, Guardasoni, Mazzola, Mozart, and the contracted singers each occupied a different place in the work's production. Authority was distributed, delegated, and transmitted before it became audible on stage.

That institutional provenance has a precise consequence for the present study of *Publio*. Within the drama, messages, arrests, custody, interrogation, sentencing, and pardon pass through offices and agents rather than moving directly from sovereign intention to political effect. The opera itself was likewise produced through a network of delegated functions. This parallel does not prove that the commissioners assigned *Publio* a specific allegorical meaning, and the argument should not claim such an intention without evidence. It does, however, establish that Prague's first audience encountered him within a ceremony devoted to the *Publio*'s threshold position is therefore historically resonant as well as dramaturgically legible: he stands between sovereign will and its execution in an opera that itself stood between monarchical display and negotiated institutional participation.

2.2 Opera Seria and the Return of a Political Genre

Calling *La clemenza di Tito* an opera seria identifies more than a formal category. In 1791, the term carried an institutional memory of court ceremony, exemplary rulers, and costly prestige. Yet, as John A. Rice emphasizes, opera seria was not an automatic choice for a Central European coronation. Although it remained among the eighteenth century's most prestigious and expensive operatic genres, it had been largely absent from Vienna during the 1770s and 1780s.¹⁵ The Prague commission therefore marked the restoration of a political genre rather than the unthinking continuation of an uninterrupted custom.

Under Joseph II, opera buffa and Singspiel had flourished, and comic repertory had served important dynastic occasions. The Bohemian commissioners' decision in 1791 was consequently relational as well as ceremonial: they deliberately departed from the Josephinian precedent and specified the genre that Joseph had declined to use.¹⁶ This reversal does not mean that opera buffa lacked political meaning. It means that opera seria offered a different grammar of public authority—one organized around rank, exemplary virtue, dynastic memory, and the concentrated testing of a ruler's moral identity.

¹⁵ John A. Rice "Operatic Culture at the Court of Leopold II and Mozart's *La clemenza di Tito*," in *Mozart's La clemenza di Tito: A Reappraisal*, ed. Magnus Tessing Schneider and Ruth Tatlow (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2018), 37–38, <https://doi.org/10.16993/ban.b>.

¹⁶ Rice, "Operatic Culture," 41.

The decision looked backward and forward at once. It recalled earlier Habsburg coronations in Prague: Johann Joseph Fux's *Constanza e fortezza* had accompanied Charles VI's Bohemian coronation in 1723, and a setting of Metastasio's *Semiramide* formed part of Maria Theresa's coronation festivities in 1743. At the same time, the choice corresponded to Leopold II's Italianate experience after twenty-five years as grand duke of Tuscany and to his formation of an opera serial troupe in Vienna early in 1791.¹⁷ The Prague Tito could thus invoke inherited dynastic ceremony while aligning itself with the new emperor's theatrical reorientation.

This return should not be mistaken for a simple revival of static absolutist propaganda. Jette Barnholdt Hansen's epideictic reading is useful here. Epideictic, or ceremonial, rhetoric praises virtues, condemns vices, and sustains the shared values of a culture; it is conventionally associated with occasions such as coronations. Hansen argues that *La clemenza di Tito* combines a conservative rhetoric that preserves courtly orthodoxies with an open or radical rhetoric that introduces civic and enlightened values.¹⁸ The genre could therefore reaffirm monarchy while also reformulating the ethical terms on which monarchy sought public assent.

Hansen accordingly describes the opera as a dialogue between old and new. Its ritualistic Baroque elements preserve established order, while musical and dramatic signs of sensibility and compassion redirect that order toward enlightened clemency. Her reading of the overture-ceremonial fanfare set against a more lyrical idea associated with compassion-offers one musical instance of this duality.¹⁹ Whether every detail of that interpretation remains methodologically valuable: opera seria in 1791 was capable of carrying historical authority and contemporary revision at the same time.

For Publio, this generic framework is decisive. A ruler's clemency becomes publicly meaningful only when punishment is institutionally possible. Publio's arrests, reports, custody, and obedience establish that possibility without displacing Tito from the dramatic center. He supplies the coercive and administrative counterweight against which mercy can appear as a consequential political act rather than a private emotion. His limited amount of solo music does not make him extraneous to opera seria's political work; it locates him sovereign's exemplary virtue to be tested, witnessed, and enacted. Publio therefore belongs to the genre's return not as a second ruler, but as the threshold official who makes rulership operative.

¹⁷ Rice, "Operatic Culture," 41

¹⁸ Jette Barnholdt Hansen, "Mozart as Epideictic Rhetorician: The Representation of Vice and Virtue in *La clemenza di Tito*," in *Mozart's La clemenza di Tito: A Reappraisal*, ed. Magnus Tassing Schneider and Ruth Tatlow (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2018), 120-21, <http://doi.org/10.16993/ban.e>.

¹⁹ Hanses, "Mozart as Epideictic Rhetorician," 124.

2.3 Clemency as Political Performance

In *La clemenza di Tito*, clemency is not simply a benign feeling that Tito possesses before the action begins. It becomes politically legible only when it interrupts a valid process of judgment and punishment. Magnus Tessing Schneider observes that eighteenth-century definitions treated clemency either as an act by which the sovereign relaxes the rigor of the law or as a virtue that inclines the prince to moderate justice with judgment and discretion. In both formulations, the power belonged specifically to the sovereign.²⁰ The concept thus presupposes a law that could be enforced and a ruler authorized to suspend its consequences.

Mazzola and Mozart complicate this vertical model by surrounding it with compassion. Schneider distinguishes princely clemency, which describes a vertical relation between sovereign and subject, from pity understood as a horizontal relation among fellow human beings. He argues that Mazzola's revisions extend sympathy audience, even toward the traitors and the emperor himself.²¹ Pardon is therefore coded on two levels: the juridical act remains Tito's monopoly, while its affective impulse can circulate throughout the court. The opera's politics lies not in replacing authority with sentiment, but in converting shared compassion into an authorized decision.

This division creates a central paradox. Many figures can recognize suffering, but only Tito can transform that recognition into release. Felicity Baker compares the clarification undertaken in Act II with restorative justice, yet emphasizes that the resolution remains Tito's work alone and that he remains the sole recourse for justice.²² The performance of clemency thus displays both sovereign benevolence and the structural concentration of absolute rule. The same gesture that saves Sesto demonstrates every other person's dependence upon a single will. The opera does not remove this contradiction; it makes the contradiction visible.

Clemency also requires knowledge. Baker argues that Tito's publicly announced forgiveness cannot by itself constitute the dramatic climax, since an isolated pardon would leave the monarch ruling alone; the final scene is instead reserved shares the relevant facts.²³ Vitellia's confession does not cause Tito's first decision to spare Sesto, which he has already made, but it transforms the conditions under which the final absolution can be understood. Pardon becomes a public judgment rather than a private indulgence because accusation, possible sentence, disclosure, and suspension are made legible in sequence.

²⁰ Magnus Tessing Schneider, "From Metastasio to Mazzola: Clemency and pity in *La clemenza di Tito*," in *Mozart's La clemenza di Tito: A Reappraisal*, ed. Magnus Tessing Schneider and Ruth Tatlow (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2018), 60, <https://doi.org/10.16993/ban.c>.

²¹ Schneider, "From Metastasio to Mazzola," 63-64.

²² Felicity Baker, "Tito's Burden," in *Mozart's La clemenza di Tito: A Reappraisal*, ed. Magnus Tessing Schneider and Ruth Tatlow (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2018), 101-2, <http://doi.org/10.16993/ban.d>.

²³ Baker, "Tito's Burden," 105.

Baker further observes that Tito's universal clemency accompanies a clarification to which all the characters to which all the characters contribute, and that Vitellia's confession enables him to absolve Sesto and the rebels.²⁴ The libretto then converts the ethical decision into administrative language: Tito orders Sesto to be released, life and liberty restored to Lentulo and his followers, and Rome informed that he knows everything, absolves everyone, and forgets everything.²⁵ The repeated totality enlarges mercy from personal forgiveness into a public settlement. Clemency is performed not only as an interior virtue but also as command, communication, and the reconstitution of order.

Publio's function becomes exact within this structure. As established in Section 1.3, he feels compassion for the arrested Sesto but calls his pity useless. This does not mean that he is morally inferior to Tito. He embodies the difference between horizontal compassion and vertical authority. He must maintain custody, transmit information, keep punishment executable, and then obey the order of release. If Publio pardoned Sesto on his own, Tito's clemency would lose its political specificity; if Publio did not enforce the legal process, the pardon would have no consequence. His restraint supplies the negative space within which sovereign mercy can become visible. Publio is therefore not merely a spectator to Tito's virtue. He is the institutional agent who brings the coercive process to the threshold of punishment and, when the command changes, carries it back toward freedom. Through him, clemency becomes a public performance of reversible power.

²⁴ Baker, "Tito's Burden," 109.

²⁵ Caterino Mazzola, *La clemenza di Tito: Dramma serio per musica in due atti*, transcribed and annotated by Dario Zanotti (Libretti d'opera italiani, 2008), Zanotti (Libretti d'opera italiani, 2008), 35, <https://www.librettidopera.it/zpdf/tito.pdf>.

2.4 Institution versus Individual

The relation between institution and individual in *La clemenza di Tito* should not be reduced to a contest between a cold system and humane feeling. Within the Opera, an institution has no theatrical body apart from the people assigned to its differentiated tasks. The Senate judges, the guards detain, Publio transmits and enforces, and Tito confirms or cancels the result. Publio is therefore neither the source of the law nor a passive messenger. He is the office through which judgment is converted into action.

The arrest scene makes that office visible. Publio enters with guards, demands Sesto's sword, identifies the man whom Sesto struck as Lentulo rather than Tito, and orders Sesto to accompany him. At the beginning of the following scene, he explains that the Senate has already assembled to hear Sesto and that he cannot delay taking him there.²⁶ His language concerns custody, verified facts, and procedural time. The scene gives him no authority to determine guilt and no discretion to abandon the process because its human cost has become apparent.

The later return of the senatorial decree defines his position still more precisely. Publio reports that Sesto has confessed, that the Senate has condemned him and his accomplices to the beasts, and that the decree lacks only Tito's imperial signature. He describes the document as "terrible, but just."²⁷ The phrase holds individual response and official judgment together without allowing either to cancel the other. The sentence itself is distributed across several bodies: the Senate formulates it, Publio authenticates and transmits it, and Tito's signature would activate its final force. Institutional violence is consequently represented as a chain of delegated acts rather than as the spontaneous cruelty of one person.

The same hierarchy that organizes action, however, also obstructs knowledge. Baker argues that Tito's lack of a reliable interlocutor is a major obstacle to the non-authoritarian leadership he desires. The court's admiring love for an absolute ruler prevents the equality required for truthful exchange, encouraging even affectionate subjects to idealize Tito and withhold unwelcome information.²⁸ Publio's official accuracy does not make him Tito's confidant. He can supply validated information, but his rank and function do not create the reciprocal equality required for unrestricted personal disclosure. The institution secures facts while the hierarchy surrounding it can still inhibit truth.

The libretto stages this distinction with unusual economy in Servilia's scene. When she tells Tito that she must reveal a secret, the stage direction requires Publio to withdraw. Servilia then acknowledges that she loves Annio, although contradicting the emperor's marital plan may

²⁶ Mazzola, *La clemenza di Tito*, 20-21

²⁷ Mazzola, *La clemenza di Tito*, 23

²⁸ Baker, "Tito's Burden," 102.

constitute an offense, and Tito gratefully praises someone willing to displease him with the truth.²⁹ Publio's withdrawal is not a humiliation; it marks the boundary between official presence and intimate disclosure. By leaving, he makes space for a form of truth that his particular office neither requires nor authorizes him to solicit. His silence in such a scene is therefore positional rather than empty.

This distinction also prevents Tito's clemency from being understood as a purely private characteristic. Sergio Durante emphasizes that the sovereign's ability to surpass the law served historically as a political justification for absolutism; royal benevolence manifested in clemency functioned as a structural element of monarchy and one of its strongest ideological supports.³⁰ Tito's virtue consequently produces an institutional effect only because other figures preserve the law, the judgment, and the condemned subject until his decision can intervene. Publio's obedience and limited discretion help to construct that structure, while his pity and perceptiveness prevent the official from becoming an impersonal mechanism.

Publio's dramatic significance thus lies in the distance among what he feels, what he knows, and what he is authorized to do. The text supports neither a portrayal of him as an emotionless bureaucratic blank nor a reinvention of him as a convert moral rebel. His ethical agency appears through accuracy, restraint, and responsible execution within the limits of office. The individual remains audible inside the institution, but he does not claim the institution as his private possession. That controlled separation is precisely what enables Publio to mediate between judgment and mercy without competing with the sovereign who alone can transform one into the other.

²⁹ Mazzola, *La clemenza di Tito*, 12

³⁰ Sergio Durante, "Stage Directions and Set Design in Mozart's *La clemenza di Tito*," in *Mozart's La clemenza di Tito: A Reappraisal*, ed. Magnus Tessing Schneider and Ruth Tatlow (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2018), 151, <https://doi.org/10.16993/ban.f>.

2.5 Authority on stage

Authority in *La clemenza di Tito* is not communicated by language alone. It is arranged spatially through entrances, processions, change of distance, the presence of guards, and the controlled movement between public and private settings. These elements form a theatrical grammar of rule. They distinguish the person who possesses sovereign power from the officials who make that power visible and executable. Publio occupies a particularly important place within this grammar because he repeatedly stands at the threshold between the emperor and the political bodies surrounding him.

The ceremonial context of the opera gives these arrangements political weight. Hansen argues that theatre and courtly ceremony could both empower absolutist monarchy and incorporate civic and enlightened values into its representation, thereby adapting monarchy to a changed political situation.³¹ The stage does not merely display a ruler who already possesses an uncontested meaning; it produces a public image of rule that must coordinate hierarchy, consent, collective feeling, and moral judgment. Publio contributes to that image without becoming its center.

The first major public tableau establishes this relationship. The libretto places the action in a magnificently decorated Roman forum facing the Capitol. Publio appears with Roman senators and provincial delegates bringing annual tribute, while Tito descends from the Capitol preceded by lictors, followed by Praetorians, and surrounded by a large populace.³² Publio then communicates the Senate's title of "father of the country" and identifies the tribute as a public sign of collective love. His authority is therefore relational and delegated: he speaks for the Senate and organizes the presentation of political recognition, while Tito remains the object toward which the entire composition is directed.

Act II transforms that ceremonial order into a space of judgment. Durante notes that the "grand hall intended for public hearings," furnished with a throne, chair, and table, is unique to the Prague libretto; it replaces the restricted "closed chamber" of Metastasio's original with a larger ceremonial setting capable of accommodating a crowd.³³ Within this configuration, authority becomes both visible and administrative. The throne marks the sovereign center, while the chair, table, and written decree connect rule to hearing, deliberation, writing, and signature. Publio moves across this arrangement: he leaves to obtain the Senate's decision and returns with the document that awaits Tito's name. His movement converts institutions that remain offstage into an action the audience can follow.

The meeting with Sesto demonstrates that spatial control also governs personal access. The stage direction states that Sesto stops immediately upon entering with Publio and the guards. Tito must

³¹ Hansen, "Mozart as Epideictic Rhetorician," 121.

³² Mazzola, *La clemenza di Tito*, 7-8

³³ Durante, "Stage Directions and Set Design," 135.

order him to approach; after Publio observes the conflict in Tito's emotions, the emperor commands Publio and the guards to leave so that he can question Sesto alone.³⁴ Distance here is neither incidental nor merely decorative. Sesto's halted body acknowledges sovereign danger, Tito's command temporarily grants access, and Publio's departure changes a custodial encounter into a private confrontation. Publio regulates the threshold but does not appropriate the conversation that occurs beyond it.

The final scene enlarges this structure once more. The condemned conspirators are already visible in the amphitheater; Tito enters preceded by lictors, surrounded by senators and patricians, and followed by Praetorians. Sesto is subsequently brought before him with Publio among the same apparatus of custody and public judgment.³⁵ Clemency can become theatrically legible only because punishment has first been made credible. Publio's presence helps preserve that credibility: he embodies the lawful route by which the sentence could be carried out, while his subordinate position leaves the cancellation of that sentence unmistakably to Tito.

For the performer, this structure argues against presenting Publio through generalized aggression or continuous military display. His authority may be conveyed more precisely through disciplined stillness, economical movement, clear attention to rank, and exact changes of position when a command alters his function. Such choices do not weaken the character. They allow the audience to perceive that his power depends on institutional proximity and procedural responsibility rather than personal domination. Onstage, Publio makes sovereignty operational; by refusing to imitate sovereignty, he also makes its limits visible.

³⁴ Mazzola, *La clemenza di Tito*, 26.

³⁵ Mazzola, *La clemenza di Tito*, 33-34.

CHAPTER 3. FROM METASTASIO TO MAZZOLA: THE FORMATION OF PUBLIO

3.1 Publio in Metastasio's 1734 Libretto

Any account of Publio in Mozart's *La clemenza di Tito* must begin with the character's earlier dramatic identity. Metastasio's 1734 libretto does not introduce him as an anonymous soldier or a generic court attendant. The list of characters identifies him specifically as "Publio, prefetto del pretorio"—Publio, prefect of the Praetorian Guard.³⁶ This designation establishes his institutional position before he speaks. He belongs near the emperor, commands or accompanies guards, and connects the sovereign to the machinery of custody, information, and public order. His authority is therefore neither independent nor merely decorative: it is delegated power exercised in Tito's immediate proximity.

Metastasio makes this delegated authority most visible at the end of Act II. Publio enters with guards, calls Sesto by name, demands his sword, reports that Lentulo has survived, and orders him to come before the assembled Senate.³⁷ The sequence is remarkably economical. Publio neither conducts an extended accusation nor celebrates Sesto's ruin. Instead, his short commands convert new information into lawful custody. The sword changes hands; private flight becomes impossible; and the conspiracy moves from personal concealment into public judgment. Publio thus functions as the dramatic agent who closes one field of action and opens another.

The opening of Act III broadens this function. Publio reminds Tito that the hour of the public games is passing and that the people gathered around the arena await the emperor's presence. Tito, however, refuses to depart until he knows Sesto's fate and directs Publio to learn what the Senate is doing.³⁸ Publio stands here at the intersection of three temporal demands: the ceremonial schedule of the people, the deliberative time of the Senate, and Tito's personal hesitation over his friend. He does not control any of these spheres, but he keeps them in communication. Through his entrances and exits, institutions that remain largely offstage acquire urgency and theatrical form.

Metastasio also gives Publio a distinct moral diagnosis. When Tito finds it impossible to believe that Sesto has betrayed him, Publio replies that not everyone possesses Tito's heart. His ensuing aria

³⁶ Pietro Metastasio, *La clemenza di Tito* (1734), in *Opere*, ed. Fausto Nicolini, vol.3 (Bari: Giuseppe Laterza & Figli, 1914), "Interlocutori," 138, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Metastasio,Pietro%E2%80%93Opere_Vol._III,1914%E2%80%93BEIC_1885240.pdf

³⁷ Metastasio, *La clemenza di Tito*, act2, scene 1, 181.

³⁸ Metastasio, *La clemenza di Tito*, act3, scene 1, 182

explains that a truthful and honorable person discovers treachery late because he assumes that other hearts are likewise incapable of infidelity.³⁹ The aria prevents the role from being reduced to administrative utility. Publio recognizes that Tito's virtue creates an epistemic weakness: the emperor measures others by his own integrity and therefore sees betrayal too slowly. Publio's caution is not cynicism. It is the prudential knowledge required of an officer responsible for protecting a ruler whose goodness resists suspicion.

This judgment does not eliminate compassion. After Tito has wrestled privately with Sesto's sentence, he summons Publio and orders that Sesto also be brought to the arena. Publio asks about the prisoner's fate; when Tito answers that it has already been decided, Publio responds in an aside, "Oh sventurato!"—"Oh, unfortunate man!"⁴⁰ The aside is brief, private, and politically powerless, but it is unmistakably sympathetic. Metastasio's Publio should therefore not be described as emotionless. His feeling is compressed by office: he can register suffering, yet he neither interrupts the command nor claims the sovereign's right to decide.

The limits of that sympathy become especially clear in the arrest sequence. After Publio's recitative commands, Sesto sings his farewell aria to Vitellia and departs with Publio and the guards; Vitellia then remains alone for her own aria of fear and remorse. Schneider observes that Mazzolà later replaces these successive exit arias with an ensemble and gives Publio a compassionate aside at the precise musical moment in which he remains silent in Metastasio.⁴¹ The distinction is important. In the 1734 drama, Publio can express political caution in an independent aria and pity in a fleeting spoken aside, but he does not participate musically in Sesto and Vitellia's emotional confrontation. His affect exists beside the principal conflict rather than inside its musical fabric.

For the performer, this original conception offers a more exact foundation than the conventional image of a severe military official. Publio's conduct may be organized through three simultaneous qualities: procedural clarity, diagnostic intelligence, and contained compassion. The arrest should be efficient because his office requires action, not because he enjoys coercion. The Act III aria may be addressed as a reasoned warning born of experience, not as a display of superiority. The aside "Oh sventurato!" should reveal a momentary human response without dissolving the discipline that surrounds it. Metastasio thus provides the essential baseline for measuring Mazzolà's revision: the later libretto does not create Publio's humanity from nothing, but relocates and amplifies it by allowing his pity to enter a shared musical event.

³⁹ Metastasio, *La clemenza di Tito*, act3, scene 8, 191

⁴⁰ Metastasio, *La clemenza di Tito*, act3, scene 8, 191.

⁴¹ Schneider, "From Metastasio to Mazzola," 73-74

3.2 Mazzolà's Revision of the Libretto

The libretto set by Mozart in 1791 is not Metastasio's 1734 drama left intact with a few numbers removed. Mozart's own catalogue describes *La clemenza di Tito* as an *opera seria* "in Due Atti," records Mazzolà's work with the phrase "ridotta à vera opera," and counts twenty-four musical numbers.⁴² The formulation is unusually explicit in naming the reviser and the revised shape. "Reduced to a true opera" need not be accepted as a judgment that Metastasio's text was theatrically invalid. It can be read more precisely as contemporary evidence that the Prague work's two-act, numbered structure was understood to result from a substantial act of operatic reconstruction.

That reconstruction must be distinguished from simple abridgment. Shortening was indispensable: a three-act drama written for the conventions of 1734 had to be adapted to different singers, circumstances, and theatrical expectations in 1791. Yet deletion alone does not explain the new libretto. Schneider instead presents Mazzolà's work as a fundamental transformation of the drama.⁴³ It alters not only how much of the story is told, but how speech, time, and presence are distributed. Episodes that Metastasio separated into successive recitatives and solo numbers are repeatedly reorganized so that several characters can hear, answer, and react within the same musical span.

The numerical changes make this redistribution visible. Baker's account records a net reallocation: eighteen inherited arias were removed and four substituted; the multi-character additions comprised three duets, three trios, one chorus-based ensemble, and two finales.⁴⁴ The significance of those figures lies less in subtraction than in replacement. A solo aria suspends external action while one character develops an affective position; an ensemble permits incompatible positions to unfold simultaneously and allows the audience to compare them in real time. Mazzolà thus does not merely accelerate Metastasio's plot. He changes the unit of dramatic meaning from the isolated utterance toward the interaction among voices.

The revision announces this method in its first closed number. Instead of allowing the opening confrontation between Vitellia and Sesto to remain wholly within recitative, Mazzolà leads it into the duet "Come ti piace imponi." At the close, both characters sing: "Fan mille affetti insieme / battaglia in me spietata. / Un'alma lacerata / più della mia non v'è"—"A thousand emotions together wage a pitiless battle within me; no soul is more torn than mine."⁴⁵ Their shared words do not produce agreement. Vitellia commands and Sesto submits, and the moral asymmetry between

⁴² Tatlow and Schneider, "Chronology and Documents," 13.

⁴³ Schneider, "From Metastasio to Mazzola," 58

⁴⁴ Baker, "Tito's Burden," 99.

⁴⁵ Mazzola, *La clemenza di Tito*, 5

them remains. The duet nevertheless places their divided inner states inside one audible frame. From the beginning, emotion becomes relational: each voice is defined not only by what it declares but by what it must sing beside, against, or together with another voice.

The same principle governs the large-scale pacing of Act I. Schneider notes that Mazzolà emphasizes the pivotal action trio by compressing seven subsequent scenes from Metastasio's Act II into four rapidly unfolding scenes at the Capitol.⁴⁶ Compression here is structural rather than merely economical. News arrives before one emotional state has settled; decisions generate consequences while witnesses are still present; and discrete episodes become a continuous public emergency. Mozart's linking of the final numbers intensifies that design musically, but the libretto has already created its prerequisite: characters no longer leave the stage simply because another person's emotional account must begin. Their responses can coexist, collide, and accumulate.

Mazzolà's treatment of *pietà* gives this formal change an ethical direction. Schneider observes that the revision gives Metastasio's less precise usage a more exact, compassionate sense.⁴⁷ In the new closed numbers, compassion is not confined to a maxim pronounced about virtuous conduct. It becomes something voiced before others, awakened by the sight or sound of another person's distress, and transmitted across differences of rank and responsibility. The revised ensemble system therefore does more than supply variety. It creates theatrical conditions in which feeling can circulate horizontally even though the legal power to pardon remains vertically concentrated in Tito.

This reorganization is decisive for Publio. His basic office does not disappear: he still conveys information, executes Tito's commands, and brings Sesto within the jurisdiction of the Senate and emperor. What changes is the dramatic environment in which those duties are performed. Metastasio often lets Publio complete a procedural task and then withdraws him before the principal characters unfold their emotions in separate arias. Mazzolà's ensemble dramaturgy can keep the official onstage and give his act of listening an audible consequence. Publio can therefore remain an agent of custody while also becoming a witness whose compassion enters the event he administers. The revision does not replace his institutional identity with sentiment; it makes office and human response perceptible at the same time.

For the performer, this distinction redirects attention from isolated lines to transitions and acts of listening. Publio's characterization begins before he sings: it is present in how he receives another character's fear, how quickly he converts knowledge into action, and whether official composure suppresses or contains a visible response. The faster ensemble structure gives him little time for retrospective explanation. His inner life must therefore be legible through alertness, restraint, and changes of address inside ongoing action. Mazzolà's achievement is not simply a shorter libretto but a different social acoustics—one in which authority, panic, loyalty, and compassion can be heard

⁴⁶ Schneider, "From Metastasio to Mazzola," 68

⁴⁷ Schneider, "From Metastasio to Mazzola," 60.

together. The next section will examine the clearest consequence of this transformation: Publio's new participation in the arrest ensemble.

3.3 The Transformation of Publio in the Arrest Scene

The arrest scene provides the clearest test of what Mazzolà's revision changes in Publio. In Metastasio's Act II, Publio calls Sesto, demands his sword, reports that Lentulo has survived, and states that the Senate is waiting. Sesto then sings a farewell aria to Vitellia and leaves with Publio and the guards; only after their departure does Vitellia remain alone for a separate aria of fear and remorse.⁴⁸ The sequence gives Publio complete control over the physical transition from freedom to custody, but no place within the lovers' musical response. He moves the accused person out of the scene while the emotional meanings of arrest are allocated successively to Sesto and Vitellia.

Mazzolà preserves the essential procedure. Publio still names Sesto, requires his sword, identifies the wounded man as Lentulo, and orders him to appear before the Senate. The crucial revision occurs immediately after these commands: instead of completing Sesto's exit aria and then beginning Vitellia's soliloquy, the libretto opens a new scene and proceeds directly into no. 14, the trio "Se al volto mai ti senti."⁴⁹ Publio's institutional action is therefore not weakened or removed. It is held open long enough for all three characters to inhabit its consequences within a single musical event.

Schneider describes this formal operation as the conversion of two separate departures into collective writing.⁵⁰ Its importance for Publio lies in continued presence. At the equivalent moment in Metastasio, he has no musical response; in the revision, the officer who enforces custody remains available as a listening and feeling participant. Arrest ceases to be merely the mechanism that separates two solo utterances. It becomes a moral situation observed from three positions: the accused man taking leave, the conspirator fearing exposure, and the official required to carry out the law.

Publio's first contribution to the trio is still an imperative: "Vieni"—"Come." Sesto answers, "Ti seguo ... Addio"—"I follow you ... Farewell," while Vitellia interrupts with "Senti ... mi perdo ... oh dio!" and then addresses Publio with "Che crudeltà!"—"What cruelty!"⁵¹ The brevity of "Vieni" is dramatically exact. Publio neither debates the legality of the arrest nor answers Vitellia's

⁴⁸ Metastasio, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, scenes 15-16, 179-80.

⁴⁹ Mazzola, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, scenes 3-4, 20-21.

⁵⁰ Schneider, "From Metastasio to Mazzola," 73.

⁵¹ Mazzola, *La clemenza di Tito*, 21.

accusation. His command punctuates a stream of unfinished farewells and frightened interruptions. Consequently, the performer must preserve the difference between cruelty and the appearance of cruelty: Publio performs an obligation that Vitellia experiences as cruel, but the trio will reveal that he is not emotionally indifferent to its cost.

That revelation arrives in Publio's parenthetical quatrain: "L'acerbo amaro pianto, / che da' suoi lumi piove, / l'anima mi commuove, / ma vana è la pietà"—"The painful, bitter weeping that falls from his eyes moves my soul, but my pity is powerless."⁵² The stanza proceeds from observation to inward response and then to institutional limit. Publio first sees Sesto's tears, then acknowledges that they move his soul, and finally recognizes that his compassion cannot alter the prisoner's destination. The adjective *vana* should not be understood as declaring the feeling false. It identifies a feeling without jurisdiction. Publio can experience horizontal compassion for Sesto, but he cannot exercise the vertical sovereign power that could suspend judgment or grant pardon.

The trio's distribution of the word *pietà* sharpens this distinction. Sesto asks that Vitellia's pity reward his suffering; Publio independently confesses that pity has arisen in him. Schneider draws attention to the identical terminal word in Sesto's and Publio's stanzas.⁵³ Vitellia, by contrast, speaks of remorse, horror, fear, and the prospect of dying from grief, but her stanza remains centered on what she feels and what may become known. This does not mean that she is incapable of remorse. Rather, the verbal design distinguishes remorse caused by one's own danger from compassion directed toward another person's pain. Publio, who has no private interest in the conspiracy, becomes the scene's clearest disinterested witness to Sesto's suffering.

The final stage direction prevents compassion from being mistaken for refusal of duty: Publio and Sesto leave with the guards, while Vitellia departs in the opposite direction.⁵⁴ The arrest is completed exactly as Publio announced. He does not release Sesto, delay the Senate, or claim the emperor's authority. The physical result thus confirms the final words of his aside: his pity is ineffective as an intervention. Yet it is not dramatically ineffective. By allowing the audience to hear compassion within the agent of custody, the trio separates lawful enforcement from emotional hardness and exposes the human cost borne even by an official who cannot change the law.

For the singer-actor, this scene requires two simultaneous lines of action. The public line is economical: Publio enters with guards, secures the sword, states verified facts, and maintains the direction of travel. The private line develops through listening: Sesto's farewell and tears affect him before his aside makes that response audible to the audience. "Vieni" should therefore remain a command rather than becoming apologetic, while "l'anima mi commuove" must sound like a

⁵² Mazzola, *La clemenza di Tito*, 21.

⁵³ Schneider "From Metastasio to Mazzola," 73

⁵⁴ Mazzola, *La clemenza di Tito*, 21-22

genuine involuntary recognition rather than a generalized display of sadness. The last phrase, “*ma vana è la pietà*,” should restore awareness of limit without erasing the compassion that precedes it.

Mazzolà’s transformation of Publio is consequently neither a sentimental conversion nor a rejection of his original function. The revision relocates humanity into the very moment at which institutional force is exercised. Metastasio’s Publio possesses prudence and can later express pity, but the arrest itself keeps him outside the lovers’ musical experience. Mazzolà places his pity inside that experience while ensuring that he still completes the arrest. Publio thereby becomes an institutional witness: a figure whose obedience preserves the juridical order and whose compassion allows the audience to perceive what that order costs. This duality forms the essential dramatic foundation for his musical and performative characterization in Mozart’s opera.

CHAPTER 4. MUSICAL AND VOCAL CHARACTERIZATION OF PUBLIO

4.1 “*Tardi s’avvede*”: Form, Text, and Dramatic Function

Publio’s only independent aria, no. 16, “*Tardi s’avvede*,” is not an isolated display number. It completes a dialogue already in progress and simultaneously enables an institutional action. Tito has ordered Publio to discover what delays the Senate’s report on Sesto. When Publio anticipates unfavorable news, Tito replies that he cannot imagine Sesto’s betrayal because he measures Sesto’s heart by his own. Publio answers, “*Ma, signor, non han tutti il cor di Tito*” (“But, sire, not everyone possesses Tito’s heart”), and the aria follows without changing the subject. The recitative and aria therefore form one act of counsel: the spoken sentence corrects Tito’s immediate inference, while the aria generalizes that correction into a maxim about fidelity, deception, and delayed recognition.⁵⁵

The maxim is inherited almost verbatim from Metastasio. Its survival is significant because Mazzolà otherwise compressed and reorganized substantial portions of the earlier drama. The ten short lines divide rhetorically into a four-line proposition and a six-line explanation. The opening states the paradox: “*Tardi s’avvede / d’un tradimento / chi mai di fede / mancar non sa*” (“One who never knows how to fail in fidelity recognizes a betrayal late”). The remaining lines supply the cause: a truthful and honorable heart assumes that every other heart is likewise incapable of

⁵⁵ Caterino Mazzola, *La clemenza di Tito*, libretto by Pietro Metastasio, adapted by Mazzola, music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, transcription by Dario Zanotti (Libretti d’Opera Italiani, 2006), 22-23, <http://www.librettidopera.it/zpdf/tito.pdf>.

infidelity. The rhyme scheme (ABAC–DEBEDC) binds *avvede* to *fede*, *tradimento* to *portento*, *verace* to *incapace*, and *onore* to *core*, while *sa* and *infedeltà* enclose the ethical explanation. The

paired words make the argument audible: fidelity explains delayed perception; truthfulness produces an inability to imagine deception.⁵⁶

The music presents this counsel with mobility rather than monumental weight. The critical score marks the C-major aria *Allegretto* and assigns it to strings, two oboes, and two horns. A brief orchestral opening establishes alternating forte and piano gestures and a recurring broken-chord motion in the inner strings. Publio then enters with predominantly syllabic declamation over the continuing pattern. The texture permits the words to travel quickly and distinctly; it does not require the bass register to signify menace, age, or inflexibility. Authority can instead emerge from rhythmic definition, stable breath, and intelligible Italian. The brightness of C major and the forward movement of the accompaniment should not automatically be classified as comic: within this scene they clarify an urgent warning addressed upward to a ruler.⁵⁷

The aria's compact form follows the logic of its text. In the first span, the opening quatrain presents the proposition and the following six lines explain it. The setting gives particular attention to *d'infedeltà*, repeating the word at the end of the explanatory unit. After that cadence, the orchestra re-establishes the opening material, and Publio returns to "Tardi s'avvede." The score therefore does not simply repeat an undifferentiated stanza. It creates a three-stage argument: proposition, explanation, and restated proposition. The listener first hears that the faithful recognize betrayal late, then hears why, and finally receives the original statement again with its cause now understood.⁵⁸

This return has a direct consequence for characterization. On its first appearance, "Tardi s'avvede" may be delivered as a general observation; on its return, the same words have become unmistakably applicable to Tito. A singer need not make the second statement louder or harsher merely because it repeats. Greater specificity can be achieved through a more focused address, clearer stress on *tardi*, and an awareness that Publio is no longer merely describing a type of person but diagnosing the emperor before him. Such differentiation arises from the formal placement of the repeated text, not from an invented change of emotion unsupported by the score.

⁵⁶ Pietro Metastasio, *La clemenza di Tito*, act3, scene 1, in *Opere*, ed. Fausto Nicolini, vol. 3 (Bari: Giuseppe Laterza & Figli, 1914), 182, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Metastasio,pietro%E2%80%93BEIC_1885240.pdf.

⁵⁷ Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, K. 621, ed. Franz Geigling, *Neue Mozart-Ausgabe*, der. 2 work group 5, vol. 20 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1970), 193, International Mozarteum Foundation Online Publications, 2006, https://dme.mozarteum.at/DME/nma/nma_cont.php?p1+193&vsep+75.

⁵⁸ Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, 194

The ending further integrates music and stage action. Near the close, Publio repeats *manca non sa*; his vocal line then ceases, the score marks his departure, and the orchestra completes the number. The remaining instrumental measures allow the counsel to outlast its speaker. Publio does not remain to win a debate, demand agreement, or observe Tito's reaction. He states the limit of Tito's assumption and withdraws to perform the task already assigned to him. For the performer, the exit should therefore complete the act of counsel rather than make the aria appear to be a detachable

concert piece. This conclusion does not prescribe a particular route or gesture; it derives only the dramatic task that the written sequence supports.⁵⁹

Publio's argument is prudent rather than cynical. A modern account of "epistemic vigilance" offers a useful but deliberately limited vocabulary for the distinction. Sperber and his co-authors argue that human communication is beneficial yet exposes hearers to accidental or intentional misinformation; trust must consequently be calibrated rather than either granted blindly or replaced by universal suspicion. This theory is not evidence that Mozart or Mazzolà anticipated modern cognitive science, and it should not be presented as a historical influence. It is useful as an analytical analogy because Publio identifies a precise failure of calibration: Tito treats the fidelity he knows in himself as evidence for fidelity in Sesto. The aria does not tell Tito to distrust everyone. It explains why personal integrity can delay recognition of another person's treachery.⁶⁰

The surrounding action confirms this dramatic function. After Publio leaves, Tito continues to reject the possibility that Sesto has changed so radically. Annio enters to plead for mercy, and Publio then returns carrying the Senate's decree. He reports that Sesto has confessed, that the Senate has condemned him and his accomplices, and that only Tito's signature is missing.⁶¹ The aria thus occupies the interval between expectation and verified judgment. Publio first warns Tito against projecting his own virtue onto the accused; he then exits, obtains the institutional result, and returns with documentary confirmation. "Tardi s'avvede" is consequently both ethical commentary and dramatic mechanism: it articulates the political danger of unexamined trust while moving Publio from spoken suspicion to authenticated knowledge.

For performance, the number is most persuasive when these functions remain joined. The vocal task is not to manufacture grandeur for a short bass aria, but to make a compact argument legible: establish the opening proposition, distinguish its explanation, let the returning text acquire personal force, and allow the exit to complete the thought. A stable *Allegretto* pulse, clean consonants within

⁵⁹ Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, 195.

⁶⁰ Dan Sperber et al., "Epistemic Vigilance," *Mind & Language* 25, no. 4 (2010): 360, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0017.2010.01394.x>; open author copy, <https://www.dan.sperber.fr/wp-content/uploads/Epistemic-Vigilance-published.pdf>.

⁶¹ Mazzola, *La clemenza di Tito*, 23.

legato, and resistance to artificial darkening can preserve Publio's official dignity without turning him into a caricature of severity. In this scene he neither judges Sesto nor grants mercy. He supplies the ruler with the vigilance that Tito's own goodness temporarily lacks, and then resumes the work of office.

4.2 Vocal Range, Tessitura, and Registration

The critical score identifies Publio as *Basso*, but that designation should be treated as a casting category rather than as a complete description of his vocal behavior.⁶² Three related terms must therefore be kept distinct. *Range* names the distance between the lowest and highest written pitches; *tessitura* describes where the line habitually lies and how long it remains there; *registration* concerns the singer's management of vocal production and timbral continuity across pitch. These categories overlap in performance, but they are not interchangeable. A role can possess modest extremes yet remain demanding because its phrases repeatedly occupy an exposed part of the voice, while a broad range may be comparatively manageable if its extreme notes are brief and well prepared. Pitch names in this discussion follow scientific pitch notation, in which middle C is C4.

This distinction is especially important for "Tardi s'avvede." Voice researchers Ingo Titze and Lynn Maxfield describe tessitura in terms of a work's mean pitch and timbral texture, and they explain that a useful measurement must consider not only which notes occur but also their frequency and accumulated duration.⁶³ The aria should consequently not be assessed by its two boundary notes alone. A note-by-note reading of Mozart's vocal line gives a written range of B2–D4, while the recurrent center of activity lies broadly between D3 and B3. C4 and D4 function as localized upper events, whereas B2 is confined to the closing area. The result is a compact ambitus of a minor tenth whose practical center is distinctly higher than its lowest pitch might suggest.⁶⁴

The opening establishes this distribution immediately. Publio enters in the middle and upper-middle portion of the bass staff, and the melody repeatedly returns to that zone as the maxim unfolds. The line does not descend early to display a cavernous bass sonority, nor does it depend upon a sustained high climax. Its characteristic demand is continuity: short syllabic units, small turns, and repeated approaches to the upper part of the staff must sound as manifestations of one speaking

⁶² Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, K. 621, ed. Franz Giegling, Neue Mozart-Ausgabe, der. 2, work group 5, vol. 20 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1970), 2, International Mozarteum Foundation Online Publications, 2006, https://dme.mozarteum.at/DME/nma/nma_cont.php?p1=2&vsep=75.

⁶³ Ingo R. Titze and Lynn Maxfield, "Adapting the Voice Range Profile for Singers to Include Duration of Voicing," *Journal of Singing* 77, no. 5 (May/June 2021): 654, http://vocology.utha.edu/resource/documets/adapting_the_voice_range_profile_for_singers_to_include_duration_of_voicing_itze_maxfield.pdf.

⁶⁴ Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, 193–95, https://dme.mozarteum.at/DME/nma/nma_cont.php?p1=193&vsep=75.

subject. The singer's authority therefore cannot be built simply by emphasizing the bottom of the range. It must remain present when the line rises, lightens, and moves.

This placement also corrects the misleading assumption that a short aria with no extreme high note is necessarily easy. D4 is not exceptional as an isolated pitch for many basses and bass-baritones, but Mozart repeatedly prepares the upper-middle voice through motion rather than through a long period of rest. The task is cumulative. Successive phrases ask the singer to preserve clarity and legato while returning to a region in which excessive weight becomes immediately audible. If the performer treats every approach to C4 or D4 as a separate "high note," the text is likely to lose its continuity; if those pitches are prepared as the natural continuation of the preceding vowel and breath gesture, the argument can remain conversational without becoming under-energized.

The final vocal span makes the relation among range, tessitura, and dramatic action particularly clear. In the closing restatement, the line reaches D4 within the extended setting of *sa* and then descends through the staff to B2 before Publio's part ends. The upper pitch is approached through connected motion, while the low boundary belongs to the release and conclusion of the sentence rather than to an opening display of vocal identity.⁶⁵ The two extremes therefore perform different rhetorical functions. D4 intensifies the act of insisting that an honorable person does not know how to fail in fidelity; B2 settles that assertion and transfers the scene back to action. A singer who enlarges both pitches merely because they mark the limits of the range would erase this functional difference.

The term *registration* requires equal caution. Nathalie Henrich's review of singing-voice research shows that the definition, number, and labeling of registers remain disputed, and that familiar words such as *chest*, *head*, and *falsestto* may refer variously to sensation, perceived tone quality, laryngeal behavior, or vocal-tract adjustment.⁶⁶ This study therefore does not claim that Mozart's notation prescribes one physiological mechanism at each pitch. Here, *registration* denotes the performer's coordinated management of the source and vocal tract so that the written line retains an intelligible and sufficiently continuous timbral identity. This operational definition is deliberately narrower than a universal theory of registers.

Henrich's synthesis is nevertheless useful for locating the aria's practical pressure point. In the pedagogical model she summarizes, the upper portion associated with the baritone male-head register lies approximately between B b 3 and F4 and remains continuous with full voice rather than being identical with falsetto.⁶⁷ Publio's recurrent B3–D4 writing falls inside that broad region. The

⁶⁵ Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, 195, https://dme.mozarteum.at/DME/nma/nma_cont.php?p1=195&vsep=75.

⁶⁶ Nathalie Henrich, "Mirroring the Voice from Garcia to the Present Day: Some Insights into Singing Voice Registers," *Logopedics Phoniatrics Vocology* 31, no. 1 (2006): 6, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14015430500344844>; author copy, <https://hal.science/hal-00344177/document>.

⁶⁷ Henrich, "Mirroring the Voice," 11.

comparison must not be turned into a fixed rule: individual voices do not share identical transition pitches, and the score labels Publio a bass, not a baritone. It does, however, explain why a singer with ample low notes may still experience the aria chiefly as an upper-middle coordination problem. The relevant question is not whether the singer “has” D4, but whether the route to D4 remains free enough for text, dynamic inflection, and legato to survive.

For performance, this reading argues against artificially darkening every vowel in order to prove that Publio is a bass. Added pharyngeal weight may make the first low or middle notes sound imposing, but it can also make recurrent ascent laborious and blur the Italian. The preferable objective is not a uniformly bright tone or a uniformly dark one. It is a stable core that can adjust: sufficient depth for the role’s official gravity, sufficient flexibility for the *Allegretto* motion, and sufficient release in the upper-middle range for the words to remain immediate. Vowel modification, where individually necessary, should protect continuity and intelligibility rather than advertise a technical maneuver.

The low end requires similar restraint. Because B2 occurs near the close, it should grow out of the descending phrase instead of being prepared by prematurely lowering or enlarging the entire instrument. Its effectiveness depends more on tonal completion and textual finality than on maximum volume. In the same way, D4 should not become a tenor-like demonstration of brilliance. The written extremes frame a single vocal identity: alert, mobile, and controlled. This is consistent with Publio’s dramatic office. He is the lowest principal voice in the cast, but his authority is conveyed through reliable presence and verbal precision rather than through unrelieved heaviness.

The aria’s vocal profile can thus be summarized as narrow in absolute span but concentrated in consequence. B2–D4 defines the boundary; D3–B3 supplies the principal working area; the recurring upper-middle pitches test registration; and the late descent gives closure. These facts provide a technical foundation for the textual work that follows. Because Mozart does not use extreme range to differentiate Publio’s ideas, prosody, consonantal timing, vowel continuity, and syllabic stress must carry a larger share of the characterization. The next section therefore turns from where the voice lies to how the Italian words are organized and projected within that range.

4.3 Prosody, Diction, and Syllabic Declamation

The vocal placement described in the preceding section acquires dramatic meaning only when it is organized by language. In Publio’s aria, the principal technical problem is not the production of isolated Italian sounds but the coordination of three systems: the meter of Mazzolà’s verse, Mozart’s distribution of syllables across musical time, and the singer’s delivery of a complete argument. *Prosody* here denotes the patterning of syllables, lexical stresses, phrase accents, and boundaries; *diction* denotes the audible formation and connection of the words; and *syllabic declamation* describes a texture in which the text generally advances one syllable at a time, even when individual syllables are prolonged or briefly ornamented. These categories must remain connected. Accurate consonants without verbal hierarchy produce spelling rather than speech, while an

uninterrupted legato that obscures consonantal distinctions weakens the counsel that Publio has been sent to give.

The libretto consists of ten *quinari*, or five-position Italian lines. In the normal form of the *quinario*, the principal metrical stress falls on the fourth position; a line ending in an oxytone word may contain only four sounded syllables and still count as a *quinario tronco*. The following scansion marks the principal verse stress in bold, uses an underscore for metrical contraction across a word boundary, and does not prescribe musical accent or breathing:

Tar-di s'av-**ve**-de
 d'un tra-di-**men**-to
 chi mai di **fe**-de
 man-car non **sa**
 Un cor ve-**ra**-ce
 pie-no d'o-**no**-re
 non è por-**ten**-to
 se_ogn'al-tro **co**-re
 cre-de_in-ca-**pa**-ce
 d'in-fe-del-**tà**

The fourth and tenth lines are *tronchi*, while the eighth and ninth reach five metrical positions through contraction at *se_ogn'* and *de_in*. The scheme produces a recurring arrival on the fourth position without making every line rhythmically identical.⁶⁸

This distinction between grammatical and metrical syllables is essential. Lorenzo Bianconi characterizes Italian meter as syllabic-accentual and warns that grammatical syllables are not identical with metrical positions; *sinalefe* can contract adjacent vowels, and grammatical word stress must likewise be distinguished from metrical stress.⁶⁹ Consequently, the ten printed lines are not ten self-contained breath units. The first four form one proposition—"The person who never knows how to fail in fidelity recognizes a betrayal late"—and the last six form its explanation.

⁶⁸ Caterino Mazzolà and Pietro Metastasio, *La clemenza di Tito*, music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, transcribed by Dario Zanotti, libretto no. 93 (Libretti d'Opera Italiani, last updated March 28, 2016), 23, <https://www.librettidopera.it/zpdf/tito.pdf>; Pier Enea Guarnerio, *Manuale di versificazione italiana* (Milan: Francesco Vallardi, 1910), 75, <https://archive.org/download/manualediversifi00guaruoft/manualediversifi00guaruoft.pdf>.

⁶⁹ Lorenzo Bianconi, "Sillaba, quantità, accento, tono," *Il Saggiatore musicale* 12, no. 1 (2005): 186–87, <https://www.saggiatoremusicale.it/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Bianconi-2005b.pdf>.

Within the second group, *se ogn'altro core / crede incapace / d'infedeltà* is a single conditional construction whose subject, verb, complement, and governing condition cross three line endings. A singer may use a rest supplied by the score, but the listener must still hear forward syntax rather than ten separately displayed fragments.

Mozart's setting makes that verbal continuity audible without reducing poetry and music to a mechanical equivalence. Bianconi's more exact formulation is that one poetic syllable can correspond to one plus an indefinite number of musical notes. In "Tardi s'avvede," one-note syllables predominate, but they coexist with tied durations, small two-note figures, and localized melismatic expansion. The texture is therefore syllabic in orientation, not absolutely note-against-syllable. This matters in performance: a singer should not attack every printed note as a new verbal event. Notes belonging to one vowel remain one syllable, and successive syllables belonging to one syntactic unit must retain direction through the short rests and recurrent accompaniment.⁷⁰

The opening quatrain requires hierarchy rather than uniform emphasis. *Tardi* establishes delayed recognition, *tradimento* names the concealed act, *fede* identifies the quality that causes the delay, and *sa* completes the maxim. The intervening words organize the relation among those ideas. If *d'un*, *chi*, *di*, *mancar*, and *non* are all given the same percussive weight as the four semantic poles, the *Allegretto* becomes a sequence of detached labels. Conversely, if the consonants are absorbed into a generalized legato, the causal statement becomes indistinct. The productive solution is a differentiated legato: consonants define the beginnings and internal joints of words, stressed vowels receive the line's energy, and unstressed syllables travel toward the next lexical or syntactic goal.

The two contracted lines reveal a particularly instructive difference between poetic meter and musical declamation. Metrically, *se ogn'altro core* and *crede incapace* require contraction across the adjacent vowels. Mozart's underlay, however, assigns separate notes to *se* and the opening vowel of *ogn'altro*, and likewise to the final vowel of *crede* and the opening vowel of *incapace*.⁷¹ The score thus permits the vowels to remain individually audible even though the verse counts them within contracted metrical positions. Their separation should not be exaggerated into aspirated or glottally detached attacks. The musical notation differentiates the vowels; the syntax still connects them. This balance allows Publio to articulate the logic with care while maintaining the continuous bearing appropriate to formal counsel.

⁷⁰ Bianconi, "Sillaba, quantità, accento, tono," 187, 189; Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, K. 621, ed. Franz Giegling, *Neue Mozart-Ausgabe*, ser. 2, work group 5, vol. 20 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1970), 193–95, International Mozartium Foundation Online Publications, 2006, https://dme.mozarteum.at/DME/nma/nma_cont.php?p1=193&vsep=75.

⁷¹ Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, 193–94, https://dme.mozarteum.at/DME/nma/nma_cont.php?p1=193&vsep=75.

Italian segmental timing adds another layer. Experimental phonetic research reports that a geminate consonant is realized as a long consonant, that the Italian singleton–geminate contrast also affects the duration of the preceding vowel, and that vowels carrying primary lexical stress are longer than unstressed vowels in speech.⁷² These findings establish real timing contrasts in Italian, but they do not dictate a fixed number of milliseconds for singing. The study concerns spoken production, whereas Mozart’s notation fixes and redistributes musical duration. Its value for this aria is therefore diagnostic rather than prescriptive: the singer must preserve the perceptual distinction between single and double consonants and between stressed and unstressed syllables while allocating those contrasts inside the written note values.

The word *s’avvede* is the clearest application. Its written *vv* must occupy audible time between the first and second vowel-bearing syllables; otherwise the word loses an Italian phonological distinction central to the aria’s opening. Yet doubling must not create an extra syllable, a new pitch, or a violent interruption. The first vowel can move into a sustained [v] before the following stressed vowel is released. Similar discipline governs *mançar non sa*: the final consonant of *mançar* must close the infinitive and lead into *non* without an added neutral vowel, while *sa* must arrive as a stressed monosyllable rather than as the incidental end of a three-word run. Mozart repeatedly places, sustains, and later expands this final *sa*, making its Verbal completion as important as its pitch.⁷³

Clarity, however, cannot be measured by consonantal force alone. Fine and Ginsborg’s survey of 143 professional and amateur musicians found perceived sung-text intelligibility to involve performer-, listener-, environment-, and words/music-related factors; diction was the most frequently cited performer-related factor, but it was not the only determinant. Their review also summarizes a central pedagogical aim as diction that is “clear, but not over-enunciated.”⁷⁴ This formulation is especially appropriate for Publio. Over-articulation would make the compact *Allegretto* sound officious or comic, whereas insufficient articulation would deprive the aria of its political function. The singer’s responsibility is to maximize the intelligibility that remains under performative control while recognizing that orchestral balance, hall acoustics, language familiarity, and register also shape what an audience hears.

⁷² Lucia Colombo, Michela Infanti, and Joanne Arciuli, “How Is Vowel Production in Italian Affected by Geminate Consonants and Stress Patterns?,” *Journal of Child Language* 51 (2024): 119, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0305000922000526>; open-access PDF, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/117D2033323AC33D5F95AAE47D7327D1/S0305000922000526a.pdf/how-is-vowel-production-in-italian-affected-by-geminate-consonants-and-stress-patterns.pdf>.

⁷³ Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, 193–95.

⁷⁴ Philip A. Fine and Jane Ginsborg, “Making Myself Understood: Perceived Factors Affecting the Intelligibility of Sung Text,” *Frontiers in Psychology* 5 (2014): 1–2, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00809>; open-access PDF, <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychology/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00809/pdf>.

The closing repetitions demonstrate how diction can change function without changing pronunciation. In the final return, Mozart gives *manca non sa* three successive completions. The central statement expands *sa* into the aria's most conspicuous melismatic descent, after which the final statement compresses the words into a plain cadential conclusion.⁷⁵ The [s] of each *sa* should identify the word promptly, but the melodic duration belongs to [a]; repeatedly renewing the consonant would divide a single syllable and obscure the line. The three statements can instead acquire different rhetorical weights: the first completes the proposition, the expanded second intensifies its certainty through sustained vowel and motion, and the last settles it as a conclusion. Such differentiation is grounded in musical placement, not in arbitrary changes of accent or invented emotional display.

Prosody and diction therefore construct Publio's authority through proportion. The verse supplies short, regularly directed units; the syntax joins those units into an argument; Mozart's predominantly syllabic setting keeps the words near the surface while selectively enlarging decisive syllables. A viable interpretation preserves lexical stress, gives gemination audible but integrated duration, distinguishes adjacent vowels without severing the phrase, and reserves the strongest rhetorical weight for the words that carry the ethical reasoning. Publio should not sound like a bureaucrat barking instructions or a philosopher withdrawing into abstraction. His diction is public action: measured speech intended to correct an emperor without compromising respect. The next section will show how orchestration and dynamics reinforce, qualify, and sometimes redistribute this verbally constructed authority.

4.4 Orchestration, Dynamics, and the Construction of Authority

The verbal authority established through Publio's prosody is not accompanied by uniformly weighty orchestration. No. 16 is an *Allegretto* in C major and duple meter, scored for two oboes, two horns in C, first and second violins, viola, Publio, and violoncello and bass. Flutes, clarinets, bassoons, trumpets, and timpani do not participate. The resulting ensemble is neither colorless nor merely economical: it is a compact field in which changes of participation remain immediately audible. In this aria, authority is constructed less by maximal sonority than by the regulation of orchestral density. The listener hears when the winds confer breadth on the strings, when they withdraw to expose the voice, and when a forte is made consequential by the piano that surrounds it.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, 195, https://dme.mozarteum.at/DME/nma/nma_cont.php?p1=195&vsep=75; Bianconi, "Sillaba, quantità, accento, tono," 189.

⁷⁶ Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, K. 621, ed. Franz Giegling, *Neue Mozart-Ausgabe*, ser. 2, work group 5, vol. 20 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1970), 193, International Mozarteum Foundation Online Publications, 2006, https://dme.mozarteum.at/DME/nma/nma_cont.php?p1=193&vsep=75.

The opening five measures establish this principle before Publio completes his first sentence. A forte attack by the full ensemble in m. 1 is answered by an immediate piano in m. 2. At the beginning of m. 3, the winds contribute a short piano sonority and then fall silent as the vocal statement begins. The sequence resembles a public frame opening around speech: the orchestra announces the institutional setting, but it does not require Publio to sing continuously against its full weight. The piano entrance should therefore not be treated as timidity. It is the condition that allows the counsel to remain intelligible and self-possessed. Quantz's earlier discussion of concerto accompaniment provides a historically adjacent, though not composition-specific, analogy: he argues that a light, singing melody with rapid harmonic change can make a better effect with a lightly staffed accompaniment than with a strong one. Because Quantz writes about concertos rather than Mozart's opera, his statement cannot function as a direct rule for this aria; it nevertheless documents an eighteenth-century understanding that reduced accompaniment can increase, rather than diminish, expressive efficacy.⁷⁷

Once the winds withdraw, the strings do not become static. First violin presents paired, slurred gestures whose upper notes give the texture a recurring profile. Second violin and viola maintain streams of eighth notes, frequently outlining broken chords in complementary registers, while the bass punctuates the measure instead of doubling every internal motion. This division produces continuity without converting the accompaniment into a rival discourse. Carse's later historical account distinguishes "strings alone" from combinations of woodwinds and strings and describes the string group as possessing harmonic and melodic elasticity. His categories should be used as retrospective terminology, not as evidence of Mozart's intention; their value here is that they identify the structural completeness of the strings-only texture. Publio does not need continuous wind support in order to sound authorized. The strings can sustain harmony, pulse, and profile while leaving the verbal line exposed.⁷⁸

The winds' first substantial return demonstrates that their absence is functional. After resting through the earlier vocal span, the oboes and horns re-enter at piano over the approach to *manca non sa* in mm. 9–10. Their sustained sonority does not replace the string mechanism; it enlarges the harmonic field precisely as the first maxim reaches completion. They withdraw again when *Un cor verace* begins in m. 11. The orchestral change thus behaves like punctuation. Publio carries the reasoning, while the enlarged ensemble confirms a syntactic and ethical arrival. Authority is not a timbre that he possesses without interruption; it is a relation between his speech and the moments at which the orchestra ratifies it.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, 193; Johann Joachim Quantz, *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte traversiere zu spielen* (Berlin: Johann Friedrich Voß, 1752), chap. 18, §§32–33, 295–96, <https://archive.org/download/VersuchEinerAnweisungDieFlöteTraversiereZuSpielen1752/QuantzVersuchFlöte1752Klein.pdf>.

⁷⁸ Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, 193–95; Adam Carse, *The History of Orchestration* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1925), chap. 8, 193–94, <https://ia801405.us.archive.org/3/items/in.ernet.dli.2015.58102/2015.58102.The-History-Of-Orchestration.pdf>.

⁷⁹ Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, 193, https://dme.mozarteum.at/DME/nma/nma_cont.php?p1=193&vsep=75.

The first complete traversal of the text refines this relation through local dynamic inflection. In m. 22, the final stressed syllable of *infedeltà* receives a brief *mezzo-forte* emphasis followed immediately by piano. The word is then repeated rather than crowned by a long accumulation of force. This written retreat matters. It prevents *infedeltà* from becoming an operatic outburst detached from the maxim's logic, and it allows the repeated word to sound like clarification or insistence rather than emotional excess. A singer may energize the stressed *-tà*, but the emphasis must remain proportionate to the immediate piano. If the *mezzo-forte* is expanded into a generalized crescendo, the local accent loses its grammatical function and the return to restraint ceases to be audible.⁸⁰

The ritornello in mm. 24–27 enlarges the same contrast at the formal level. A piano wind sonority in m. 24 is followed by two forte measures before the ensemble returns to piano in m. 27, where Publio re-enters with *Tardi s'avvede*. The forte therefore belongs primarily to the orchestral frame; the renewed counsel begins inside the quieter space that the ritornello creates. Quantz's insistence that accompaniment alternate between many and few parts so that the principal voice may have "air," and that "light and shade" be maintained, clarifies the perceptual logic of this design without claiming direct influence. Dynamic markings here organize succession and hierarchy. They do not provide a continuous psychological code in which forte automatically means anger and piano automatically means weakness.⁸¹

Because the second traversal preserves the recurrent string mechanism, its differences can be perceived with unusual clarity. The decisive redistribution occurs in mm. 42–47, where the final thought is completed three times. The first *sa* arrives in m. 42 with strings alone. In the next statement, the winds enter at piano as *sa* expands into a melismatic descent in m. 44. During the last *mancar non* in m. 45, the strings carry an explicit crescendo, and the final *sa* in m. 46 is delivered with the full ensemble at forte. The following measure immediately returns to piano. This sequence establishes a genuine rhetorical hierarchy: unreinforced completion, expanded and colored reconsideration, then collective confirmation. The final forte is persuasive because the preceding versions have withheld it.⁸²

The crescendo and forte at this point should not be translated into indiscriminate vocal pressure. Quantz cautions that the bass and inner parts must neither impede the liveliness of the principal part nor cover or suppress it. Applied here as a period-informed performance principle, that warning directs attention to balance rather than sheer decibels. The second violin and viola crescendo must remain rhythmically alive but transparent enough for *mancar non sa* to retain consonantal definition. The oboes and horns should broaden the cadence without hardening its attack, and

⁸⁰ Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, 194, https://dme.mozarteum.at/DME/nma/nma_cont.php?p1=194&vsep=75.

⁸¹ Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, 194; Quantz, *Versuch einer Anweisung*, 296.

⁸² Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, 195, https://dme.mozarteum.at/DME/nma/nma_cont.php?p1=195&vsep=75; Quantz, *Versuch einer Anweisung*, 295–96.

Publio should allow the ensemble's arrival to supply scale instead of attempting to outsize it. His authority becomes audible through coordination: the orchestra grows around the proposition at the moment of completion.

The closing ritornello, beginning in m. 48, transfers the final statement from singer to ensemble.

Forte and piano blocks recur after Publio has fallen silent, and the opening orchestral profile is recalled without being stabilized at a single loud level. The aria therefore does not conclude with an uninterrupted ceremonial blaze. Its finality depends on contrast retained to the end. The full ensemble can sound public and affirmative, while the intervening piano preserves the measured character of the counsel that has just been heard. In this sense the orchestra does not merely accompany Publio; it converts his ethical proposition into a collective frame and then closes that frame.⁸³

These observations have direct consequences for rehearsal. The repeated eighth-note patterns in second violin and viola require buoyancy and directional grouping; equal heaviness on every note will congest the vocal register and make the *Allegretto* sound administrative rather than humane. First violin gestures should articulate the phrase profile without becoming soloistic commentary, and the bass should preserve the duple impulse without forcing the singer into rigidity. Wind entries need to be prepared as changes of perspective: their attacks must be clear enough to register, yet sufficiently integrated that they sound like confirmation rather than interruption. For the singer, piano requires centered tone and textual presence, not withdrawal, while forte should be achieved by resonance and ensemble alignment rather than a sudden increase of vocal mass. Conductor and singer should rehearse the placement of *non* and *sa* against the wind entries and the m. 45 crescendo so that orchestral expansion follows the verbal syntax.

Mozart thus constructs Publio's authority as a proportional and temporal phenomenon. Strings provide continuity; winds and horns appear selectively to widen cadential and formal boundaries; dynamic contrasts distinguish institutional framing from the scale of direct counsel. None of these elements alone signifies political power. Their ordered relations allow Publio to speak with restraint while the orchestra makes that restraint publicly consequential. The next section turns to No. 14, where his authority no longer unfolds as an uninterrupted solo argument but must operate within ensemble timing, the act of arrest, and competing claims of compassion.

4.5 Publio in No. 14: Ensemble Timing, Arrest, and Compassion

If no. 16 constructs Publio's authority through solo counsel, no. 14 tests that authority inside an ensemble, where official action must coexist with the speech, breath, and movement of two other characters. The trio "Se al volto mai ti senti" is therefore not a lyrical interruption inserted after an arrest. It is the arrest prolonged in musical time. Publio has already required Sesto's sword and

⁸³ Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, 195; Carse, *History of Orchestration*, 193–94.

informed him that the Senate is assembled; his task is to conduct the accused man away. Yet the trio prevents that task from becoming an instantaneous exit. The singer must sustain a clear destination while allowing Sesto's farewell and Vitellia's panic to occupy the same span of time.

The preceding recitative establishes both legal necessity and temporal pressure. Publio tells Sesto that they must leave, that the Senate has gathered to hear him, and that he cannot postpone taking him there. Sesto answers with a farewell to Vitellia, and the new scene opens directly into the trio. As Schneider observes, Mazzolà turns Metastasio's two separate departure numbers into a single ensemble: Sesto no longer departs before Vitellia responds, and Publio remains present within their emotional crisis.⁸⁴ The revision does not cancel custody. It distributes the time required to complete custody among three consciousnesses. For Publio, this creates a distinctive performance problem: he must keep the action moving without behaving as though only his own tempo exists.

Mozart begins the number in B-flat major, in 6/8 and at an *Andantino*, with two oboes, two bassoons, two horns, strings with divided violas, and the three voices. The opening is not led by Publio. A *dolce* wind figure, answered and supported by the strings, precedes Sesto's entrance on "Se al volto mai ti senti," whose image is a light breeze carrying his final sighs to Vitellia.⁸⁵ The figuration invites an association with that "lieve aura" without requiring literal pantomime. More important for Publio is his written silence. He has already issued the order, but Mozart makes him listen before he sings. On stage, that silence should retain operational readiness—attention to Sesto, the guards, and the intended exit—rather than becoming either emotional vacancy or passive disappearance.

Vitellia enters in the second phase, around m. 19, with the aside "Per me vien tratto a morte," acknowledging that Sesto is being taken to his death because of her. Her line is more broken and exclamatory than Sesto's opening farewell, while the orchestra sharpens the contrast through rapidly changing accents and dynamics. Publio remains silent throughout this entry. The score thus establishes three different temporal states before giving him a vocal line: Sesto extends a tender farewell, Vitellia experiences accelerating fear, and Publio waits within a procedure that cannot be abandoned.⁸⁶ The performer should not fill this silence with generalized severity. A more precise action is to hear both utterances while preserving the bodily direction of custody.

⁸⁴ Caterino Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, libretto by Pietro Metastasio, adapted by Mazzolà, music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, transcription by Dario Zanotti, libretto no. 93, rev. March 28, 2016, 20–21, <https://www.librettidopera.it/zpdf/tito.pdf>; Magnus Tessing Schneider, "From Metastasio to Mazzolà: Clemency and Pity in *La clemenza di Tito*," in *Mozart's La clemenza di Tito: A Reappraisal*, ed. Magnus Tessing Schneider and Ruth Tatlow (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2018), 73, <https://doi.org/10.16993/ban.c>.

⁸⁵ Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, K. 621, ed. Franz Giegling, *Neue Mozart-Ausgabe*, ser. 2, work group 5, vol. 20 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1970), 169, International Mozarteum Foundation Online Publications, 2006, https://dme.mozarteum.at/DME/nma/nma_cont.php?p1=169&vsep=75.

⁸⁶ Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, 170–71.

Publio's first sung intervention arrives at m. 27: "Vieni"—"Come." Sesto answers "Ti seguo ... Addio," while Vitellia interrupts with "Senti ... mi perdo ... oh Dio!" The exchange accumulates short phrases, alternating dynamics, and fermatas; Vitellia finally turns the moral accusation toward Publio with "Che crudeltà!"⁸⁷ Because "Vieni" is embedded in overlapping speech, its authority depends less on volume than on rhythmic placement and intention. It should be clear enough to restore the destination but not so heavily prolonged that it arrests the ensemble itself. Publio does not answer the accusation verbally. His task is to hold the line of action steady while the music permits the accusation to remain audible.

After the fermata-laden interruption, the double bar and change to *Allegretto* around m. 34 reorganize the scene. Sesto begins "Rammenta chi t'adora," asking Vitellia to remember the man who still adores her and to grant pity as the reward for his suffering; the score allows flexibility at his entrance with *a piacere*.⁸⁸ The faster collective pulse does not mean that the arrest has already been completed. It converts suspended leave-taking into more active ensemble motion. In rehearsal, Publio's body may initiate or renew the direction of departure, but the movement should remain incomplete. The written instruction "in atto di partire," which appears later as Sesto repeats his appeal, similarly indicates an action in preparation, not an exit accomplished before the music has finished.

Publio's interior response finally becomes audible from approximately m. 48: "L'acerbo amaro pianto, / che da' suoi lumi piove, / l'anima mi commuove, / ma vana è la pietà." He observes the bitter tears falling from Sesto's eyes, admits that they move his soul, and concludes that his pity is powerless.⁸⁹ Mozart gives the bass a line that remains textually direct even as it participates in the increasingly active ensemble. The singer should preserve the sequence of thought: perception on "pianto," involuntary response on "l'anima mi commuove," and recognition of limit on "ma vana è la pietà." *Vana* does not invalidate the feeling. It identifies compassion without jurisdiction. Consequently, the phrase should not become either cold dismissal or a sentimental *ritardando* that suspends the public task.

Around m. 70, the three stanzas are layered rather than merely placed one after another. Vitellia sings of remorse, horror, and fear; Sesto continues to ask that his suffering receive pity; Publio returns to the tears that move him and to the uselessness of his pity. Schneider identifies an asymmetry in the text's closing vocabulary: only Sesto and Publio arrive at *pietà*.⁹⁰ Mozart's

⁸⁷ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, 21; Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, 171–72.

⁸⁸ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, 21; Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, 172–75.

⁸⁹ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, 21; Schneider, "From Metastasio to Mazzolà," 73–74; Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, 173–74.

⁹⁰ Schneider, "From Metastasio to Mazzolà," 73; Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, 175–76.

simultaneous setting makes this verbal relationship perceptible without merging the characters' motives. The ensemble is not a chorus of shared emotion. Each singer retains a separate semantic axis while participating in one pulse. Publio's lower voice can give the texture stability, but it should not cover the upper lines: his dramatic authority is strengthened, not diminished, when the audience can hear the suffering to which he responds.

The later pages intensify the coordination problem. Alternations of forte and piano, *sforzando-piano* attacks, crescendos, and repeated fragments increase pressure across the ensemble. Around m. 86, Vitellia's "Oh Dio," Sesto's "Addio," and Publio's recurring "Vieni" are heard in close succession and overlap.⁹¹ These words define three vectors—alarm, farewell, and procedure—inside the same musical mechanism. Orchestral force should therefore not be translated into one undifferentiated stage emotion. Publio's repeated imperative must continue to point toward the Senate, but it need not become progressively angrier. Its repetition can instead show persistence: emotional knowledge has changed the officer, but it has not changed the order he must execute.

The closing measures bring these vectors to a coordinated physical result. The ensemble presses through its final forte statements and orchestral continuation; only at the close does the score give the direction that Publio and Sesto depart with the guards while Vitellia leaves by the opposite side.⁹² This written sequence supplies the essential staging principle without requiring evidence from a particular production image. The arrest should remain visibly pending during the trio and become complete at its musical endpoint. Guards, principals, and conductor must therefore agree on when Sesto yields his final attention to Vitellia, when Publio converts repeated invitation into actual travel, and when the opposing exits begin. Completing the departure too early destroys the dramatic simultaneity that Mazzolà and Mozart created; delaying it after the cadence weakens Publio's procedural purpose.

For the singer-actor, no. 14 requires authority to be measured through ensemble listening. Publio must enter the number with a destination, allow silence to register what he hears, place "Vieni" with exactness, disclose compassion without appropriating Sesto's grief, and complete the arrest only when the score releases the action. The role's difficulty lies not in producing a large quantity of vocal material but in maintaining two obligations at once: responsiveness to another person and fidelity to office. In no. 14, compassion does not defeat the law, and the law does not erase compassion. Mozart makes both audible by giving Publio a line whose timing is inseparable from the lines he must hear.

⁹¹ Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, 176–78.

⁹² Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, 21–22; Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, 178.

4.6 Publio in No. 18: Reading Tito's Inner Conflict

No. 14 establishes Publio's capacity to hear Sesto's suffering without abandoning the action required by his office. No. 18 turns that capacity toward the sovereign himself. The trio "Quello di Tito è il volto!" is usually driven by Sesto's terror and Tito's wounded affection, yet Publio supplies its only explicit interpretation of what is happening inside Tito. He is neither an omniscient narrator nor an impartial spectator. He is an official who has heard Tito attempt to suppress friendship, can observe the emperor's altered behavior, and must infer what that behavior means. For the performer, the scene therefore makes listening a form of dramatic action: Publio reads the ruler while remaining subject to him.

The preceding recitative gives Publio unusually privileged knowledge. Tito waits impatiently for Sesto, while Publio reports that the guards have gone to carry out the order and reminds him that only a few moments have passed. When Sesto is seen approaching, Tito admits that his old affection already speaks in the accused man's favor. He then rejects that impulse, declaring that Sesto must find his prince rather than his friend, and "composes himself in an attitude of majesty." Sesto enters the next scene and immediately stops.⁹³ These stage directions reveal that majesty is not Tito's unchanging condition but a deliberately assumed exterior. Publio has witnessed the transition from confessed affection to constructed authority. His later diagnosis of Tito's conflict is consequently based on evidence available within the scene, not on information granted only to the audience.

A comparison with Metastasio clarifies how Mazzolà enlarges this function. In the earlier drama, Publio first observes, "Mille affetti diversi ecco a cimento," and later wonders whether Sesto suffers more from knowing that he has done wrong or Tito from having to punish him. Mazzolà transforms the first statement into a complete quatrain: different emotions wage war in Tito, and the emperor's distress proves that he continues to love Sesto. He also assigns Tito and Publio the same later text, "Palpita il traditore, / né gli occhi ardisce alzar."⁹⁴ The revision moves Publio from balanced uncertainty to a more focused reading of Tito's continuing attachment, then places him beside the emperor in a shared reading of Sesto. Publio still does not decide what Tito will do; rather, he identifies the affective pressure under which a decision must be made.

Mozart opens the trio in E-flat major, common time, and *Larghetto*, with pairs of flutes, clarinets, bassoons, and horns, strings, and the three voices. Four orchestral measures precede the vocal entrance. Emphatic dynamic contrasts and repeated string motion establish tension before Sesto begins at m. 5. He asks whether the face before him is truly Tito's, searches it for its customary

⁹³ Caterino Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, libretto by Pietro Metastasio, adapted by Mazzolà, music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, transcription by Dario Zanotti, libretto no. 93, rev. March 28, 2016, 25–26, <https://www.librettidopera.it/zpdf/tito.pdf>.

⁹⁴ Pietro Metastasio, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 3, scene 6, in *Opere*, ed. Fausto Nicolini, vol. 3 (Bari: Giuseppe Laterza & Figli, 1914), 186–87, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Metastasio,Pietro%E2%80%93Opere,_Vol._III,1914%E2%80%93BEIC_1885240.pdf; Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, 26.

gentleness, and concludes that it now makes him tremble. Tito then examines Sesto's face in return and wonders how a crime could transform it. Publio remains silent throughout these first two readings.⁹⁵ The scene is therefore organized through visible signs that are verbalized in music: Sesto reads Tito's lost gentleness, Tito reads Sesto's altered appearance, and Publio watches both acts of interpretation. His written silence should be active but economical. An accumulation of illustrative reactions would compete with the score's carefully delayed revelation of his thought.

Publio finally enters around m. 21 with "Mille diversi affetti / in Tito guerra fanno." Alternating *piano* and *sforzando* gestures in the surrounding texture prevent the statement from settling into detached calm. His second sentence, "S'ei prova un tale affanno, / lo seguita ad amar," is extended and repeated across the following page before Tito commands Sesto to approach.⁹⁶ The performer should preserve the logic of the text. "Guerra" names opposing forces, but it does not require generalized agitation; "affanno" identifies the suffering that Publio can observe; and "amar" is his inference from that suffering. A slight concentration of color on the sustained and repeated *amar* can make the recognition audible, provided that it remains within the flow of the *Larghetto*. Because the passage is parenthetical, it should not become covert advice addressed directly to Tito or a demonstrative explanation offered to Sesto.

Schneider characterizes Tito's subsequent dilemma as one "between pity and respect for the rigour of the law" and connects Publio's aside with an invitation for the audience to pity the emperor.⁹⁷ Publio's quatrain makes that dilemma legible before Tito states it himself. Nevertheless, continued love is not equivalent to pardon. The singer must not let the warmth of "lo seguita ad amar" announce an outcome that remains undecided. Publio recognizes the source of Tito's pain, but the law, the Senate's verdict, and the emperor's obligation to judge still stand. His insight is psychologically exact precisely because it stops short of prophecy.

After Publio's stanza, Tito orders "Avvicinati!" Sesto hears the command as a voice striking his heart; Tito asks "Non odi?"; and Sesto describes sweat covering him and suffering beyond that of a dying man. Publio does not sing during this exchange, which carries the *Larghetto* to its fermata.⁹⁸ This second silence differs from the first. Publio has already formulated an interpretation, and now Tito's strained command and Sesto's physical response test it. On stage, the bass should continue to

⁹⁵ Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, K. 621, ed. Franz Giegling, *Neue Mozart-Ausgabe*, ser. 2, work group 5, vol. 20 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1970), 209–11, International Mozarteum Foundation Online Publications, 2006, https://dme.mozarteum.at/DME/nma/nma_cont.php?p1=209&vsep=75.

⁹⁶ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, 26; Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, 211–12.

⁹⁷ Magnus Tessing Schneider, "From Metastasio to Mazzolà: Clemency and Pity in *La clemenza di Tito*," in *Mozart's La clemenza di Tito: A Reappraisal*, ed. Magnus Tessing Schneider and Ruth Tatlow (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2018), 76, 80, <https://doi.org/10.16993/ban.c>.

⁹⁸ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, 26; Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, 212–13.

observe the distance between ruler and prisoner, the guards, and Sesto's hesitant advance. Attention is more useful than repeated facial commentary. The score makes Publio an interpreter because it gives him time both to speak and to verify what he has perceived.

At m. 42 the *Allegro* begins with Sesto's assertion that no dying person could suffer more. Around m. 51, Tito and Publio enter together, both marked *sotto voce*, with "Palpita il traditore, / né gli occhi ardisce alzar"—the traitor trembles and does not dare to raise his eyes.⁹⁹ The ensemble now reverses and consolidates the opening pattern. At first Sesto and Tito read each other's faces while Publio reads Tito; now Tito and Publio jointly read Sesto's trembling body and lowered gaze. Their rhythmic coordination does not erase the hierarchy between emperor and official, but it creates a moment of perceptual agreement. The word *traditore* should therefore remain a juridical identification, not an opportunity for Publio to display personal hostility. The shared *sotto voce* marking argues for restrained, closely matched delivery: this is a private assessment within the ensemble, not a public denunciation.

Across the later pages, Sesto's increasingly urgent and florid line is layered over Tito and Publio's repeated observation. Crescendos and sudden dynamic contrasts intensify the texture, while *a piacere* and *a tempo* markings allow Sesto momentarily to disturb and then rejoin the common pulse. Tito and Publio, by contrast, remain closely coordinated as they return to the trembling traitor and his downcast eyes. The final page reduces the sound toward *pianissimo* without resolving the dramatic question.¹⁰⁰ For the bass, the technical challenge is to provide definition and weight without covering Sesto's anguish or Tito's tenor line. Publio's lower register can stabilize the ensemble, but dramatic authority here depends on audible relationship rather than maximum volume. He must listen across Sesto's temporal flexibility and match Tito's restraint so that the audience hears a shared observation, not two competing verdicts.

The trio's meaning becomes fully clear only in the recitative that follows. After the quiet close, Tito admits, "E pur mi fa pietà"—and yet Sesto moves him to pity—and orders Publio and the guards to leave him alone with the prisoner. Publio departs; only afterward does Tito lay aside his majestic manner.¹⁰¹ The sequence confirms Publio's reading: Tito's imposed exterior has not extinguished affection, and the sight of Sesto has produced pity. Yet it also defines the limit of Publio's function. He may recognize the conflict, but he cannot enter the private encounter in which friendship, injury, law, and mercy will be tested. His prompt departure should not signal indifference, triumph, or secret certainty about the outcome. It is obedience to the boundary between witnessing the ruler and replacing him.

⁹⁹ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, 26; Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, 214–15.

¹⁰⁰ Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, 215–17.

¹⁰¹ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, 26; Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, 217–18.

For the singer-actor, no. 18 requires a disciplined progression from knowledge to inference, from inference to verification, and from verification to withdrawal. Publio hears Tito construct majesty, watches Sesto and Tito read one another, gives Tito's distress a precise name, falls silent while the command is tested, joins Tito in reading Sesto's body, and leaves before the emperor removes his public mask. The role's dramatic force lies in this controlled proximity. Publio is close enough to understand that the ruler still loves the accused, but not empowered to resolve what love must mean under law. Mozart makes that distinction audible through delayed entry, parenthetical utterance, renewed silence, *sotto voce* coordination, and finally departure.

4.7 Recitative, Ensemble, and the Continuity of Character

The preceding sections have examined Publio at moments of arrest, warning, observation, and judgment. Considered separately, those moments can make the role appear episodic: he has one brief aria, participates in several ensembles, and otherwise moves through passages of recitative. Considered as a continuous performance, however, the apparent fragments disclose a stable sequence of actions. Publio reports what has happened, asks what must follow, conveys or anticipates an order, observes the response, and withdraws when his access ends. His characterization therefore does not depend upon a recurring musical theme or an extensive private narrative. It depends upon the recurrence of disciplined behavior across changing musical forms. Recitative and ensemble alter the scale on which that behavior becomes audible, but they do not create two different Publios.

Nakagawa summarizes the conventional organization of late eighteenth-century Italian number opera as one in which recitative links arias, ensembles, and choruses. She further distinguishes the modes by their treatment of time and text: recitative normally advances without the unnotated repetition of words, whereas a number may repeat a word, line, or stanza in order to intensify emotion and musical unity.¹⁰² This distinction is especially useful for Publio because it explains why the same character must act differently without becoming inconsistent. In recitative, his thought must move forward through the syntax; in an ensemble, a short perception may be repeated, synchronized with other perceptions, or absorbed into a collective statement. The performer should not make secco recitative sound like an undeclared aria, nor should he treat ensemble repetition as static display. Both modes continue an action already in progress.

No. 12, the Act I quintet with chorus, offers the clearest large-scale example. Mozart begins the number as an *Allegro* in E-flat major, with full orchestral forces, five soloists, and a distant chorus. Publio remains silent through the opening stages of the catastrophe. He enters alone at m. 47 with a complete report: "V'è in Roma una congiura, / per Tito ahimè pavento; / di questo tradimento / chi

¹⁰² Reiko Nakagawa, "Dramatic Effects in Mozart's Italian Operas: Focusing on the *Recitativo Accompagnato*" (doctoral diss., Tokyo College of Music, 2023), 3–4, <https://tokyo-ondai.repo.nii.ac.jp/records/1498>.

mai sarà l'autor"—there is a conspiracy in Rome; he fears for Tito and asks who caused the treachery. Servilia and Annio then join him in "Le grida ahimè ch'io sento / mi fan gelar d'orror."¹⁰³ The delayed entrance gives the bass a distinct function without turning the passage into a miniature aria. His first task is to make new public knowledge intelligible. A focused consonant at *congiura*, a forward-moving breath through *per Tito*, and a genuine question at *chi mai* are more dramatically useful than generalized alarm.

As the number expands, Publio's report is progressively redistributed. After Vitellia enters, Publio joins Servilia and Annio in asking who is responsible for the betrayal; he then joins Vitellia as well as Servilia and Annio in responding to the cries of horror. Sesto's descent from the Capitol brings the guilty individual into a texture that has so far registered only public danger and conjecture.¹⁰⁴ Publio's continuity here lies in the changing radius of the same perception. He begins as the person who names the conspiracy, becomes part of a smaller coalition that tests and repeats the report, and finally contributes to a broader field of fear. The singer should let that expansion be heard. The initial solo report requires definition; the later shared lines require rhythmic agreement, balanced vowels, and a willingness to relinquish foreground. A bass who preserves soloistic weight at every return would obscure the movement from individual information to collective recognition.

The internal design of no. 12 makes this distinction still sharper. When Sesto reaches the stage, Mozart separates his exchanges with Vitellia from the measured ensemble by inserting passages marked *Recitativo*. Between those private exchanges, an *Andante* gives Servilia, Annio, and Publio the question "Qual destra rea macchiarsi / poté d'un tal delitto?" A second recitative exchange between Sesto and Vitellia follows, after which all five soloists return in another *Andante*.¹⁰⁵ Nakagawa argues that this alternation makes Sesto and Vitellia stand out amid the confused chorus and the interwoven positions of the other characters. For Publio, the structural consequence is exact: he sings when the scene formulates a public question and rests when the conspirators exchange knowledge unavailable to him. His silence is not a temporary loss of characterization. It preserves the boundary of what he can know. On stage, active listening should make that boundary visible, but speculative suspicion should not anticipate the disclosure that the drama has withheld from him.

¹⁰³ Caterino Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, libretto by Pietro Metastasio, adapted by Mazzolà, music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, transcription by Dario Zanotti, libretto no. 93, rev. March 28, 2016, 17, <https://www.librettidopera.it/zpdf/tito.pdf>; Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, K. 621, ed. Franz Giegling, *Neue Mozart-Ausgabe*, ser. 2, work group 5, vol. 20 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1970), 135, 142–44, International Mozarteum Foundation Online Publications, 2006, https://dme.mozarteum.at/DME/nma/nma_cont.php?p1=142&vsep=75.

¹⁰⁴ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, 17; Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, 145–49.

¹⁰⁵ Nakagawa, "Dramatic Effects," 35, 39; Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, 18; Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, 149–55.

At the second *Andante*, Publio joins Vitellia, Servilia, Sesto, and Annio in “Ah dunque l’astro è spento, / è spento di pace apportator.” The quintet and chorus then converge on “Oh nero tradimento, / oh giorno di dolor!” and carry the act to its close.¹⁰⁶ Across the number, Publio has moved from an isolated report to three-person testimony, from testimony to a five-person lament, and finally into the public sonority of the full ensemble and chorus. This is not a hidden solo arc; it is a controlled transfer of information into communal experience. The bass line should supply firmness to the vertical texture, yet its authority must remain relational. Clear entries, unanimous releases, and attention to the upper voices will communicate more than an attempt to dominate the final sonority.

The recitatives surrounding no. 20 reveal the same character under severe temporal compression. Tito calls “Publio!”; Publio answers “Cesare.” When Tito says that they must go to the waiting people, Publio immediately asks, “E Sesto?” He then asks whether Sesto’s fate has been decided, and, after Tito confirms it, responds aside, “Oh, sventurato!”¹⁰⁷ In only a few utterances, Publio performs three continuous actions: he answers the sovereign, checks the unresolved status of the prisoner, and registers compassion for the condemned man. The questions should be direct, because the public is waiting and movement toward the arena has already begun. The aside should be audible without halting that movement. Its humanity depends upon its brevity: Publio feels the cost of the decision but does not convert feeling into unauthorized intervention.

After Tito’s aria, the libretto states that the emperor leaves followed by Publio. Vitellia calls Publio back while he is following Tito, and the repeated directions “in atto di partire” and “come sopra” preserve his bodily orientation toward departure. He apologizes because he must follow Caesar, then answers Vitellia’s questions with compressed facts: “All’arena,” “Anch’esso,” “Pur troppo,” and “E lungamente.”¹⁰⁸ These replies can sound cold if detached from the stage directions. In context, their economy expresses divided time rather than emotional vacancy. The performer should retain a line of movement toward Tito, allow each reply to land precisely on Vitellia’s question, and avoid settling into a new conversational scene. Publio has been interrupted; he has not chosen to remain.

His final answer makes the limit of his knowledge explicit: “No. Solo con lui / restar Cesare volle: escluso io fui.” He reports that Caesar wished to remain alone with Sesto and that he himself was excluded, then exits.¹⁰⁹ The line confirms the boundary established after no. 18. Publio witnessed

¹⁰⁶ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, 18; Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, 155–60.

¹⁰⁷ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, 29–30; Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, 241.

¹⁰⁸ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, 30; Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, 254.

¹⁰⁹ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, 30; Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, 254.

Tito's public conflict but did not hear the private encounter in which Sesto's confession and Tito's decision were tested. *Escluso io fui* should therefore be factual rather than aggrieved. A wounded emphasis would invent a contest for intimacy that the text does not supply. The close of the phrase should release into departure. Vitellia may interpret his restraint as evidence that Sesto has betrayed her, but the audience has heard the more limited truth: Publio knows the procedure, not the secret.

The final scene completes this pattern by placing Publio within the public machinery of judgment while withholding an individualized moral commentary. The stage direction brings Tito, Publio, and Sesto among the lictors before Vitellia confesses that she was the author of the plot. Tito answers "Tu ancora!"; Sesto and Servilia exclaim "Oh, stelle!"; Annio and Publio answer together, "Oh, numi!"¹¹⁰ Publio's reaction is thus present, audible, and shared. The singer need not manufacture a larger solo response. A clean attack, a unified rhythm with Annio, and immediate renewed attention to Tito will preserve the shock without appropriating a revelation that belongs to Vitellia.

No. 25 then gives Tito an accompanied recitative with strings. The vocal score contains only Tito's line as he moves from renewed disillusionment to a renewed decision for clemency, orders Sesto released, restores life and liberty to Lentulo and his followers, and declares that he knows all, absolves all, and forgets all. Publio, although still present in the scene, has no sung intervention.¹¹¹ His silence now differs from the secrecy of no. 12 and the exclusion after no. 18. Here he is a public witness to a sovereign decision that he will help make operative. The performer should receive each change in Tito's argument without imitating it. Excessive visible commentary would compete with the accompanied recitative; complete disengagement would deny Publio's responsibility for what follows.

The distribution of no. 26 is equally deliberate. The sestet with chorus begins with an individual stanza for Sesto, followed by one for Tito and then a shared stanza for Vitellia, Servilia, and Annio. Publio has no corresponding stanza. In the score, his staff remains silent through these individualized responses, even though he is listed among the six soloists. He enters only with the tutti and chorus, without Tito, on "Eterni dèi, vegliate / sui sacri giorni suoi."¹¹² The omission prevents Publio from becoming the final confidant, penitent, or commentator. His last musical identity is public. He does not explain clemency; he participates in the community that receives it.

When Publio enters in the tutti, his bass line shares the collective petition that the gods guard Tito's days and preserve Rome's happiness in him. On the following page, the soloists and four-part

¹¹⁰ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, 34–35; Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, 292–93.

¹¹¹ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, 35; Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, 294–96.

¹¹² Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, 36; Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, 297–305.

chorus continue that prayer in coordinated, predominantly chordal writing; Tito then answers with his own appeal to the eternal gods.¹¹³ The bass must join decisively while remaining integrated with the choral bass and the other soloists. Firm pulse, unified Italian vowels, and resonance centered in the written line are preferable to artificial darkening or excessive projection. Publio's authority has reached its proper scale: not a private verdict and not an independent claim to virtue, but a stable lower voice within the restored public order.

Across recitative and ensemble, then, Publio's continuity is behavioral, vocal, and epistemic. Recitative reveals the direction of his action through questions, reports, concise answers, and exits. Ensemble places the same action within simultaneous perspectives: he may name a danger alone, test it with a smaller group, fall silent during knowledge he does not possess, or join a public conclusion. His rests are as important as his sung phrases because they preserve the limits of access on which his reliability depends. For the singer-actor, the practical line is consistent: articulate the syntax, keep each utterance directed toward its immediate task, listen through written silence, support collective rhythm without forcing prominence, and leave when the text requires withdrawal. The musical form changes; Publio's disciplined relation to information, authority, and other people does not.

4.8 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has argued that Publio's musical and vocal characterization cannot be understood solely through the dimensions of his solo aria. Although his comparatively limited amount of music may initially suggest a secondary dramatic position, Mozart and Mazzolà construct the role through a continuous interaction among solo utterance, recitative, ensemble participation, orchestral support, and attentive stage presence. Publio's characterization therefore emerges not from sustained self-disclosure but from the consistency with which he speaks, listens, observes, and acts within the institutional world of the opera.

In "Tardi s'avvede," Publio is granted a brief moment of individual reflection. The number does not develop into an expansive psychological portrait comparable to the major arias of Sesto, Vitellia, or Tito. Instead, its compressed form and proverbial text define a character accustomed to evaluating conduct from the perspective of consequence. His observation concerns recognition that arrives too late: desire has already obscured judgment, and understanding follows only after damage has been done. The aria is consequently important not because it temporarily transforms Publio into a principal character, but because it reveals the ethical intelligence underlying his subsequent conduct.

The vocal writing reinforces this conception. Publio's authority is not created by sheer volume, exaggerated darkness, or an unvaryingly severe manner. It depends upon stability of register, clarity

¹¹³ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, 36; Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, 305–7.

of diction, rhythmic precision, and the controlled projection of the text. The role requires sufficient weight to establish institutional credibility, yet it must retain enough flexibility to respond to the rapidly changing emotional conditions around Tito, Sesto, and Vitellia. A performance that emphasizes heaviness alone risks reducing Publio to a conventional authoritarian bass figure. Conversely, a performance lacking firmness weakens the dramatic credibility of the arrest, the Senate's decree, and the imperial system that he represents. The appropriate vocal characterization therefore lies in a disciplined balance between command and responsiveness.

Prosody and syllabic declamation are central to that balance. Publio frequently communicates through concise reports, names, imperatives, and procedural statements. Because these utterances are often brief, their dramatic force depends less upon melodic expansion than upon the singer's treatment of linguistic rhythm. Consonantal definition, vowel continuity, accentuation, and the precise arrival of each phrase allow institutional speech to remain intelligible without becoming mechanically spoken. Authority is produced through the accuracy and timing of the utterance rather than through indiscriminate vocal pressure.

The orchestral and dynamic contexts further demonstrate that Publio's authority is relational rather than absolute. His vocal line operates within a Classical texture in which instrumental balance and exchanges among characters remain essential. The singer must therefore recognize when the music requires prominence and when it requires attentive restraint. Publio's authority becomes most persuasive when it appears integrated into the musical order of the court. He does not dominate every scene; rather, his presence helps make the political and judicial environment dramatically credible.

This principle becomes especially clear in the arrest ensemble, no. 14. Publio initiates the movement from freedom to custody, but the ensemble does not permit him to remain merely an impersonal mechanism of the plot. By keeping him musically present while Sesto and Vitellia confront the emotional consequences of the arrest, the trio places official duty and private suffering within the same temporal field. Publio cannot cancel the order he has been required to execute, nor does he openly oppose the institution he serves. Nevertheless, his participation allows the human cost of that order to register within the official act itself. Compassion is thus expressed as perception and response rather than as disobedience.

A related function appears in no. 18, where Publio's presence contributes to the representation of Tito's inner conflict. Publio neither creates Tito's clemency nor determines the emperor's final decision. His dramatic significance lies instead in his proximity to the moment at which judgment begins to change. As the official responsible for transmitting commands and maintaining procedure, he witnesses the instability beneath imperial authority before clemency is publicly enacted. His attentive presence permits the audience to perceive the transformation not only as Tito's private emotional struggle but also as an event taking place within a functioning political structure.

The alternation among recitative, aria, and ensemble consequently does not fragment Publio's characterization. Each musical form reveals a different aspect of the same dramatic identity. In recitative, he communicates knowledge, announces decisions, and converts institutional intention into action. In his aria, he reveals a concise ethical awareness of error and delayed recognition. In ensembles, he remains within the emotional consequences of the acts he performs. Even when he is silent, his continued presence may preserve the credibility of the judicial situation and provide a visible point of contact between sovereign decision and its practical execution.

For the performer, this continuity requires more than a generalized display of seriousness. Publio must be constructed through recurring choices of breath, diction, vocal weight, timing, bodily stillness, and visual attention. His reactions should not become so demonstrative that they claim an emotional centrality the score does not grant him. At the same time, complete neutrality would erase the perceptive and compassionate dimensions created by his participation in the ensembles. The most convincing interpretation therefore allows response to appear within discipline: the body remains shaped by office, while the eyes, timing, and vocal inflection reveal that the official understands what the execution of law costs other human beings.

Publio thus occupies a threshold between several dramatic categories. He stands between command and obedience, public law and private suffering, knowledge and action, judgment and clemency. Mozart's score does not remove him from the institutional order, nor does it turn him into an independent moral hero. Instead, it gives him sufficient musical and theatrical responsiveness to register the tensions within that order. His apparent marginality is therefore structurally productive. Because he does not possess sovereign power, his presence reveals how power is communicated, enacted, witnessed, and emotionally received.

The musical analysis undertaken in this chapter consequently establishes the basis for a broader dramaturgical interpretation. Publio's aria, recitatives, ensemble participation, vocal construction, and listening presence together define him as more than a minor official. They make him a threshold figure through whom the opera connects the machinery of law with the emergence of compassion. The following chapter will develop this conclusion by examining the dramaturgy of Publio's office: his delegated authority, his access to knowledge, his participation in arrest and judgment, his inability to intervene directly, and his role as a witness to the appearance of clemency.

5.1 Publio as Prefect of the Praetorian Guard

Publio enters the drama already defined by an office. In the list of characters, he is identified as "Publio, *prefetto del Pretorio*," while the open vocal score-derived libretto further specifies him as a

bass.¹¹⁴ This designation should be understood not as decorative historical information but as a preliminary dramaturgical instruction. It places Publio close to the sovereign, associates him with an organized body capable of physical coercion, and distinguishes his public function from the private passions that drive Vitellia, Sesto, Annio, and Servilia. The bass register cannot by itself determine Publio's character or ethics. Nevertheless, it gives the performer a sonic resource through which institutional steadiness, rank, and controlled authority may be made audible.

The historical office gives this designation weight, but it should not be treated as a complete model for the operatic character. Suetonius reports that Titus, while acting as Vespasian's partner in government, assumed command of the Praetorian Guard—an office that had previously been held by a Roman knight.¹¹⁵ The passage demonstrates the office's proximity to imperial power and the exceptional degree of trust attached to its holder. At the same time, it establishes a necessary distinction between history and drama. The historical Titus himself held this command before becoming emperor, whereas the opera places Tito on the throne and assigns the visible praetorian function to another figure, Publio. This difference permits a dramaturgical reading rather than a claim of direct historical reconstruction. Through Publio, the opera externalizes the coercive capacity that surrounds imperial rule: Tito deliberates, judges, and ultimately pardons, while Publio gives material form to the apparatus that guards, disarms, arrests, escorts, and transmits institutional decisions.

Tacitus makes the coercive meaning of the office still clearer when he describes a praetorian commander as retaining control of an "armed force."¹¹⁶ This testimony does not determine Publio's personal temperament, nor does it prove that the operatic figure was constructed from this particular historical episode. It instead clarifies the political meaning carried by his title. Publio's authority is present before he issues an order. When he later asks Sesto for his sword or appears accompanied by guards, these actions do not suddenly transform him into a figure of power; they reveal a power already contained in the office announced at the beginning of the work. Coercion therefore exists first as an institutional capacity and only later becomes visible as dramatic action.

The libretto, however, immediately complicates any interpretation of Publio as merely a military commander. In Tito's first large public scene, Publio appears together with Roman senators and provincial envoys charged with presenting their annual tribute to the Senate.¹¹⁷ He announces the

¹¹⁴ Wolfgang Amadé Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, KV 621, libretto by Pietro Metastasio, adapted by Caterino Mazzolà, "Interlocutori," *Digital Mozart Edition*, Stiftung Mozarteum Salzburg, accessed August 20, 2026, [critical libretto](#) ; see also the [open libretto PDF](#) , 1.

¹¹⁵ Suetonius, "The Deified Titus" 6.1, trans. J. C. Rolfe, in *Suetonius*, vol. 2, Loeb Classical Library 38, first published 1914, 326–29, [public-domain facsimile](#) ; see also the [searchable public-domain text](#) .

¹¹⁶ Tacitus, *Histories* 4.68, trans. Clifford H. Moore, in *Tacitus*, vol. 2, Loeb Classical Library 249 (London: William Heinemann; New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1931), 130–31, [public-domain facsimile](#) ; see also the [searchable public-domain text](#) .

¹¹⁷ Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 1, scene 4, [Digital Mozart Edition](#) .

Senate's designation of Tito as father of the fatherland and explains the proposed use of the provincial tribute for a temple honouring the emperor. Publio consequently speaks not as a private servant but as the public voice of organized political bodies. The Senate, the provinces, and the Praetorian Guard become theatrically legible through his presence and speech.

Yet Publio's authority in this scene is authority of mediation rather than origination. He does not create the Senate's decree, impose the tribute, or determine its final use. He presents collective decisions to Tito, who then redirects the treasure toward the victims of Vesuvius. Publio occupies the point at which institutional intention becomes spoken information and awaits sovereign response. His rank gives his words public weight, but their efficacy remains dependent upon imperial judgment. This combination of status and dependence becomes the fundamental condition of his dramaturgy.

In the second act, the same structure assumes a punitive form. Publio demands Sesto's sword, conducts him before the assembled Senate, and later returns carrying the Senate's decree.¹¹⁸ These actions establish a chain extending from investigation and arrest through senatorial judgment to possible imperial ratification. Publio can disarm the accused, control his movement, and place an official document before the emperor. He cannot, however, determine guilt independently, sign the sentence, or grant clemency. His practical power is considerable, but his jurisdiction is limited. He possesses the means through which punishment can be enacted without possessing the sovereign authority that finally decides whether it will be enacted.

This distinction has direct consequences for performance. Publio should not be reduced either to a generic court servant or to a brutal jailer. If his institutional rank is already legible, menace does not need to be exaggerated. Stillness, economical gesture, and precise timing can communicate more authority than overt aggression. His deference to Tito should likewise not erase his status. Obedience is not evidence that Publio lacks power; it is the prescribed form through which his delegated power operates. In ceremonial scenes, his body must make public order visible. In the arrest, it must make procedure unavoidable. When he carries the decree, the document becomes the visible sign of an authority that passes through his hands but does not belong to him.

Publio's position as prefect therefore establishes the central tension of his character: he is neither an autonomous moral agent nor a lifeless instrument. He commands force yet remains subject to command; he knows institutional decisions before most other characters yet cannot determine their ethical outcome. His later compassion toward Sesto should accordingly be understood not as a contradiction of his office but as an ethical pressure arising within it. Before Publio can be examined as witness, intermediary, or compassionate observer, he must first be recognized as the officer through whom imperial institutions acquire a body and a voice. The following section

¹¹⁸ Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, scenes 3 and 7, [Digital Mozart Edition](#) .

therefore turns from the historical and political meaning of his title to the specific dramaturgy of delegated authority and institutional speech.

5.2 Delegated Authority and Institutional Speech

Having established Publio's position as prefect of the Praetorian Guard, the next question is how that office becomes audible within the drama. Publio seldom speaks as the originating source of policy. Instead, he places before Tito information, expectations, commands, and institutional movements produced elsewhere: a written list of names, the timetable of the public games, the expectation of the gathered people, and the actions of guards and lictors. His authority is therefore neither personal sovereignty nor mere servility. It is the delegated capacity to make institutions present in speech and to carry sovereign commands back into action.

Thomas Hobbes's distinction between an author and an actor supplies a useful vocabulary for this structure. He writes that "some have their words and actions Owned by those whom they represent. And then the Person is the Actor ... the Actor acteth by Authority."¹¹⁹ Hobbes's formulation is not evidence for the historical Roman prefecture, nor does it establish any direct influence on Mazzolà's libretto. It is employed here only as an analytical heuristic. In the drama, the source of authority behind a particular utterance can change: Tito authorizes commands, documents supply administrative information, the people generate collective expectation, and guards or lictors produce the actions that Publio reports. Publio occupies the recognized point of transmission.

This outward orientation is reflected in his language. Publio's characteristic nouns—*foglio*, *nomi*, *publici giochi*, *popolo*, *custodi*, and *littori*—refer to objects, groups, and offices beyond his private self. His verbs likewise register movement and transmission: bringing, asking, going, returning, executing, and appearing. Whereas the principal conspirators frequently speak from desire, concealment, or confession, Publio's recitative speech generally makes an external institutional condition legible to Tito and to the audience.

The first clear example occurs in act 1, scene 6. The stage direction brings Tito and Publio together "with a document," and Tito asks what it contains. Publio answers:

*I nomi ei chiude
de' rei che osar con temerari accenti
de' cesari già spenti
la memoria oltraggiar.*

¹¹⁹ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, with an introduction by A. D. Lindsay (London: J. M. Dent & Sons; New York: E. P. Dutton, 1914), chap. 16, 84, [Internet Archive facsimile](#) ; [Project Gutenberg searchable text](#) .

When Tito condemns the investigation as barbarous and dangerous to the innocent, Publio attempts only “*Almen...*” before the utterance remains incomplete.¹²⁰ The document is not self-executing. Publio can collect or transmit the information and can emphasize its relevance, but he cannot independently transform the list into prosecution. Its political force depends upon Tito’s response.

The incomplete “*Almen...*” is therefore more significant than a simple sign of timidity. The ellipsis does not determine whether Tito interrupts Publio or whether Publio restrains himself; what it unmistakably withholds is completion. His first report possesses the stability of an official statement, but his attempted objection cannot proceed after the emperor has rejected the inquiry. The scene thus combines confidence in administrative function with discipline at the boundary of delegated authority.

In act 2, scene 5, Publio’s institutional speech shifts from documentary intelligence to the coordination of civic ceremony. He reminds Tito that the time of the public games is passing and that “*il popolo raccolto, e non s’attende / che la presenza tua*”—the gathered people await only the emperor’s presence.¹²¹ Publio does not merely express a private wish that Tito attend. He gives voice to public time and collective expectation. The impersonal formulations *l’ora trascorre* and *non s’attende* present the demand as an objective civic condition, while *la presenza tua* identifies the emperor as the missing element required to complete the event.

Publio can consequently place institutional pressure upon Tito without commanding him. His report establishes urgency, but Tito retains the power to postpone his appearance. Delegated speech is therefore consequential without being sovereign: it defines the circumstances within which the emperor must decide, but it does not make the decision in his place.

A particularly revealing distinction follows when Tito orders Publio to obtain the delayed information: “*Va’, chiedi: che si fa, che si attende? Io voglio tutto / saper pria di partir.*” Publio replies, “*Vado; ma temo / di non tornar nunzio felice.*”¹²² The structure of the response separates obedience from judgment. *Vado* accepts the command immediately and without qualification. The adversative *ma*, however, opens a limited space for Publio’s personal assessment: *temo* expresses his expectation that the message will be unfavourable. Most importantly, *nunzio* defines him as the messenger rather than the author of the result. He does not pronounce a verdict; he anticipates the character of news that another institution will supply. The broader moral implications developed in

¹²⁰ Caterino Mazzolà, after Pietro Metastasio, *La clemenza di Tito*, libretto for Wolfgang Amadè Mozart, critical edition, *Digitale Mozart-Edition*, version 138 (February 3, 2014), act 1, scene 6, vv. 255–270, PDF 11, [critical PDF](#) ; [Act I HTML text](#) .

¹²¹ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, scene 5, vv. 588–597, PDF 24, [critical PDF](#) ; [Act II HTML text](#) .

¹²² Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, scene 5, vv. 608–612, PDF 24–25, [critical PDF](#) ; [Act II HTML text](#) .

the aria that follows will be considered in section 5.4. Here, the structural point is that Publio's subjectivity appears as a qualification of his delegated task, not as an alternative source of authority.

Act 2, scene 9 compresses this system into its clearest sequence. When Tito asks why Sesto has not yet arrived, Publio reports, "*Ad eseguire il cenno / già volaro i custodi.*" Tito then commands, "*Vanne tu stesso, / affrettalo,*" and Publio answers, "*Ubbidisco...*" Almost immediately he observes Tito's lictors approaching and concludes, "*Eccolo.*"¹²³ Imperial command, the movement of the guards, Publio's formula of obedience, the appearance of the lictors, and Sesto's arrival are joined in a single chain.

In this context, "*Ubbidisco*" should not be treated as evidence that Publio lacks agency. It is the verbal formula by which he acknowledges the source of a legitimate command and converts that command into an assigned action. His position is simultaneously superior and subordinate: he can participate in directing or coordinating armed personnel precisely because his own authority remains located within the emperor's vertical chain of command. The concluding "*Eccolo*" completes the relay by turning an offstage institutional process into visible stage reality.

Publio's institutional speech thus performs three related operations. First, it presents information, as in the document containing the names. Second, it represents a public condition, as in the people's expectation at the games. Third, it communicates the execution of commands, as in the movement of guards and lictors. None of these operations grants him sovereign decision-making power. Nevertheless, they make him indispensable to the functioning of sovereignty onstage. Tito may decide, but Publio helps make the emperor's decisions administratively knowable and materially effective.

Delegation does not erase Publio's individual judgment. His subjectivity appears at the edges of official language—in the unfinished "*Almen...*," the adversative "*ma temo,*" and the evaluation of what the returning message may contain. These moments show that he is not a mechanically neutral conduit. Yet his judgment can influence the presentation of information without becoming a binding decision. Institutional speech should therefore be understood not as emotionless speech, but as speech whose efficacy and limits are determined by an acknowledged office and chain of authority.

For the singer-actor, this distinction suggests a precise performance vocabulary. Official reports need not be apologetic or excessively forceful; their authority can arise from clarity, economy, and an exact sense of their addressee. The *foglio* should organize the first exchange as an institutional object. The reference to the public games may open Publio's spatial attention toward the civic world beyond his immediate conversation with Tito. By contrast, *Vado* and *Ubbidisco* require forward

¹²³ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, scene 9, PDF 27, [critical PDF](#) ; [Act II HTML text](#) .

impulse, since each word accepts a task that must immediately become movement. The personal qualifications—*Almen* and *temo*—may receive a slight hesitation or change of colour, but should not dissolve the administrative structure into private melodrama. Publio's body and voice remain parts of the relay even when his personal judgment becomes audible.

Publio is therefore both powerful and bounded. Through him, the emperor receives access to documents, public expectations, and the movements of subordinate officers; through him, imperial instructions descend toward execution. He is not the origin of these decisions, but neither is he a passive accessory. He is the active relay through which authority becomes speech and speech becomes action. The next section will examine what happens when this apparently orderly system begins to carry suspicion toward coercive arrest.

5.3 From Suspicion to Arrest

Section 5.2 examined Publio's speech as an expression of delegated authority. The arrest of Sesto shows the same authority acquiring a coercive, material form. Publio does not enter as a private observer who has gradually become suspicious, nor does he conduct an investigation on stage. The institutional response has already begun before he speaks: the stage direction introduces him "con guardie," accompanied by guards. His first words—"Sesto" and then "La tua spada"—therefore do not create suspicion but announce that suspicion has already been translated into custody.¹²⁴ The guards give institutional suspicion a visible body, while Publio gives it a voice and a direction.

The compressed exchange is crucial. Publio first addresses Sesto by name, and Sesto answers, "Che chiedi?" The moment retains a trace of personal recognition between men who have previously belonged to the same political and social world. Publio's answer, however, immediately changes the terms of their relationship: "La tua spada." The demand is expressed without explanation, ornament, or emotional accusation. Its object is practical rather than rhetorical. Once deprived of his weapon, Sesto is no longer positioned as an autonomous Roman aristocrat moving freely within the imperial court but as a person placed under guard. The libretto does not require a physical struggle. On the contrary, the stage direction "Sesto dà la spada" makes the transition occur through compliance.¹²⁵ Yet compliance should not be confused with freedom or consent. The guards establish the possibility of force, and the surrender of the sword makes their coercive presence effective without requiring violence.

Only after demanding the sword does Publio explain the evidence that has made the arrest necessary. The man whom Sesto struck while believing him to be Tito was Lentulo, and the blow did not kill him. Publio does not embellish this information with moral condemnation. Instead, he

¹²⁴ Caterino Mazzolà, after Pietro Metastasio, *La clemenza di Tito*, "Kritische Edition des vertonten Textes," act 2, scene 3, Digital Mozart Edition, version 138 (Stiftung Mozarteum Salzburg, 2014), 22, [open critical PDF](#).

¹²⁵ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, scene 3, 22, [critical PDF](#).

concludes: “Il resto intendi. Vieni.” The phrase “Il resto intendi” obliges Sesto to complete the inference himself. Lentulo’s survival means that the mistaken identity, the attempted killing, and Sesto’s connection to the conspiracy can now be exposed. Publio supplies the decisive fact but does not turn it into a personal denunciation. The immediately following “Vieni” converts knowledge into compelled movement. The sequence is remarkably economical: the name identifies the subject, the sword is removed, the surviving witness is disclosed, and the accused is ordered to follow.

Publio then defines the destination and the procedural reason for the removal: “Sesto, partir conviene. È già raccolto / per udirti il Senato, e non poss’io / differir di condurti.”¹²⁶ Three expressions displace individual choice. The impersonal *conviene* presents departure as necessary; *è già raccolto* indicates that the Senate has assembled before Sesto arrives; and *non poss’io differir* represents Publio himself as unable to delay the institutional timetable. His authority is real—he can disarm Sesto and determine his movement—but it remains bounded. He has not assembled the Senate, and he cannot replace its hearing with his own judgment.

The wording *per udirti*, “in order to hear you,” is equally important. Without imposing a modern legal model on the opera, the libretto nevertheless distinguishes arrest, hearing, and verdict. Publio conducts Sesto to the body that will hear him; he does not pronounce the result in advance. Suspicion has become actionable knowledge, but it has not yet become a formally announced sentence. This distinction prepares the later scene in which Publio carries the Senate’s decree, analyzed in section 5.5.

For performance, the coercion of the scene need not be represented primarily through aggression or vocal force. The text places its weight on clarity, timing, and spatial control. Publio’s entrance with the guards should establish the purpose of the visit before any emotional reaction is shown. “Sesto” may briefly preserve interpersonal recognition, but “La tua spada” should be direct and non-negotiable. The transfer of the sword must remain visible because it is the scene’s decisive change of status. Once the weapon has been surrendered, Publio and the guards can determine the available path of exit. The absence of a struggle does not reduce the arrest’s severity; it reveals an authority so firmly established that resistance is unnecessary.

The trio “Se al volto mai ti senti” prolongs this process rather than suspending it. Publio repeatedly commands “Vieni,” while Sesto replies “Ti seguo” before turning again to Vitellia with “Addio.” Vitellia attempts to interrupt the movement and finally directs “Che crudeltà!” at Publio. He does not defend himself or debate the justice of the arrest. His second “Vieni” simply reactivates the movement that the farewell has delayed. The closing stage direction confirms the outcome: Publio and Sesto leave together with the guards.¹²⁷ Thus, the arrest continues underneath the trio’s

¹²⁶ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, scene 3, 22, [Act II open text](#) .

¹²⁷ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, scene 4, no. 14, 23, [critical PDF](#) ; see also the [DME synoptic comparison](#) .

emotional exchanges. Sesto's farewell and Vitellia's distress do not halt the institutional action; they unfold inside the time that Publio controls.

This sustained ensemble structure is one of Mazzolà's significant revisions of Metastasio. Magnus Tessing Schneider notes that Mazzolà replaced two successive exit arias with an ensemble and gave Publio an utterance where he had remained silent in the corresponding Metastasian passage.¹²⁸ The formal consequence is that Sesto's removal no longer occurs between separately ordered reflections. Publio, Sesto, and Vitellia remain present within one shared theatrical event. The arrest therefore acquires duration: Publio must continue enforcing movement while Sesto and Vitellia attempt to prolong their final exchange.

The content of Publio's compassionate aside will be examined in section 5.4. For the present argument, its structural setting is more important than its emotional meaning. Publio's awareness of Sesto develops while he remains responsible for taking him away. Feeling and custody coexist, but custody continues. The ensemble does not release Publio from his office; it makes the human cost of performing that office visible.

Publio consequently occupies a precise position in the movement from suspicion to arrest. He neither discovers the decisive evidence nor determines Sesto's guilt. Instead, he transforms already established knowledge into constraint: a weapon is surrendered, movement is restricted, and the accused is delivered to the Senate. His restraint prevents the arrest from becoming an act of personal revenge, but it does not make the action voluntary or harmless. The scene's force arises from the very separation between Publio's personal awareness and his institutional function. That separation becomes the central problem of the following section: Publio can be moved by Sesto's suffering, yet he cannot use that compassion to interrupt the procedure entrusted to him.

5.4 Compassion without the Power to Intervene

Section 5.3 demonstrated how Publio transforms institutional suspicion into a visible act of custody. Yet the conclusion of the arrest scene reveals that his official function does not eliminate his emotional awareness. During the trio, Publio continues to direct Sesto's removal, but his private aside discloses that Sesto's tears have moved him. The scene therefore divides Publio's presence into two simultaneous registers: externally, he remains the officer responsible for completing the arrest; internally, he recognizes the suffering produced by the action he is carrying out.¹²⁹

¹²⁸ Magnus Tessing Schneider, "From Metastasio to Mazzolà: Clemency and Pity in *La clemenza di Tito*," in *Mozart's La clemenza di Tito: A Reappraisal*, ed. Magnus Tessing Schneider and Ruth Tatlow (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2018), 73–74, [open chapter PDF](#) , [DOI](#) .

¹²⁹ Caterino Mazzolà, after Pietro Metastasio, *La clemenza di Tito*, "Kritische Edition des vertonten Textes," act 2, scene 4, no. 14, Digital Mozart Edition, version 138 (Stiftung Mozarteum Salzburg, 2014), 23, [공개 비평판 PDF](#) .

The crucial point is not merely that Publio experiences pity. The construction of his aside first confirms the emotional effect of Sesto's grief and then immediately denies that the emotion can produce a practical result. The adversative turn separates compassion from efficacy. Publio's pity is genuine, but it is powerless. It cannot return Sesto's sword, dismiss the guards, cancel the Senate's hearing, or suspend the movement already under way. The uselessness attributed to pity therefore describes the limit of Publio's agency rather than a failure of his moral perception.

This distinction prevents Publio from being interpreted either as an unfeeling functionary or as a covert opponent of the political order. He is not indifferent to Sesto, but neither does he attempt to resist his assignment. His compassion remains compatible with obedience because it belongs to a different level of his character. As an individual, he can be emotionally affected; as prefect and imperial agent, he cannot transform that emotion into a decision. The resulting tension is more complex than a simple opposition between cruelty and kindness. Publio is humane enough to recognize suffering but institutionally incapable of acting upon that recognition.

The significance of this moment becomes clearer when Mazzolà's version is compared with the Metastasian source. In the Turin 1757 libretto, Sesto leaves with Publio and the guards, after which the scene changes immediately to Vitellia alone.¹³⁰ Publio performs the escort, but the original version does not grant him a separate interior response. His presence remains primarily functional. Mazzolà's revision changes this relationship by retaining Publio within the ensemble and giving him a compassionate aside. As Magnus Tessing Schneider observes, the previously silent Publio is newly allowed to express compassion for Sesto.¹³¹

This addition does more than supply Publio with extra text. It changes his dramatic status. He is no longer merely the person who brings the guards and removes the accused; he also becomes a witness who understands something about the human cost of that removal. His pity does not alter the action, but it alters the audience's perception of the person carrying it out. The institutional mechanism of arrest is no longer represented as emotionally anonymous. It operates through a person who can see suffering clearly and nevertheless must continue.

The trio also establishes an important emotional triangle among Sesto, Vitellia, and Publio. Sesto's appeal for pity is directed toward Vitellia, not toward the officer arresting him. Felicity Baker emphasizes that, even after Sesto recognizes Vitellia's moral unworthiness, he continues to love her,

¹³⁰ Pietro Metastasio, *La clemenza di Tito*, critical edition of the Turin 1757 libretto source, ed. Iacopo Cividini with Adriana De Feo, Digital Mozart Edition, version 147 (Stiftung Mozarteum Salzburg, 2013), 35, [공개 원전 PDF](#) .

¹³¹ Magnus Tessing Schneider, "From Metastasio to Mazzolà: Clemency and Pity in *La clemenza di Tito*," in *Mozart's La clemenza di Tito: A Reappraisal*, ed. Magnus Tessing Schneider and Ruth Tatlow (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2018), 73, [공개 논문 PDF](#) , [DOI](#) .

seeks her pity, and refuses to expose her as the instigator of the conspiracy.¹³² Vitellia, however, remains preoccupied with her own remorse, fear, and possible exposure. She understands that Sesto is being led toward death because of her command, but she does not yet answer his appeal through confession or intervention.

Publio consequently becomes the unexpected recipient of an emotion that Sesto seeks from Vitellia. He is not the intended addressee of Sesto's appeal, but he is the person who responds internally to Sesto's suffering. This does not place Publio and Sesto in a private friendship that the libretto never establishes. Rather, it creates a temporary moral alignment: while Vitellia's attention remains divided by self-preservation, Publio's attention is directed outward toward the prisoner's tears. He recognizes the suffering that the actual object of Sesto's love is still unable to answer adequately.

Nevertheless, Publio's compassion must be distinguished from sovereign clemency. Pity is an affective recognition of another person's suffering; clemency is the political capacity to convert such recognition into an authoritative decision. Jette Barnholdt Hansen identifies clemency understood as compassion as a virtue embodied above all in Tito, the opera's title character.¹³³ This distinction clarifies Publio's limitation. He can feel the emotional impulse from which clemency might arise, but he does not possess the sovereign authority needed to make that impulse legally or politically effective.

Publio's pity therefore anticipates the moral possibility of clemency without producing clemency itself. He occupies an intermediate position between institutional severity and sovereign forgiveness. The guards, the arrest, and the Senate's hearing belong to the machinery he administers; the power to set aside the result does not. The opera allows compassion to appear within the institution before it becomes an act of government, but it carefully assigns the power of final intervention elsewhere.

For the performer, this distinction requires a double orientation. Publio's public body should remain committed to the escort: his position, physical focus, and relation to the guards must continue to direct Sesto toward the exit. The private aside, however, should permit the audience to perceive that Publio has registered Sesto's tears. This awareness does not require an embrace, an attempt to stop the guards, or any additional action unsupported by the text. A brief change of gaze, vocal colour, or inward focus can disclose compassion without dissolving Publio's official posture.

¹³² Felicity Baker, "Tito's Burden," in *Mozart's La clemenza di Tito: A Reappraisal*, ed. Magnus Tessing Schneider and Ruth Tatlow (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2018), 111, [공개 논문 PDF](#) , [DOI](#) .

¹³³ Jette Barnholdt Hansen, "Mozart as Epideictic Rhetorician: The Representation of Vice and Virtue in *La clemenza di Tito*," in *Mozart's La clemenza di Tito: A Reappraisal*, ed. Magnus Tessing Schneider and Ruth Tatlow (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2018), 129, [공개 논문 PDF](#) , [DOI](#) .

The final recognition of pity's ineffectiveness should likewise not be delivered as a cold dismissal of Sesto. Such an interpretation would contradict the preceding acknowledgment that the prisoner's grief has affected Publio. At the same time, excessive sentimentality would weaken the dramatic contradiction by making Publio appear ready to abandon his duty. The strongest interpretation preserves both realities: his emotional response is sincere, and his continuation of the arrest is equally firm. The tragedy of the moment lies precisely in the fact that neither reality cancels the other.

Publio's compassion therefore deepens rather than interrupts his institutional identity. He becomes morally legible to the audience, but he does not acquire independent political power. His private response shows that the agents of authority may perceive the suffering generated by their actions even when they lack the authority to change those actions. The following section will make this limitation still more concrete. When Publio returns with the Senate's decree, institutional judgment will no longer be embodied only in guards and movement; it will take the fixed form of a document that Publio must carry, report, and place before Tito.

5.5 The Senate's Decree and Documentary Knowledge

Section 5.4 examined Publio's compassion as an emotion without the authority to intervene. The next stage of his dramatic function concerns a different form of limitation: he possesses institutional knowledge but does not possess final control over its consequences. When Publio returns from the Senate, he does not bring only an oral report. The stage direction specifies that he enters carrying a written document and subsequently hands it to Tito.¹³⁴ The Senate's judgment therefore arrives on stage as a material object that can be carried, transferred, signed, withheld, and ultimately destroyed.

The document condenses several stages of institutional knowledge. First, Sesto has spoken before the Senate and confirmed his responsibility. Second, the Senate has converted his confession and the available testimony into a formal judgment. Third, that judgment has been written into a decree that Publio can transport to the emperor. Publio's report consequently does not originate in personal suspicion. He presents knowledge that has already passed through testimony, deliberation, judgment, and documentation.

This sequence clarifies the difference between Publio's knowledge and his authority. He knows what Sesto has confessed, what the Senate has decided, and what punishment the decree prescribes. He can explain the document's contents and identify its institutional source. He cannot, however,

¹³⁴ Caterino Mazzolà, after Pietro Metastasio, *La clemenza di Tito*, "Kritische Edition des vertonten Textes," act 2, scene 7, Digital Mozart Edition, version 138 (Stiftung Mozarteum Salzburg, 2014), 25–26, [Open-access critical edition PDF](#).

give the decree its final political force. The written judgment still lacks the emperor's name. Publio's act of handing the paper to Tito therefore marks both the completion of his own assignment and the beginning of a decision that lies beyond his office.

Publio characterizes the decree as emotionally terrible but institutionally just. The two evaluations are not mutually exclusive. Its severity affects him, but he does not dispute the legitimacy of the Senate's judgment. This continues the division already observed in section 5.4. Publio can recognize the human horror of an outcome while remaining faithful to the procedure that produced it. Yet the document now gives this division a concrete form. His compassion belongs to his private perception; the decree belongs to the institution he represents.

The stage action of transferring the paper is therefore more than a practical gesture. Until that moment, Publio physically possesses the institutional record, but he does not possess the authority represented by the missing signature. Once he places the paper in Tito's hands, the structure of power becomes visible. The Senate has judged, Publio has transmitted, and the emperor must decide whether to complete the document. Each institution and individual occupies a distinct position in the document's movement.

Tito's immediate physical reaction also demonstrates that documentary knowledge is not emotionally neutral. On receiving the decree, he collapses into a seated position. The paper confronts him with information that he had previously resisted: his friend has admitted responsibility, and the Senate has pronounced a capital sentence. The document removes the possibility that Tito can preserve Sesto's innocence merely through personal trust. It establishes a publicly processed version of events against which his private affection must now struggle.

Publio and Annio are then dismissed, leaving Tito alone with the paper. This exit is structurally important. Publio has delivered the decree, but he is not permitted to participate in the sovereign deliberation that follows. His institutional function gives him access to the result of the Senate's proceedings, not to the emperor's private process of decision. Once the document has reached Tito, Publio temporarily disappears from the chain of action.

The libretto makes Tito's hesitation visible through the pen. He raises it in preparation for signing the sentence but then places it down again.¹³⁵ This action demonstrates that documented guilt does not automatically produce punishment. The Senate's decree establishes what has been judged, but a further act is required before that judgment can be implemented. The interval between taking up and putting down the pen is the space in which institutional knowledge confronts sovereign responsibility.

¹³⁵ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, scene 8, 27, [Open-access Act II text](#) .

Importantly, Tito's first hesitation does not arise because he believes the document to be false. He wonders whether Sesto may still have something undisclosed to reveal and orders that the accused be brought before him. The written decree is authoritative enough to demand a decision, but it does not exhaust every possible form of knowledge. Documentary certainty and personal encounter are placed beside one another. The decree records what the Senate knows; Tito still seeks to know what Sesto may say directly to him.

After the private confrontation with Sesto, Tito again remains alone with the document. He initially signs it, apparently completing the institutional process. He then reverses the practical effect of that action by tearing the paper and throwing away the fragments.¹³⁶ The sequence of signing and tearing is crucial. Tito does not simply refuse to read the decree, nor does he deny that Sesto is guilty. He first acknowledges the formal judgment and then prevents its prescribed punishment from becoming the final outcome.

Felicity Baker accordingly interprets this moment as Tito's decision to set aside a condemnation that the drama has already presented as just.¹³⁷ Clemency here does not depend upon declaring Sesto innocent. The distinction between guilt and punishment remains intact. What changes is the sovereign response to established guilt. Destroying the decree does not erase Sesto's confession or invalidate the Senate's reasoning as information; it interrupts the passage from judgment to execution.

The document thus has two different functions. Epistemically, it preserves and communicates what the Senate has concluded. Politically, it awaits an act that determines whether the conclusion will be enforced. Publio participates fully in the first function but not in the second. He makes institutional knowledge present, yet Tito decides what that knowledge will be permitted to do.

The material treatment of the decree also transforms an internal moral conflict into visible theatre. Hansen argues that clemency in the opera is represented not only through character and music but also as a pattern of action.¹³⁸ The pen, the signature, the pause, and the torn paper make the stages of Tito's decision perceptible without requiring another official proclamation. The document's changing physical condition records the changing status of the sentence.

¹³⁶ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, scene 11, 32, [Open-access critical edition PDF](#) .

¹³⁷ Felicity Baker, "Tito's Burden," in *Mozart's La clemenza di Tito: A Reappraisal*, ed. Magnus Tessing Schneider and Ruth Tatlow (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2018), 104–5, [Open-access chapter PDF](#) , [DOI](#) .

¹³⁸ Jette Barnholdt Hansen, "Mozart as Epideictic Rhetorician: The Representation of Vice and Virtue in *La clemenza di Tito*," in *Mozart's La clemenza di Tito: A Reappraisal*, ed. Magnus Tessing Schneider and Ruth Tatlow (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2018), 129–30, [Open-access chapter PDF](#) , [DOI](#) .

For performance, the paper should therefore be treated as a consequential object rather than an incidental prop. Publio's entrance must make its presence visible, and the handover should be clear enough for the audience to understand that responsibility has changed hands. His delivery should balance the decree's horror with his recognition of its procedural legitimacy. Excessive triumph would make him appear vindictive, while excessive reluctance would suggest resistance that the text does not provide.

The distinction between carrying the decree and authorizing it should also determine Publio's physical relationship to Tito. He may present and explain the paper, but once Tito receives it, Publio should relinquish both the object and the centre of decision. His departure leaves the emperor isolated with the written consequence of Sesto's confession. The resulting emptiness around Tito is not merely emotional; it represents the solitude of final authority.

Publio is absent when the pen is raised, lowered, used, and when the document is destroyed. This absence is essential to the next section. He knows the Senate's judgment because he carried it, but he does not witness the complete private process through which Tito changes its outcome. When Publio is summoned again, he must interpret Tito's words without direct access to the document's transformation. Section 5.6 will examine how this limited knowledge shapes Publio's attempt to understand the emergence of clemency.

5.6 Witnessing the Emergence of Clemency

If Section 5.5 established Publio's role in transmitting the Senate's written judgment, the scenes that follow reveal the limits of the knowledge conferred by that institutional function. Publio can deliver the decree and observe Tito's response, but he does not participate in the private deliberation through which the emperor transforms condemnation into clemency. His dramatic trajectory therefore follows a precise epistemic sequence: he first interprets Tito's visible emotional conflict, is then excluded from the decisive conversation, misreads its outcome, and finally encounters clemency only when it becomes a public declaration. Through this sequence, the opera distinguishes between witnessing the signs of an emotion and possessing knowledge of a sovereign decision.

This distinction first becomes apparent in the trio no. 18. While Sesto appeals to Tito and Tito struggles to maintain his severity, Publio directs his attention toward the emperor. His aside identifies a conflict among multiple emotions within Tito and infers from the intensity of his suffering that his affection for Sesto has not disappeared.¹³⁹ Publio does not claim direct access to

¹³⁹ Caterino Mazzolà, after Pietro Metastasio, *La clemenza di Tito*, "Kritische Edition des vertonten Textes," act 2, scene 10, no. 18, *Digital Mozart Edition*, version 138 (Stiftung Mozarteum Salzburg, 2014), 28, [Open-access critical edition PDF](#).

Tito's thoughts. Rather, he translates the emperor's gestures, silence, and visible agitation into an interpretation that the audience can understand. He thus occupies the position of an internal spectator: present within the institutional scene but temporarily performing the analytical work normally assigned to the external audience.

Observation, however, does not grant participation. Immediately after acknowledging his pity for Sesto, Tito orders Publio and the guards to leave so that he may remain alone with the condemned man.¹⁴⁰ The exit is a crucial dramaturgical hinge. The representatives of custody and public authority must disappear before the relationship between emperor and friend can emerge without institutional witnesses. Publio has seen the emotional conditions from which clemency may arise, but he is denied access at the exact moment when those conditions are converted into a decision. He witnesses the conflict but not its resolution.

When Publio returns, Tito merely tells him that Sesto's fate has already been decided. Because Publio has delivered the Senate's condemnation, has not witnessed the destruction of the decree, and now hears that Sesto is to be taken to the arena, he assumes that the legal sentence remains in force. His compassionate aside for the "unfortunate" Sesto registers that conclusion.¹⁴¹ The inference should not be played or interpreted as evidence of stupidity. On the contrary, it is the most reasonable conclusion available to an officer whose knowledge is limited to the Senate's judgment, the prisoner's custody, and Tito's deliberately ambiguous answer. Clemency becomes dramatically powerful precisely because it interrupts the institutional outcome that Publio has every reason to expect.

The subsequent exchange with Vitellia makes this limitation explicit. Publio confidently reports that Sesto will die, but when she asks what Sesto said to Tito, he admits that he does not know because the emperor required privacy and excluded him. The juxtaposition of certainty about the anticipated punishment and candour about the missing conversation reveals the structure of his error. Publio is neither deceptive nor omniscient; he is an incomplete conduit whose official confidence exceeds his actual access to the sovereign's deliberation. His limited knowledge then produces a second misunderstanding when Vitellia reads his reserve and hurried departure as evidence that Sesto has denounced her.

The arena scene finally resolves this informational imbalance. Publio enters with Tito and Sesto among the lictors, a configuration that continues to resemble the public execution of a lawful sentence. Vitellia's confession produces a collective shock, after which Tito publicly orders Sesto's release and declares absolution. The contrast between Publio's earlier admission that he was excluded and the emperor's final public act is decisive: what Publio could not know through private

¹⁴⁰ Caterino Mazzolà, after Pietro Metastasio, *La clemenza di Tito*, "Kritische Edition des Librettos," act 2, scene 10, *Digital Mozart Edition*, version 139 (Stiftung Mozarteum Salzburg, 2013), 27, [Open-access Prague libretto PDF](#) .

¹⁴¹ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, scene 12, 33, [Open-access critical edition PDF](#) .

access becomes knowable when Tito speaks before Rome.¹⁴² Publio therefore does not witness the initial formation of clemency in Tito's mind. He witnesses its emergence into shared, institutional reality.

Publio's aside in the trio also guides the audience's response to this process. As Magnus Tessing Schneider observes, the scene invites the audience to extend pity toward the emperor himself.¹⁴³ Publio is the character who makes that invitation dramatically intelligible. His attention shifts the emotional centre of the scene from Sesto's fear alone to the suffering produced in Tito by the demand to punish a beloved friend. Publio's reading remains incomplete, but it prepares the audience to recognize that the eventual pardon grows from a struggle already visible in the ruler's body.

For the performer, this progression requires a clear distinction between attentiveness, inference, and knowledge. During the trio, Publio's focus should remain on Tito, with the concentration of an officer attempting to read a sovereign whose decision will determine the actions of everyone present. His exit should retain the discipline of obedience, even if a brief backward glance suggests unresolved concern. On returning, his question about Sesto should combine official responsibility with personal urgency, while the ensuing aside should express sincere compassion grounded in what he believes to be certain. In the exchange with Vitellia, his prediction of death should not sound evasive; his admission of exclusion must instead reveal the honest boundary of his information.

The final scene consequently demands not exaggerated astonishment but a rapid reclassification of what Publio believed he knew. The condemned prisoner becomes the pardoned friend, and the Senate's judgment gives way to the emperor's publicly articulated clemency. Publio's dramatic importance lies in this asymmetry of knowledge. He is close enough to observe Tito's vulnerability, too institutionally distant to enter the private space of decision, yet responsible for witnessing and embodying its public consequences. Clemency becomes fully real for Publio only when it crosses the boundary between sovereign interiority and public order.

5.7 Publio as a Threshold Figure

The term "threshold figure" is used here in a specifically dramaturgical sense. It does not suggest that Publio occupies a mystical or socially indeterminate liminal state. Rather, it describes the position repeatedly assigned to him at crossings between sovereign interiority and public authority,

¹⁴² Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, version 139, act 2, scene 13, 32, [Open-access Prague libretto PDF](#) ; Pietro Metastasio, *La clemenza di Tito*, "Kritische Edition der Libretto-Vorlage Turin 1757," act 2, scene 13, *Digital Mozart Edition*, version 147 (Stiftung Mozarteum Salzburg, 2013), 50, [Open-access Metastasio source PDF](#) .

¹⁴³ Magnus Tessing Schneider, "From Metastasio to Mazzolà: Clemency and Pity in *La clemenza di Tito*," in *Mozart's La clemenza di Tito: A Reappraisal*, ed. Magnus Tessing Schneider and Ruth Tatlow (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2018), 80, [Open-access chapter PDF](#) , [DOI](#) .

institutional knowledge and physical action, private compassion and official duty. Publio seldom determines what occurs at these crossings. Instead, he carries people, documents, commands, and interpretations across them. His significance therefore lies less in autonomous agency than in the theatrical visibility he gives to transitions that might otherwise remain abstract.

The analyses in Sections 5.1–5.6 have demonstrated the consistency of this function. Publio stands between Tito and the Senate when he reports institutional judgments; between the Senate and Sesto when he conducts the accused to interrogation; between knowledge and bodily control when he demands Sesto's sword; and between imperial speech and stage action when he directs guards and lictors. He also stands between compassion and enforcement, since he recognizes suffering without possessing the authority to suspend the procedure that produces it. Finally, he occupies an epistemic boundary: he can observe Tito's emotional conflict but cannot enter the private deliberation in which clemency becomes a decision.

The public hearing scene in Act II crystallizes this position spatially. The libretto identifies the location as a hall for public audiences and places Tito and Publio together with patricians, praetorians, and the Roman people.¹⁴⁴ Publio is therefore not presented as an isolated courtier speaking privately to the emperor. His presence belongs to a larger institutional arrangement in which the sovereign, elite subjects, armed authority, and populace are made simultaneously visible. Positioned within this arrangement, Publio becomes a point of contact between groups that otherwise occupy different levels of Roman political order.

This contact does not make him equal to the powers he connects. Publio may cross a boundary without controlling either side of it. He can carry the Senate's decree but cannot validate or annul it; he can convey Tito's orders but cannot determine their purpose; and he can escort Sesto into or out of a scene without deciding whether the prisoner will be condemned or pardoned. His threshold function is consequently defined by asymmetry. He possesses sufficient authority to produce movement but insufficient sovereignty to determine the final meaning of that movement. This distinction prevents him from being mistaken for Tito's secret adviser or an independent judge.

The final arena scene condenses this asymmetry into a single stage image. Its entrance direction brings Tito and Publio into the public space with Sesto among the lictors.¹⁴⁵ Before Tito announces his pardon, the grouping still appears to embody the normal conclusion of the penal process: the ruler presides, the prisoner remains within the apparatus of punishment, and Publio accompanies the transition from judgment to anticipated execution. Yet the same arrangement is immediately

¹⁴⁴ Caterino Mazzolà, after Pietro Metastasio, *La clemenza di Tito*, "Kritische Edition des vertonten Textes," act 2, scene 5, *Digital Mozart Edition*, version 138 (Stiftung Mozarteum Salzburg, 2014), 24, [Open-access critical edition PDF](#).

¹⁴⁵ Caterino Mazzolà, after Pietro Metastasio, *La clemenza di Tito*, "Kritische Edition des Librettos," act 2, scene 17, *Digital Mozart Edition*, version 139 (Stiftung Mozarteum Salzburg, 2013), 35, [Open-access Prague libretto PDF](#).

redefined by Tito's command to release Sesto. The institutional apparatus does not disappear; its function changes. Publio remains present as coercive movement is redirected into liberation.

The musical conclusion completes this redefinition. In the set text, Publio is explicitly included with Tito, Sesto, Vitellia, Servilia, Annio, and the chorus in the opera's final collective invocation.¹⁴⁶ He is not assigned an independent proclamation of clemency, because the pardon does not originate with him. Nor, however, does he remain separated as a silent guard. His official voice is absorbed into the voice of the community restored by Tito's decision. The officer who transmitted accusation, custody, and punishment now participates in the collective articulation of political and social concord.

The original scenographic conception reinforces this transition. Sergio Durante relates the movement toward the final chorus to an expansion from a comparatively restricted stage area into the monumental public space of the amphitheatre. He interprets this spatial change as a movement from individual self-awareness and repentance to collective celebration.¹⁴⁷ Publio's trajectory corresponds closely to that expansion. In the preceding scenes, his knowledge is partial and his movement is repeatedly controlled by Tito's commands. In the finale, he enters the largest public configuration of the opera and becomes part of a collective that now possesses the truth he previously lacked.

The ending thus does more than reveal Tito's clemency. It redistributes knowledge. Felicity Baker characterizes the conclusion as an exceptional moment in which transparency becomes available to everyone.¹⁴⁸ Publio is particularly important to this transformation because the preceding scenes have so carefully marked the limits of what he knows. His exclusion from Tito and Sesto's private conversation establishes fragmented knowledge as the normal condition of the court. The final confession and pardon temporarily abolish that fragmentation: ruler, accused, officials, courtiers, and public witnesses are brought into a shared field of truth.

For the performer, Publio's threshold status should be expressed through changing relationships rather than an unchanging character pose. In the public hearing hall, his physical alignment should make his connection to both Tito and the assembled institutions visible. During Sesto's arrest, economy and directness should communicate procedural authority, while his aside allows

¹⁴⁶ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, sextet with chorus no. 26, 39, [Open-access critical edition PDF](#) .

¹⁴⁷ Sergio Durante, "Stage Directions and Set Design in Mozart's *La clemenza di Tito*," in *Mozart's La clemenza di Tito: A Reappraisal*, ed. Magnus Tensing Schneider and Ruth Tatlow (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2018), 142, [Open-access chapter PDF](#) , [DOI](#) .

¹⁴⁸ Felicity Baker, "Tito's Burden," in *Mozart's La clemenza di Tito: A Reappraisal*, ed. Magnus Tensing Schneider and Ruth Tatlow (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2018), 105, [Open-access chapter PDF](#) , [DOI](#) .

compassion to appear without interrupting the escort. When Tito orders him to leave the private conversation, the actor must visibly relinquish access to the space of sovereign deliberation. In the final entrance, he should initially retain the concentration appropriate to a prisoner's public delivery, since he does not yet possess confirmation of the pardon.

Tito's public command should therefore produce a perceptible but controlled reorientation. Publio need not display the highly personal release experienced by Sesto or the penitential shock experienced by Vitellia. His transformation is institutional: he recognizes that the order governing the prisoner has changed and adjusts his presence accordingly. In the final ensemble, he should neither disappear into passive anonymity nor compete with the principal characters. His participation represents the incorporation of official authority into the newly restored community.

Publio should consequently be understood neither as a neutral functionary nor as a concealed architect of the drama's resolution. His authority is real but delegated, his compassion genuine but initially ineffective, and his knowledge substantial but incomplete. These limitations constitute rather than diminish his theatrical importance. By repeatedly occupying the point at which information becomes action, custody becomes movement, private decision becomes public knowledge, and punishment becomes release, Publio makes the opera's institutional transformations visible. His role demonstrates that clemency becomes politically meaningful only when it passes beyond the ruler's interior decision and reorganizes the people, bodies, and authorities gathered around him.

5.8 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that Publio's office is not merely a historical designation attached to a secondary character. It is a dramaturgical mechanism through which *La clemenza di Tito* transforms information into action and sovereign intention into public consequence. As prefect of the Praetorian Guard, Publio connects Tito with the Senate, guards, prisoners, patricians, and the Roman people. His entrances, reports, questions, commands, and exits make otherwise invisible institutions theatrically present.

Publio's authority is delegated, but it is not intellectually empty. He does not merely repeat whatever he has been told. When Tito finds it impossible to imagine Sesto's betrayal, Publio respectfully reminds him that other people do not necessarily possess the emperor's truthful heart.¹⁴⁹ This intervention neither challenges Tito's sovereignty nor flatters his immediate judgment. Publio instead offers a moral diagnosis from within the hierarchy: Tito's virtue has limited his ability to recognize deception. His obedience therefore coexists with independent perception.

¹⁴⁹ Caterino Mazzolà, after Pietro Metastasio, *La clemenza di Tito*, "Kritische Edition des vertonten Textes," act 2, scene 5, *Digital Mozart Edition*, version 138 (Stiftung Mozarteum Salzburg, 2014), 25, [Open-access critical edition PDF](#) .

The same distinction governs Publio's treatment of Sesto's guilt. He reports the accusation as substantiated because Sesto has confirmed it in his own words, not because Publio personally desires his punishment.¹⁵⁰ His regret does not invalidate the evidence, while the evidence does not eliminate his emotional response. Chapter 5 has consequently rejected the assumption that institutional certainty must be performed as emotional coldness. Publio can believe that the judgment is factually justified and still experience compassion for the person subjected to it.

His knowledge nevertheless remains limited by the structure in which he serves. Publio can transmit the Senate's decision and ask what is to happen to Sesto, but Tito does not reveal the full meaning of his sovereign decision. The answer that Sesto's fate has already been decided provides procedural direction without disclosing that the decree has been destroyed and the prisoner pardoned.¹⁵¹ Publio is therefore reliable when reporting information he has received directly but fallible when compelled to interpret information withheld from him. This distinction between accurate reporting and incomplete interpretation is central to his characterization.

Publio's compassion is similarly real but institutionally restricted. In the arrest ensemble, Sesto's suffering moves him, yet his pity cannot authorize the suspension of custody. Effective clemency belongs to Tito because only the sovereign can intervene in the legal process and redirect its outcome. As Sergio Durante observes, sovereign benevolence manifested through clemency constitutes a structural function of monarchy.¹⁵² Tito's pardon must therefore be understood not merely as a private feeling but as an act that reorganizes the political and institutional order represented onstage.

Publio makes that reorganization visible. The same officer who removes Sesto's sword, conducts him toward the Senate, carries the decree, and anticipates his death eventually accompanies him into the arena where the expected punishment is replaced by release. Clemency does not abolish the institutions surrounding Tito. Rather, it changes what those institutions are required to do. Publio's continued presence allows the audience to perceive the passage from lawful custody to sovereign pardon as a concrete transformation of bodies, commands, and public knowledge.

The resulting character cannot be reduced to a progression from coldness to kindness. Authority and compassion are present together from the beginning, just as institutional knowledge and epistemic

¹⁵⁰ Caterino Mazzolà, after Pietro Metastasio, *La clemenza di Tito*, "Kritische Edition des Librettos," act 2, scene 7, *Digital Mozart Edition*, version 139 (Stiftung Mozarteum Salzburg, 2013), 24, [Open-access Prague libretto PDF](#) .

¹⁵¹ Pietro Metastasio, *La clemenza di Tito*, "Kritische Edition der Libretto-Vorlage Turin 1757," act 3, scene 8, *Digital Mozart Edition*, version 147 (Stiftung Mozarteum Salzburg, 2013), 45, [Open-access Metastasio source PDF](#) .

¹⁵² Sergio Durante, "Stage Directions and Set Design in Mozart's *La clemenza di Tito*," in *Mozart's La clemenza di Tito: A Reappraisal*, ed. Magnus Tassing Schneider and Ruth Tatlow (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2018), 151, [Open-access chapter PDF](#) , [DOI](#) .

limitation remain present together. Publio embodies law without personal cruelty, compassion without unauthorized intervention, obedience without intellectual emptiness, and knowledge without omniscience. These combinations explain why the designation “threshold figure” describes him more accurately than either “bureaucrat” or “confidant.”

This conclusion also establishes limits for performance interpretation. The evidence does not prescribe one mandatory characterization, posture, vocal colour, or set of gestures. It does, however, exclude interpretations that contradict the role’s dramatic structure. A uniformly threatening Publio would suppress the compassion written into his ensembles, while an excessively sentimental Publio would undermine his procedural responsibility. Likewise, playing him as omniscient would erase the carefully constructed exclusion that produces his misunderstanding of Tito’s decision.

The next stage of analysis must therefore ask how these distinctions can be embodied. Hansen’s account of eighteenth-century operatic performance emphasizes that a character’s ethos and dramatic intentionality emerged through the performer’s vocal and gestural relationship with the audience.¹⁵³ Publio’s structural complexity will become theatrically meaningful only when the singer differentiates official clarity, respectful counsel, compassionate observation, incomplete knowledge, and collective participation through voice, body, gaze, stillness, and spatial orientation. Chapter 6 accordingly turns from what Publio’s office means to how that meaning can be performed, beginning with the problem of the stereotypical bass official.

¹⁵³ Jette Barnholdt Hansen, “Mozart as Epideictic Rhetorician: The Representation of Vice and Virtue in *La clemenza di Tito*,” in *Mozart’s La clemenza di Tito: A Reappraisal*, ed. Magnus Tessing Schneider and Ruth Tatlow (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2018), 127, [Open-access chapter PDF](#) , [DOI](#) .

CHAPTER 6. ACTING PUBLIO: PSYCHOLOGY, GESTURE, AND EMBODIED AUTHORITY

6.1 The Problem of the Stereotypical Bass Official

Chapter 6 turns from the dramaturgy of Publio's office to the means by which a singer-actor makes that dramaturgy visible. Its first obstacle is not a lack of information but a surplus of convention. Because Publio is both a bass and the Praetorian prefect, rehearsal can begin with a ready-made figure: an older, heavy, humorless official whose low voice is treated as evidence of hardness and whose authority is represented by continuous slowness. This figure may be immediately legible, but theatrical legibility is not the same as textual truth. The critical libretto calls him only "PUBLIO, prefetto del Pretorio";¹⁵⁴ the official Köchel Catalogue confirms the part as bass.¹⁵⁵ Neither designation specifies age, physique, gait, facial severity, emotional opacity, or moral cruelty. Such qualities may emerge in a particular production, but they cannot be imported as though they belonged to the cast list.

Three categories must therefore remain distinct: vocal category, institutional function, and performed temperament. Bass identifies the role's vocal placement; prefect identifies delegated responsibility; temperament is produced by choices made under dramatic circumstances. John Kapusta's concept of "ideologies of voice type"—the learned ideas and practices through which voice types are understood—is useful because it names the point at which classification becomes expectation.¹⁵⁶ In rehearsal, that expectation can become bodily almost at once: the singer may darken vowels beyond the needs of the text, weight every consonant, widen the stance, lower the chin, delay each response, or keep the face immobile in order to look official. None of these choices is inherently false. The problem is their circular use: bass is made to justify heaviness, heaviness confirms severity, and severity is then accepted as Publio's personality before his actions have been examined.

Empirical voice-perception research helps explain why this shortcut can feel convincing. In a study using brief speech samples, Tsantani and colleagues found a tendency for lower-pitched male voices to be selected as more dominant; the same discussion, however, describes such impressions as rapid

¹⁵⁴ Caterino Mazzolà, after Pietro Metastasio, *La clemenza di Tito*, "Kritische Edition des vertonten Textes," Digital Mozart Edition, version 138 (Stiftung Mozarteum Salzburg, 2014), 1, [Open-access critical edition PDF](#) .

¹⁵⁵ Internationale Stiftung Mozarteum, "La clemenza di Tito (The Clemency of Titus), KV 621," *Köchel Catalogue*, cast list, accessed August 20, 2026, [Official Köchel Catalogue](#) .

¹⁵⁶ John Kapusta, "Ideologies of Voice Type and Ravel's *L'heure espagnole*," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 34, no. 2 (2022): 211, [Public article abstract](#) , [DOI](#) .

but not necessarily accurate.¹⁵⁷ The transfer to opera must be limited. Fundamental frequency in a manipulated spoken word is not identical to operatic Fach, which also involves range, tessitura, registration, timbre, and technique. The defensible inference is narrower: a low male voice can predispose listeners to hear dominance before they know the speaker's conduct. That is evidence about reception, not proof of Publio's inner nature. A bass performer does not need to neutralize the authority of his instrument; he needs to prevent a likely first impression from becoming the whole acting score.

Office produces a second shortcut. Because Publio works through guards, custody, intelligence, and decrees, institutional force can be misread as a personal appetite for force. The arrest then becomes punitive pleasure, and every report becomes intimidation. Yet the preceding chapter showed that Publio's agency is delegated: he verifies, transmits, escorts, and obeys; he is neither the Senate that judges nor the sovereign who decides. Performance must preserve the difference between capacity and desire. Publio may be exact without being sadistic, formidable without being hostile, and restrained without being empty. Conversely, resisting the stereotype does not require making him genial, sentimental, or secretly rebellious. It requires withholding a psychological adjective until the text and action have earned it.

The libretto itself resists a monotone official. While conducting Sesto away, Publio admits that the prisoner's tears move his soul even though his pity has no power; his only aria is marked *Allegretto* rather than *Grave* or *Maestoso*.¹⁵⁸ Neither fact dictates a facial expression, posture, or step. *Allegretto* is not a stage direction, and compassion need not become a public collapse. Taken together, however, they exclude the assumption that Publio must inhabit one slow, dark, affectless temperature. The trio asks him to sustain firmness and susceptibility at the same time: he continues the escort while registering suffering. The aria asks for alert counsel rather than ceremonial weight for its own sake. His authority becomes dramatically valuable precisely because it remains responsive.

Practically, the performer can organize preparation in three layers. First, protect the vocal facts: stable breath, resonant core, intelligible Italian, rhythmic precision, and freedom across the written line. Second, identify the institutional objective of each entrance: to present, warn, obtain compliance, escort, report, deliver, or wait. Third, allow human response to modify focus, breath timing, color, and muscular availability without erasing the official task. This sequence prevents a generalized mood from swallowing action. A darker color may be justified by a sentence; stillness

¹⁵⁷ Maria S. Tsantani, Pascal Belin, Helena M. Paterson, and Phil McAleer, "Low Vocal Pitch Preference Drives First Impressions Irrespective of Context in Male Voices but Not in Female Voices," *Perception* 45, no. 8 (2016): 946–47, [Open-access article PDF](#) , [DOI](#) .

¹⁵⁸ Mazzolà, after Metastasio, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, trio no. 14 and aria no. 16, "Kritische Edition des vertonten Textes," version 138, 23, 25, [Open-access critical edition PDF](#) ; compare Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, K. 621, ed. Franz Giegling, NMA II/5/20 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1970), 193–95, [Open NMA score](#) .

may sharpen listening; physical weight may be useful when Publio's presence must arrest motion. If these qualities are permanent, however, they cease to signify. Variation gives them dramatic value.

A useful rehearsal test is to remove the title and voice type from a beat and name the action Publio directs toward another person. If the answer is only "being authoritative," the choice remains generic. If the answer is warning Tito, securing Sesto's compliance, authenticating a decree, or observing a change in the ruler, the beat has an object and a pressure. Bass sonority and official bearing can then be restored as forces that intensify a specific action rather than substitute for one. The same test applies to the body: a widened stance, delayed turn, or reduced gesture should answer a local need, not advertise "bass official" in every scene. The aim is not naturalistic smallness but theatrical specificity.

The stereotype can therefore remain useful as an audience horizon, not as a finished character. Publio's first appearance should establish enough institutional economy for authority to register; later actions can complicate that first reading. When the low voice carries public weight while the actor listens, when a command stays clear while pity becomes perceptible, and when official control permits thought to change, Publio ceases to be a generic function without becoming an invented secret protagonist. The goal is neither a rehabilitated anti-authoritarian nor a dark caricature, but embodied authority whose behavior remains accountable to score and libretto. The following sections test that authority through hierarchy, address, spatial economy, restraint, listening, and continuity.

6.2 Status, Hierarchy, and Addressing the Emperor

Publio's relationship with Tito is fundamentally asymmetrical, but asymmetry should not be mistaken for dramatic passivity. Publio commands guards, escorts prisoners, and carries information produced by the Senate and the Praetorian apparatus. Yet when he addresses the emperor, his authority becomes delegated rather than sovereign. His task is to transmit truth upward without claiming the right to determine its consequences. Status should therefore be heard not as permanent softness, hesitation, or fear, but as a continuous calculation of what kind of speech the situation permits: ceremonial acclamation, procedural reminder, warning, verified report, limited correction, or obedience.

The first of these modes is ceremonial address. In the public forum of Act I, Publio speaks before senators, provincial delegates, Praetorians, and the Roman people as the representative voice of the Senate. His sentence announcing the Senate's judgment concludes with an imperial honorific.¹⁵⁹ Tito is the grammatical recipient, but the speech also authenticates the hierarchy for everyone assembled onstage and, by extension, for the theatre audience. The performer should consequently

¹⁵⁹ Caterino Mazzolà, after Pietro Metastasio, *La clemenza di Tito*, "Kritische Edition des vertonten Textes," act 1, scene 4, Digital Mozart Edition, version 138 (Stiftung Mozarteum Salzburg, 2014), 7, [Open-access critical edition PDF](#).

project the line publicly rather than turn it into a private, submissive utterance. Deference is already encoded in the title, syntax, and ceremonial setting. Vocal breadth, a clearly completed cadence, and an exact destination for the words can preserve distance without diminishing Publio's institutional agency.

A second mode emerges in Act II, where Publio must distinguish respectful counsel from verified reporting. Before the Senate's verdict has arrived, Tito measures Sesto's loyalty according to the goodness of his own heart. Publio responds with an adversative opening and a respectful form of address, reminding him that other people do not necessarily possess Tito's moral nature. When Publio later returns carrying the decree, he opens his report with a sovereign title.¹⁶⁰ Both utterances travel upward through the same hierarchy, but they perform different actions. The first is preventive counsel offered while knowledge remains incomplete; the second is an evidential report backed by confession and an institutional document. In performance, the first may contain a brief evaluative preparation before the correction, whereas the second requires a clean and settled onset. Playing both in the same generalized solemn tone would erase the changing status of Publio's knowledge.

A third mode appears when Tito becomes impatient while waiting for Sesto. Publio first corrects the emperor's perception of the elapsed time and then immediately accepts the renewed order to hasten the prisoner's arrival.¹⁶¹ The sequence is a miniature model of hierarchical professionalism. Publio neither imitates Tito's impatience nor disputes his right to issue the command. He preserves procedural accuracy and then obeys. The actor may allow the factual correction to land, receive the subsequent imperative, and answer without defensive delay. The response should not sound sarcastic, resentful, or emotionally defeated. It acknowledges that Tito controls the command while Publio remains responsible for reporting the actual condition of its execution.

Felicity Baker's formulation that Tito's subjects may appeal to his goodwill but cannot make demands on him supplies an important political limit for these exchanges.¹⁶² Publio can exert pressure by presenting an inconvenient fact, returning with an authenticated judgment, or refusing to distort procedural time. He cannot compel Tito's final decision. The performer should therefore resist turning Publio into an equal confidant who freely instructs the emperor. His directness comes from professional obligation rather than personal parity. This distinction also changes the pressure of the speech: an appeal must be sufficiently clear to affect the ruler, while remaining sufficiently bounded to acknowledge that the decision belongs elsewhere.

¹⁶⁰ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, scenes 5 and 7, 25, [Open-access critical edition PDF](#) .

¹⁶¹ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, scene 9, 27, [Open-access critical edition PDF](#) .

¹⁶² Felicity Baker, "Tito's Burden," in *Mozart's La clemenza di Tito: A Reappraisal*, ed. Magnus Tessing Schneider and Ruth Tatlow (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2018), 100, [Open-access chapter PDF](#) , [DOI](#) .

In rehearsal, every line addressed upward can be marked according to four questions: Who is the exact recipient? What does Publio know at this moment? Which institution authorizes him to speak? How much resistance does the sentence permit? These answers should then determine the vocal action. A ceremonial declaration requires carrying power and formal completion; a reminder requires forward motion; a warning requires semantic precision; an evidential report requires a stable beginning; and obedience requires immediacy. Hierarchy is not represented simply by reduced volume. A subordinate official whose words cannot be understood cannot perform his institutional function. Hansen's account of opera-seria performance emphasizes that character acquires ethos and intentionality through the performer's vocal and gestural dialogue with the listeners.¹⁶³ For Publio, that ethos arises from consistency: he neither withholds necessary facts nor claims the sovereign prerogative to decide what those facts will mean.

Hierarchy in these scenes is therefore relational rather than static. Tito summons, dismisses, questions, and accelerates; Publio acknowledges those actions while regulating the flow of information on which they depend. He can correct the measurement of time, warn against a mistaken assumption, and deliver a judgment that the emperor does not wish to receive. Formal address maintains vertical distance, while direct syntax protects the truth-bearing function of Publio's office. A convincing Publio does not become dramatically smaller in Tito's presence. He becomes more exact. His authority is credible precisely because its limits remain audible.

6.3 Stillness, Gesture, and Spatial Economy

Publio's physical life onstage is vulnerable to two opposite distortions. One is to make him permanently rigid, as though military office required the body of an immovable statue. The other is to fill every silence with pacing, nodding, pointing, and repeated demonstrations of vigilance. Neither choice produces convincing authority. Stillness is not the absence of acting, and spatial economy is not the refusal to move. They are forms of selection: the actor maintains a body capable of action and chooses the smallest visible movement sufficient to alter a relationship, transmit information, or complete an institutional task. Because Publio repeatedly stands between the emperor, the Senate, the guards, and the accused, his physical grammar must make these relationships legible without continually illustrating them.

Publio's first public appearance establishes this principle through placement. The stage direction situates him among Roman senators and representatives of the provinces before Tito's ceremonial descent from the Capitol.¹⁶⁴ Publio therefore begins not as an isolated individual competing for attention but as a visible component of an institutional body. His authority initially derives from occupying that collective position and becoming its speaking representative. The libretto does not

¹⁶³ Jette Barnholdt Hansen, "Mozart as Epideictic Rhetorician: The Representation of Vice and Virtue in *La clemenza di Tito*," in *Mozart's La clemenza di Tito: A Reappraisal*, ed. Magnus Tessing Schneider and Ruth Tatlow (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2018), 127, [Open-access chapter PDF](#) , [DOI](#) .

¹⁶⁴ Caterino Mazzolà, after Pietro Metastasio, *La clemenza di Tito*, "Kritische Edition des vertonten Textes," act 1, scene 4, Digital Mozart Edition, version 138 (Stiftung Mozarteum Salzburg, 2014), 6, [Open-access critical edition PDF](#) .

prescribe an exact distance or angle, so it would be unjustified to reconstruct a fixed historical blocking pattern. Nevertheless, the relational structure is clear. Publio should remain connected to the official group until his task requires differentiation. Wandering prematurely toward Tito's central area would weaken that structure, while complete visual disappearance within the crowd would obscure his responsibility. A stable station, oriented toward the ceremonial action and prepared for speech, can communicate both belonging and readiness.

The public audience scene in Act II provides an even clearer model of spatial economy. The libretto identifies a throne, a chair, and a small table, allowing the setting itself to mark the sovereign and administrative centres of the scene. It later specifies Publio's delivery of the Senate's written decree to Tito.¹⁶⁵ These objects and actions already carry substantial dramatic meaning. The actor does not need to reinforce the throne's authority with continuous bowing or repeated indications toward it. Instead, the marked transfer of the document should become the decisive physical event: approach, presentation, release, and withdrawal. The gesture changes the legal status of the scene because institutional judgment has moved from Publio's custody into the emperor's hands. Its simplicity makes that transfer more visible. Returning to a stable position after the handover also completes the action and restores the distinction between the messenger and the sovereign decision-maker.

Sergio Durante observes a direct functional relationship between stage organisation and musical character in the 1791 production.¹⁶⁶ For the performer, this means that movement should respond to dramatic and musical thresholds rather than to every grammatical clause. A new report, an imperial command, the transfer of an object, or a required exit may justify a change of position. Ordinary recitative does not automatically justify pacing. Publio's spatial decisions should also preserve the readability of rank: standing continually beside Tito may suggest an equality that the text does not grant, whereas excessive distance may prevent the audience from understanding their administrative relationship. The exact geometry will vary with the production, but the principle remains relational. Publio should be near enough to act and report, yet distinct enough for Tito's sovereign centre to remain visible.

Stillness itself requires technique. It should not be produced by locking the knees, immobilising the breath, forcing the shoulders backward, or adopting a permanent military tension. Such rigidity weakens singing and makes subsequent gestures look mechanical. A useful still position distributes weight clearly, permits uninterrupted breathing, and leaves the head, arms, and torso available to respond. Gilbert Austin's 1806 treatise on rhetorical delivery, while not direct evidence of the Prague staging, offers a historically adjacent principle: cultivated gesture includes the discipline to

¹⁶⁵ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, scenes 5 and 7, 24, 26, [Open-access critical edition PDF](#)

¹⁶⁶ Sergio Durante, "Stage Directions and Set Design in Mozart's *La clemenza di Tito*," in *Mozart's La clemenza di Tito: A Reappraisal*, ed. Magnus Tessing Schneider and Ruth Tatlow (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2018), 142, [Open-access chapter PDF](#) , [DOI](#) .

avoid continuous display and the ability to remain still.¹⁶⁷ This is particularly applicable to Publio's function as a public reporter and representative. His body may remain attentive without producing visible filler. Breath, focus, and readiness continue even when the external position does not change.

Gesture should consequently be organised around rhetorical changes rather than individual words. Repeated pointing, habitual nodding, touching the chest to indicate sincerity, or opening the palm at every explanatory phrase turns the body into a parallel translation of the libretto. It also reduces the force of gestures that are genuinely necessary. A warning may require a single controlled emphasis; a verified report may be carried by a settled presentation; obedience may be expressed by immediate preparation to act. The size of the gesture must account for the theatre and the audience's sightline, but enlargement should not become emotional exaggeration. Henry Siddons's English adaptation of Engel's work on gesture contrasts brilliant theatrical display with expression properly fitted to character and praises performance without an exaggerated trait.¹⁶⁸ This text does not document Mozart's production directly, but it provides a useful historical corrective to the assumption that visibility always requires excess. Publio's physical truth depends on consistency with his office and the specific action of the scene.

A practical rehearsal score can therefore divide every spatial action into four components: station, trigger, vector, and recovery. The station is Publio's established place before the action begins. The trigger is the word, command, object, or change of information that makes movement necessary. The vector identifies the person or institutional centre toward which the action travels. Recovery determines the new position after the action has been completed. In the decree scene, for example, Publio begins from an official station, moves when the report must be delivered, directs the document toward Tito, releases it, and then recovers a position from which he can await the imperial response. This method produces blocking that is repeatable without becoming inflexible, because every movement has a dramatic cause and an identifiable completion.

Stillness and gesture thus operate through contrast. If Publio has remained physically economical, a single approach, turn, presentation, or departure can acquire considerable weight. His authority does not depend on occupying the greatest amount of space but on making his relationship to each part of the political structure immediately intelligible. Spatial economy allows the audience to perceive Tito's sovereign centre, the collective presence of the institutions, and Publio's position as the person authorised to move between them. This disciplined physical framework prepares the arrest scene, where restraint, pressure, and compassion must coexist within a sequence of especially consequential movements.

¹⁶⁷ Gilbert Austin, *Chironomia; or, A Treatise on Rhetorical Delivery* (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1806), 137, [Public-domain full scan](#) .

¹⁶⁸ Henry Siddons, *Practical Illustrations of Rhetorical Gesture and Action*, adapted from a work by M. Engel, 2nd ed. (London: Sherwood, Neely, and Jones, 1822), 205, [Public-domain full scan](#) .

6.4 The Arrest Scene: Restraint, Pressure, and Compassion

The arrest scene tests Publio's embodied authority more acutely than any of his earlier entrances. He must accomplish three tasks at once: make Sesto relinquish his capacity for violence, keep the judicial process moving, and register the human suffering produced by that process. The scene should therefore not be organized as a simple alternation between cold brutality and sudden sympathy. Its dramatic tension arises from the coexistence of apparently contradictory conditions: Publio remains the agent of Sesto's arrest while becoming a morally affected witness to it. A useful acting score may accordingly divide the arrest into four connected phases—containment, disarmament, compelled departure, and compassionate recognition—each of which increases pressure without requiring greater volume or physical aggression.

Publio enters “with guards,” so the means of coercion are visible before he speaks.¹⁶⁹ Their presence establishes an unequal spatial relationship and makes additional demonstrations of force unnecessary. Publio need not rush toward Sesto, threaten him, or seize him immediately. He may enter at a pace suggesting that the decision has already been made, stop at a distance from which Sesto can be addressed but not easily escape, and allow the first utterance of Sesto's name to claim his attention. Because the guards have already limited the possible routes of movement, Publio's stillness can function as an expression of command. The specific formation will depend on the production, but the underlying principle remains constant: the guards carry the visible possibility of violence, while Publio carries the clarity of institutional intention.

The request for Sesto's weapon is reduced to the compressed phrase “La tua spada”—“Your sword.” The absence of a finite verb gives the line the quality of an administrative demand rather than an emotional outburst. The stage direction then records that Sesto gives him the sword.¹⁷⁰ This exchange should be treated as a precise transfer rather than as an abbreviated fight. Publio sees Sesto, identifies the weapon, permits the command to register, and receives the sword only when Sesto begins to surrender it. Reaching too early can make the action appear to be a snatching gesture; waiting too long can weaken the connection between the spoken demand and its physical consequence. The exact handling must, of course, be fixed safely with the stage director and properties team. Once the transfer has been completed, Publio should neither brandish the weapon nor inspect it triumphantly. Its removal is significant because it alters the balance of agency: Sesto remains morally responsible, but he is no longer physically autonomous.

Publio next explains that Lentulo survived and lets Sesto infer the consequences: “Il resto intendi. Vieni”—“You understand the rest. Come.” The movement from evidence to command is extremely

¹⁶⁹ Caterino Mazzolà, after Pietro Metastasio, *La clemenza di Tito*, “Kritische Edition des vertonten Textes,” act 2, scene 3, Digital Mozart Edition, version 138 (Stiftung Mozarteum Salzburg, 2014), 22, [Open-access critical edition PDF](#) .

¹⁷⁰ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, scene 3, 22, [Open-access critical edition PDF](#) .

economical. Publio does not deliver a prosecutorial speech, nor does he invite an argument about guilt. Nevertheless, an actor may allow a brief beat between the information and the command so that Sesto's recognition can become visible. This pause does not indicate uncertainty. It marks the moment in which external evidence becomes internal knowledge for the accused. If Publio fills it with anger, the arrest becomes a personal confrontation; if he passes over it mechanically, the audience loses the instant in which Sesto understands that concealment is no longer possible.

When Sesto attempts to prolong his farewell to Vitellia, Publio explains that departure is necessary, that the Senate has already assembled, and that he cannot defer taking Sesto there.¹⁷¹ The pressure comes from the institutional clock embedded in the sentence. The impersonal construction *partir conviene* presents departure as necessity; "already" indicates that the judicial process has begun elsewhere; and "I cannot defer" identifies the limit of Publio's discretion. None of these ideas requires shouting. They can instead be embodied through a forward impulse in the breath, a cadence that closes rather than invites negotiation, and a small reorientation toward the exit. Publio's authority emerges from the logical sequence of his language: necessity, institution, and assigned duty progressively remove Sesto's remaining alternatives.

In rehearsal, this sequence can be organized as a succession of completed actions: establish the perimeter, obtain Sesto's attention, receive the sword, communicate the evidence, allow recognition, initiate movement, refuse delay, and organize the exit. Each action should have a clear cue and an observable completion. The guards should function as spatial architecture rather than as an agitated crowd. If they repeatedly close in on Sesto without a new reason, the production spends its coercive energy too early. By contrast, a stable perimeter allows a single change of position—a blocked path, a guard closing the formation, or Publio turning toward the exit—to acquire considerable dramatic weight.

The trio complicates the arrest because Sesto and Vitellia use the musical time to prolong their farewell. Publio's repeated "Vieni" therefore becomes more than a literal command: it operates as a recurring temporal cue that keeps the arrest in progress. The first command establishes the need to leave; the second indicates that the intervening emotion has been heard but has not changed the decision. Vitellia names this persistence "cruelty," yet Publio's aside reveals that Sesto's tears move him even though pity is powerless.¹⁷² The performer should not attempt to rebut Vitellia's accusation or seek moral absolution from the audience. Publio's public objective remains unchanged, while the aside discloses its emotional cost. A release in the breath, a slight darkening of timbre, or a momentary change of focus toward Sesto may be sufficient. Because Publio's external score has remained restrained, a small internal disturbance can register clearly without interrupting the arrest.

¹⁷¹ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, scene 3, 22, [Open-access critical edition PDF](#) .

¹⁷² Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, scene 4, no. 14, 23, [Open-access critical edition PDF](#) .

Compassion in this scene is therefore not softness that replaces duty. It is pressure experienced within duty. The statement that pity is “vain” means that Publio’s feeling has no practical power at this stage of the proceeding. A prolonged sentimental pause would falsely suggest that he is considering releasing Sesto or abandoning his task. Yet complete emotional neutrality would erase the conflict written into the aside. The actor must distinguish feeling from intervention: Publio may be moved, but he does not promise assistance, offer consolation, or obstruct the Senate’s process. His humanity becomes credible precisely because it does not grant him authority that the scene has not given him.

This compassion is not merely a modern interpretive addition. Magnus Tessing Schneider observes that Publio remains silent during this part of Metastasio’s earlier version, whereas Mazzolà’s adaptation gives him a new aside in which he expresses compassion for Sesto.¹⁷³ The change makes Publio’s reaction a deliberate component of the ensemble. He is no longer only the official who arrives and removes the accused; he remains present as both executor and witness while Sesto and Vitellia attempt to complete their farewell. The audience is consequently invited to perceive Sesto’s suffering alongside the uninterrupted motion of the institution. Publio’s sympathy also intensifies the moral contrast with Vitellia: even the officer charged with conducting the arrest acknowledges Sesto’s pain, while the person principally responsible for his situation still withholds the truth.

The arrest is not complete until the stage picture has been converted into departure. Publio and Sesto leave with the guards, while Vitellia exits in the opposite direction. This separation divides the emotional and institutional consequences of the scene. Publio does not need to drag Sesto away; the surrendered weapon, the established perimeter, and Sesto’s verbal consent to follow already make the relation legible. What matters is the vector of movement. Walking ahead may present Publio as a guide, remaining alongside Sesto may emphasize escort, and following closely behind may suggest compulsion. The production should choose the relationship that best fits its larger conception of Publio, but it must remain consistent with the restraint already established. One clear initiation of movement is generally stronger than repeated physical corrections.

The arrest scene thus demonstrates how Publio’s power can intensify through reduction. His language becomes shorter, his body remains more contained, and Sesto’s available choices steadily diminish. At the same time, compassion appears as a controlled disturbance within that formal structure. Publio is neither a sadistic jailer nor a passive functionary. He exercises coercive authority without taking pleasure in it, recognizes the suffering produced by his action, and nevertheless completes the duty entrusted to him. The scene’s ethical force depends upon preserving all three conditions. Restraint makes the pressure credible; pressure gives compassion a real cost; and compassion prevents authority from becoming emotionally empty.

¹⁷³ Magnus Tessing Schneider, “From Metastasio to Mazzolà: Clemency and Pity in *La clemenza di Tito*,” in *Mozart’s La clemenza di Tito: A Reappraisal*, ed. Magnus Tessing Schneider and Ruth Tatlow (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2018), 73, [Open-access chapter PDF](#) , [DOI](#) .

6.5 Listening and Reacting in Ensembles

Publio's work in the ensembles of *La clemenza di Tito* demonstrates that acting continues whenever a character is receiving information, even when he is not carrying the principal melodic argument. For Publio, listening is not passive stillness but a sequence of dramatic operations: he locates the source of a sound, determines what it may signify, measures it against the information available to him, and then decides whether action is required. His ensemble acting must therefore be governed by three distinctions: what Publio knows as opposed to what the audience knows, where a sound or action originates, and how each new piece of information alters his relationship with the other characters. These distinctions prevent listening from becoming decorative movement and make his reactions part of the opera's causal structure.

The most important principle is that a reaction should occur after its dramatic stimulus. A performer who turns toward an offstage noise before it is heard, anticipates another character's confession, or displays knowledge that Publio has not yet acquired weakens the dramatic chain of cause and effect. This does not mean that the actor must remain blank while waiting for his next vocal entrance. The body may retain an active orientation, but a perceptible change should be motivated by something that Publio sees or hears. A useful rehearsal sequence is therefore: source, reception, interpretation, decision, and action. Not every stimulus requires all five stages to be equally visible, but their order should remain intact.

Trio no. 10 offers a particularly clear example of the difference between character knowledge and audience knowledge. Publio and Annio inform Vitellia that Tito has selected her as his consort. The audience understands that her fragmented speech and visible distress result from her realization that Sesto has already departed to carry out the assassination. Publio and Annio, however, interpret the same signs as the overwhelming effect of happiness: "Oh come un gran contento, come confonde un cor!"¹⁷⁴ Publio must respond to the public explanation available to him, not to the secret explanation known by the audience. He may register that Vitellia is unusually disoriented, but he has no sufficient reason to identify terror, guilt, or conspiracy. If the actor gives her a knowingly suspicious look, he destroys the dramatic irony and falsely anticipates Publio's later discovery.

This moment requires a disciplined form of benevolent misreading. Publio believes he is escorting the woman whom Tito has chosen to become empress. His objective is consequently to move her toward the imperial apartments, not to interrogate her. A brief pause in response to her hesitation can show that he has noticed it, but the pause should resolve into reassurance or renewed forward movement. The reaction becomes dramatically useful because it reveals both Publio's attentiveness and the limitation of his knowledge. Good ensemble listening does not make a character omniscient; it allows the

¹⁷⁴ Caterino Mazzolà, after Pietro Metastasio, *La clemenza di Tito*, "Kritische Edition des vertonten Textes," act 1, scene 10, no. 10, Digital Mozart Edition, version 138 (Stiftung Mozarteum Salzburg, 2014), 16, [Open-access critical edition PDF](#).

audience to see precisely why an intelligent character may still reach an incorrect conclusion.

The Act I quintet with chorus demands a different form of listening. Here Publio is not interpreting an individual's ambiguous behaviour but responding to a sound generated elsewhere in the theatrical space. A distant cry precedes his declaration that there is a conspiracy in Rome and that he fears for Tito. He subsequently joins Servilia and Annio in stating that the screams they hear freeze them with horror.¹⁷⁵ The sequence is important. The distant sound is received first; Publio then identifies it as evidence of organized danger; finally, his individual assessment expands into a shared emotional response. His musical entrance should therefore sound like the result of listening rather than an announcement prepared in advance.

Physically, the performer should orient toward the source of the cry before turning the information into language. The reaction need not be large. A change in eye line, a suspension of the previous action, and an altered breath may be sufficient to indicate that Publio has detected something beyond the immediate group. He can then scan the visible environment or acknowledge the other characters before delivering his judgment. The essential point is that his body should connect the distant event to the people beside him. He functions as the person who converts an alarming but initially undefined sound into an intelligible political threat.

Sergio Durante notes that Mozart marks the first cries in this quintet as *Coro in distanza*, locating the chorus at a distance.¹⁷⁶ Durante's reconstruction of the original staging remains a hypothesis, but it demonstrates that the chorus is not merely an abstract musical effect. It represents people occupying another part of the dramatic environment. A contemporary production may place the chorus visibly upstage, behind the scenery, in the auditorium, or entirely offstage. Whatever solution is chosen, Publio's listening must correspond to it. If the chorus is visible, he can locate both movement and sound; if it remains concealed, the direction of his attention must help the audience imagine the unseen space. A generic outward gesture toward the auditorium would weaken this spatial relationship.

This scene also requires coordination with the conductor and chorus. Publio's first physical reception of the cry must be attached to an exact musical event rather than left to spontaneous timing. The singer should know which choral entrance initiates the response, how long the listening beat can last without delaying his own entrance, and when attention must return to the principal stage action. Breath preparation can serve both vocal and dramatic purposes: the inhalation for Publio's phrase may also be the moment in which the distant cry produces alarm. This integration prevents the familiar separation in which the actor "reacts" first and then visibly prepares to sing as an unrelated technical task.

¹⁷⁵ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 1, scene 12, no. 12, 17, [Open-access critical edition PDF](#) .

¹⁷⁶ Sergio Durante, "Stage Directions and Set Design in Mozart's *La clemenza di Tito*," in *Mozart's La clemenza di Tito: A Reappraisal*, ed. Magnus Tassing Schneider and Ruth Tatlow (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2018), 148, [Open-access chapter PDF](#) , [DOI](#) .

Trio no. 18 creates a more complex pattern because listening and observation move between three characters. Sesto looks at Tito and fears the disappearance of his former tenderness. Tito looks at Sesto and sees a face transformed by guilt. Publio initially observes Tito, recognizing that many emotions are in conflict within the emperor. Later, he joins Tito in describing Sesto as trembling and unable to raise his eyes.¹⁷⁷ Publio's attention therefore changes direction during the ensemble: he first reads the sovereign who must judge and then aligns himself with the sovereign's reading of the accused.

The first phase should not be played as though Publio already knows what Tito will decide. He can recognize emotional conflict without knowing its outcome. His focus on Tito should be specific but not so visually emphatic that it competes with the encounter between Tito and Sesto. A stable stance and a clear eye line can frame the imperial struggle for the audience while leaving the principal dramatic energy between the other two men. When Publio later sings with Tito, ensemble unity does not require identical gestures. It requires a shared object of attention and a common interpretive impulse: both men are now looking at the physical signs of Sesto's distress.

This transition illustrates an important distinction between agreement and imitation. Publio's function is not to mirror Tito's posture or reproduce every change in the emperor's face. Such imitation would reduce him to a visual echo. Instead, his agreement becomes legible through timing, breath, and the moment at which his attention settles on Sesto. The shared vocal line indicates alignment, while the different social positions of the two men remain visible. Tito is the betrayed friend and sovereign; Publio is the officer observing the encounter and maintaining custody. They may reach the same immediate judgment without experiencing it from the same emotional position.

Publio's later exclusion from the private conversation between Tito and Sesto further limits his knowledge. He witnesses the signs of conflict but not the exchange that transforms Tito's response. This must affect subsequent reactions. Publio cannot behave as if he already knows that clemency will prevail merely because the performer and audience know the opera's ending. His listening in the ensemble establishes perceptiveness, not omniscience. Preserving that distinction makes his later surprise and concern credible.

The final scene completes Publio's ensemble arc. When Vitellia unexpectedly confesses that she is the author of the conspiracy, Publio joins Annio in the exclamation "Oh numi!" The revelation produces an immediate collective shock. After Tito grants forgiveness, Publio is named among all the soloists and the chorus who join the final invocation.¹⁷⁸ Listening has changed his status: the officer who entered with the condemned prisoner becomes a member of the community that publicly receives and confirms the act of clemency.

¹⁷⁷ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, scene 10, no. 18, 28, [Open-access critical edition PDF](#) .

¹⁷⁸ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, scene 17 and no. 26, 38–39, [Open-access critical edition PDF](#) .

Because Vitellia's confession gives Publio genuinely new information, a larger response is justified here than in scenes where he is simply monitoring expected procedure. The breath may open, the body may temporarily lose its administrative containment, and his attention may move sharply toward Vitellia. Yet the reaction should not be prolonged beyond the arrival of Tito's next response. Once Tito begins to process the confession, Publio's task changes from displaying his own shock to witnessing the emperor's decision. A reaction remains dramatically alive only until a new objective replaces it.

In the final sextet, Publio should not continue to stand apart as though he were still supervising a judicial proceeding. At the same time, sudden familiarity or excessive celebration would erase the formal nature of the ending. His transformation can be expressed through a gradual redistribution of attention. Earlier, he watched individuals in order to assess risk, guilt, and obedience; now his focus joins the collective orientation toward Tito and the restored order. Vocal participation, shared breathing, and a less defensive spatial relationship with the other characters are sufficient to mark this change.

A practical rehearsal process may therefore include three maps. The first is an information map recording what Publio knows at each moment and which facts remain inaccessible to him. The second is a sound-and-sight map identifying the origin of every stimulus that produces a reaction. The third is a relational map indicating whether each response separates Publio from another character, aligns him with that character, or absorbs him into a larger group. These maps prevent arbitrary nodding, continuous facial commentary, and reactions motivated only by orchestral intensity.

Selective reaction is especially important for a role such as Publio. Constant movement would suggest nervousness and draw attention away from the characters whose decisions drive the plot. Complete immobility, however, would make him appear absent from the dramatic event. The appropriate solution is not a compromise in which every reaction is merely small. It is selection: some information is received without visible change, some alters the eyes or breath, and **some requires speech, movement, or institutional action. The size of the response should be determined by its consequence for Publio, not simply by the emotional intensity of the music.**

Across the ensembles, Publio progresses from mistaken social interpretation to accurate threat detection, from observation of private conflict to shared judgment, and finally from institutional separation to collective reconciliation. His authority is strengthened rather than weakened by this receptivity. He does not dominate every ensemble, but he repeatedly translates sounds, gestures, and behaviour into understanding and action. Listening consequently becomes both an acting technique and a moral measure of the character: Publio's humanity lies not only in what he commands, but also in his capacity to be changed by what he witnesses.

6.6 Exit, Re-entry, and the Continuity of Official Action

The exits assigned to a secondary official character are easily treated as practical necessities: the singer finishes a scene, leaves the stage, and waits for the next entrance. Publio's exits, however, are

rarely empty transitions. He leaves in order to obtain information, transmit an order, supervise custody, accompany the emperor, or bring a prisoner into a new public space. His subsequent entrance usually presents the result of that activity. Exit and re-entry should therefore be understood as the two visible ends of an action that continues while Publio is absent from the audience's view.

This principle gives Publio a continuous dramatic life rather than a series of disconnected appearances. For every exit, the performer should be able to answer several questions: Where is Publio going? What task has he been assigned? What result does he expect? What actually occurs while he is absent? What new information, document, person, or constraint does he bring back? These questions need not produce elaborate unseen scenes in the actor's imagination. Their purpose is to prevent Publio from returning in the same neutral condition in which he left. Re-entry must contain the consequence of the offstage task.

The clearest example occurs after Tito orders Publio to discover what the Senate is doing. Publio answers that he will go but fears that he will not return as the bearer of good news. After his aria and exit, he reappears carrying the Senate's document.¹⁷⁹ The document makes the offstage action materially visible. Publio did not disappear merely because the dramatic focus shifted to Tito and Annio. He went to the institutional source of judgment, learned that Sesto had confessed, received the decree, and returned to place it before the emperor.

The performer's departure and return should reflect the change from apprehension to verified knowledge. At the exit, Publio possesses strong evidence and expects an adverse result, but he does not yet hold the Senate's definitive judgment. At the re-entry, uncertainty has been replaced by official confirmation. This difference need not be expressed through exaggerated grief. It can be carried by a firmer pace, a direct relationship to the document, and an immediate visual orientation toward Tito. The paper should not look like a decorative property discovered at the last moment. Its physical handling should indicate that it is the reason for Publio's return and the object through which his offstage mission becomes public fact.

The re-entry must also avoid triumph. Publio believes that the decree is "terrible, but just," and his earlier aria has already shown that he regards Tito's trust as dangerously generous. Nevertheless, confirmation of Sesto's guilt is not a personal victory. The actor should enter with the certainty of an officer who has completed an unwelcome task, not with the satisfaction of a man proven correct. This distinction allows the earlier warning, the offstage investigation, and the delivery of the decree to form one coherent action without converting Publio into Sesto's antagonist.

¹⁷⁹ Caterino Mazzolà, after Pietro Metastasio, *La clemenza di Tito*, "Kritische Edition des vertonten Textes," act 2, scenes 5 and 7, Digital Mozart Edition, version 138 (Stiftung Mozarteum Salzburg, 2014), 25, [Open-access critical edition PDF](#).

The spatial organization of entrances and exits reinforces this continuity. Durante's reconstruction of the Prague public-hearing set proposes that two arches were used for actors entering and leaving from different sides.¹⁸⁰ The exact appearance and use of the original set cannot be established with certainty, but the proposal demonstrates that an exit was not necessarily a neutral disappearance into an undifferentiated backstage area. Different routes could imply different destinations, institutions, or relationships. A character leaving toward the Senate, the imperial apartments, the place of custody, or the public arena carries a distinct directional intention.

A modern production need not reproduce the reconstructed Prague architecture. It should, however, establish a coherent geography. If one route represents the Senate and another leads toward the arena, Publio's use of those routes should remain legible. A re-entry from a particular direction can tell the audience where he has been before he speaks. Conversely, arbitrary changes of entrance may weaken the causal connection between task and result. Even in an abstract production with few scenic elements, the actor can preserve spatial memory by directing the final look and movement of an exit toward a specific destination and allowing the first step of the re-entry to retain that origin.

The most consequential exit occurs when Tito orders Publio and the guards to leave him alone with Sesto. Publio exits with the guards and is recalled only after the private interview and Tito's solitary struggle over the decree.¹⁸¹ This interval establishes a genuine limit on Publio's knowledge. He has observed Tito's emotional conflict, but he does not hear the conversation in which Sesto refuses to name Vitellia, nor does he witness Tito tearing up the signed decree. The actor must preserve this absence as part of Publio's later behaviour.

Continuity of official action must not be confused with omniscience. Publio may remain physically nearby, continue supervising the guards, and be prepared to answer Tito's call, but proximity does not give him access to the private conversation. When Tito calls and Publio re-enters, his question "E Sesto?"—"And Sesto?"—must be a real request for instruction. He returns ready to execute a decision, not already aware of its content. Tito's answer that Sesto's fate is decided is deliberately incomplete, and Publio interprets it as confirmation of death. His misunderstanding becomes credible only if the preceding exit has been respected as an actual boundary of knowledge.

This re-entry also requires an appropriate degree of readiness. Publio has not been emotionally participating in Tito's unseen monologue; he has been maintaining custody and awaiting further orders. His return should therefore preserve official alertness rather than carry an invented emotional transformation. The contrast is dramatically useful: Tito has undergone an intense private reversal, while Publio re-enters from a procedural world in which the expected sentence still

¹⁸⁰ Sergio Durante, "Stage Directions and Set Design in Mozart's *La clemenza di Tito*," in *Mozart's La clemenza di Tito: A Reappraisal*, ed. Magnus Tessing Schneider and Ruth Tatlow (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2018), 136, [Open-access chapter PDF](#) , [DOI](#) .

¹⁸¹ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, scenes 10 and 12, 29, 32, [Open-access critical edition PDF](#) .

appears to stand. The difference between their experiences allows the concealed act of clemency to remain concealed.

The following scene makes the continuity of movement especially explicit. Vitellia calls to Publio while he is already following Tito. Publio apologizes and states that he must go after the emperor.¹⁸² The exchange does not begin from a neutral position in which two characters have chosen to meet. It interrupts an action already in progress. Publio's body should therefore retain the direction of departure even while he answers Vitellia's questions.

This does not require hurried or inaudible delivery. Publio can stop sufficiently to communicate, but his feet, torso, or repeated return of focus toward Tito's route should indicate that the conversation is delaying another obligation. His answers become concise because he has somewhere else to be. If he turns completely toward Vitellia, settles into a comfortable distance, and treats the exchange as an independent conversation, the written urgency disappears. The scene is stronger when Vitellia must hold him at the threshold of departure.

The same principle prevents the actor from adding unsupported suspicion. Vitellia interprets Publio's restraint and haste as evidence that Sesto has revealed her guilt. Publio, however, explicitly states that he was excluded from Tito's private conversation. His brevity results from the obligation to follow the emperor, not from a secret decision to avoid Vitellia. The audience should be able to perceive the difference between Publio's official momentum and Vitellia's fearful interpretation of it. His exit completes the task he announced rather than confirming the conspiracy she imagines.

The final re-entry provides the largest visible result of an offstage assignment. Tito orders the guards to bring the condemned man before him. In the following scene, Publio appears with Sesto among the lictors.¹⁸³ The entrance completes the command: the prisoner has been collected, placed within the apparatus of punishment, and brought into the public arena. Publio's appearance is therefore not an ordinary entrance into the finale. It is the arrival of a processional formation that seems to carry the Senate's sentence toward execution.

Until Tito reveals his clemency, Publio should not signal that the procession has another purpose. The actor knows that Sesto will be pardoned, but Publio does not. The pace, formation, and distance between officer, prisoner, and lictors should preserve the apparent reality of punishment. Publio may direct the formation with minimal gestures, but the entrance must have a clear endpoint: Sesto is delivered into Tito's presence and the escorting task is completed. Only then can Publio redistribute his attention from the management of custody to the new events unfolding before him.

¹⁸² Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, scene 13, 33, [Open-access critical edition PDF](#) .

¹⁸³ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, scenes 16–17, 37–38, [Open-access critical edition PDF](#) .

Vitellia's confession interrupts this official continuity with information that no one expected. Its dramatic force depends partly on the strength of the preceding action. If Publio has entered without a definite task, the confession merely changes the general mood. If he has entered to complete what appears to be a death procession, her revelation breaks a specific institutional trajectory. His shock can then be understood as the collapse of an action that seemed settled. The new truth forces him to stop executing one version of justice and witness the creation of another.

A practical rehearsal record for Publio's exits can therefore contain six elements: the exit cue, destination, assigned task, information possessed at departure, offstage result, and first action upon returning. For the Senate sequence, for example, the task is to obtain news and the result is the decree. For the private interview, the task is to maintain custody outside and the result is continued ignorance of Tito's decision. For the final procession, the task is to bring Sesto to the arena and the result is the prisoner's formal presentation. Recording these elements makes the role's through-line concrete.

The physical circumstances of the production should also be incorporated into this score. The performer must know where the guards assemble, who carries or receives the sword and decree, how much offstage time is available, which entrance must remain clear, and who initiates each procession. These logistical details are not separate from acting. If Publio must search for a document, reorganize guards at the last second, or rush to reach the correct entrance, the re-entry will lose its intended authority. Technical preparation protects the apparent continuity of the fictional institution.

The final word or gesture before an exit should remain active until Publio has crossed the visible boundary of the scene. Similarly, a re-entry begins before the audience sees him: pace, breath, focus, and the management of any accompanying person or object must already be organized. The wing or doorway is not a place where acting is switched off and on. It is a threshold through which the same action changes from visible to invisible and back again.

Publio's exits and re-entries consequently reveal his central structural importance. The Senate's judgment, the movement of the guards, the emperor's orders, the custody of Sesto, and the public arena are connected because Publio moves between them. His temporary absence enables the next event rather than interrupting his characterization. When these transitions are performed as continuous official action, Publio ceases to appear as a minor functionary summoned only when the plot requires information. He becomes the embodied connection through which institutional decisions acquire documents, movement, witnesses, prisoners, and public consequences.

6.7 Integration of Voice, Body, and Text

The preceding sections have separated voice, gesture, status, listening, movement, and continuity in order to examine each element with sufficient precision. Performance, however, cannot preserve these divisions. Publio does not first produce a voice and then add a body to it, nor does he execute a gesture independently of the breath that prepares the phrase. Text, phonation, attention, posture, and movement occur within the same temporal event. The final task of characterization is therefore integration: the performer must allow each component to modify the others without permitting any single component to become a generalized sign of authority.

Breath provides the most immediate point of connection. Research on classical singers confirms that singing requires respiratory behaviour distinct from quiet breathing and that trained singers develop coordinated but individually variable relations between rib-cage and abdominal movement. Salomoni, van den Hoorn, and Hodges found that professional classical singers altered the coordination of rib cage and abdomen substantially during singing and also exhibited considerable inter-subject variation.¹⁸⁴ These findings do not prescribe one correct breath pattern for Publio, and they should not be converted into a historical claim about eighteenth-century technique. They do establish an important practical limit: dramatic physicality should be organized around the respiratory requirements of singing rather than imposed upon them as a competing system.

For Publio, this means that a physical indication of status must remain compatible with the preparation and continuation of phonation. A performer who holds the chest artificially rigid, fixes the abdomen, retracts the head, or produces continuous muscular tension in order to appear military may create an image of authority while compromising the flexibility required for the musical phrase. Conversely, a singer who abandons all bodily organization whenever difficult singing begins may preserve vocal security at the cost of dramatic continuity. The objective is not to choose between “good singing” and “good acting,” but to construct actions whose physical organization permits both.

Current research also cautions against simplistic claims that one visible posture automatically produces a superior voice. Castillo-Allendes and colleagues compared several standardized postures in singers and found no general significant differences in the principal aerodynamic or muscular variables across the tested positions; the authors accordingly emphasize that the effects of postural

¹⁸⁴ Sauro Emerick Salomoni, Wolbert van den Hoorn, and Paul W. Hodges, “Breathing and Singing: Objective Characterization of Breathing Patterns in Classical Singers,” *PLOS ONE* 11, no. 5 (2016): 10–13, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0155084>.

modification remain insufficiently consistent for universal prescriptions.¹⁸⁵ The implication for Publio is useful precisely because it is modest. An upright or contained body should not be adopted because a particular posture supposedly guarantees better phonation. It should be chosen when it clarifies rank, readiness, direction, and relation while leaving the singer free to coordinate breath and sound.

This principle becomes especially important when a dramatic action and a vocal entrance occur almost simultaneously. The singer should avoid a sequence in which the body completes an expressive gesture, resets into a separate “singing posture,” inhales conspicuously, and only then produces the phrase. Such segmentation reveals the technique rather than the character. A more integrated solution allows the dramatic stimulus to organize the breath itself. A distant cry may

Interrupt the previous breath and initiate Publio’s alarm; Tito’s command may release a preparatory inhalation that simultaneously acknowledges obedience; the presentation of the Senate’s decree may establish the bodily vector from which the report is sung. Breath is then neither hidden nor displayed for its own sake. It becomes part of the causal structure of the action.

The arrest sequence provides a particularly demanding test. In the trio following Sesto’s arrest, Publio must maintain custody, repeat the imperative “Vieni,” listen to Sesto and Vitellia, and register compassion without relinquishing the movement toward the Senate.¹⁸⁶ The vocal line, gaze, and body should therefore share one objective. If “Vieni” is sung with increasing vocal force while the body remains disengaged from Sesto, the command becomes acoustically emphatic but theatrically incomplete. If the actor repeatedly advances, points, or physically pressures Sesto while the vocal line remains restrained, the body may create a brutality not present in the musical relation. Integration requires the scale of vocal pressure and physical pressure to correspond.

This correspondence need not be literal. A stronger consonant does not require a larger gesture, and a softer dynamic does not require physical weakness. Indeed, contrast is often more effective. Publio may establish the inevitability of “Vieni” through an economical body while allowing the repeated word to retain linguistic precision. When his aside acknowledges Sesto’s suffering, compassion may alter breath, focus, or vocal colour without changing the institutional direction of the scene. The body continues the arrest while the voice reveals that the officer understands its human consequence. The two layers coexist because they answer different aspects of the same event.

¹⁸⁵ Adrián Castillo-Allendes, Mauricio Delgado-Bravo, Alvaro Reyes Ponce, and Eric J. Hunter, “Muscle Activity and Aerodynamic Voice Changes at Different Body Postures: A Pilot Study,” *Journal of Voice* 39, no. 2 (2025): 439–447, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvoice.2022.09.024>. Open-access author manuscript, PMCID: PMC10924224.

¹⁸⁶ Caterino Mazzolà, after Pietro Metastasio, *La clemenza di Tito*, “Kritische Edition des vertonten Textes,” act 2, scene 3, no. 14, Digital Mozart Edition, version 138 (Stiftung Mozarteum Salzburg, 2014), 21–22, open-access critical edition PDF.

Text should determine where such changes become necessary. Publio's language repeatedly moves among ceremonial statement, factual report, warning, command, question, and observation. These speech acts should not all receive the same vocal weight. In "Tardi s'avvede," for example, Publio does not command Tito; he offers a diagnosis of the danger created by excessive trust. The physical relation should therefore differ from the arrest. The singer can maintain formal status while allowing the phrase to travel toward Tito as counsel rather than coercion. The aria's authority emerges from clarity of argument and controlled musical proportion, not from reproducing the physical pressure required when Sesto must actually be taken into custody.

The same distinction applies to the decree scene. Publio's return with the Senate's judgment converts an offstage institutional process into a document that can be seen, heard, and acted upon.¹⁸⁷ Voice, body, and object should function as one chain. The document determines the direction of the approach; the approach establishes the relation to Tito; the breath prepares the report; and the words identify the legal meaning of the object. If the paper is handled casually while the voice attempts solemnity, the scene divides against itself. If the document is presented with exaggerated ritual while the text is delivered as routine information, the same division occurs. The physical and vocal scales need not be identical, but they must belong to the same objective.

Integration also clarifies the treatment of silence. A singer's body does not cease to perform when Publio has no text, yet silent acting should not become continuous commentary. The listening principles established in Section 6.5 remain decisive: visible change must follow information available to Publio. In the Act II trio, his first attention to Tito and his later alignment with Tito's observation of Sesto create different physical and vocal relationships within the same ensemble.¹⁸⁸ During rests, posture and gaze maintain those relationships; during sung phrases, breath and diction bring them into sound. Silence and phonation are therefore not separate acting modes. They are alternate states of the same attention.

A useful rehearsal method is to work first with the text and physical objectives at speaking volume, then with the written musical rhythm, and finally with full singing, while preserving the same vectors of attention. The purpose is not to make sung performance imitate ordinary speech. Opera necessarily enlarges duration, pitch, resonance, and physical demand. The exercise instead tests whether the objective survives the transition into singing. If a warning that is precise in speech becomes generalized heaviness when sung, the vocal preparation has displaced the action. If a gesture that is clear in spoken rehearsal becomes impossible during the phrase, the gesture is not yet integrated with the singer's respiratory organization.

¹⁸⁷ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, scenes 5–7, 25–27.

¹⁸⁸ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, scene 10, no. 18, 28.

The reverse process is equally useful. A phrase can first be sung without planned movement in order to identify the breath, resonance, articulation, and musical timing that cannot be compromised. Physical action can then be introduced only where the musical structure permits it. This procedure prevents the actor from treating movement as decorative material layered over a completed vocal interpretation. Instead, the final score develops through negotiation between musical necessity and dramatic necessity.

Such negotiation is particularly important for Publio because his authority depends on economy. Large, continuous physical effort is unnecessary for a character whose institutional position already supplies much of his status. Releasing unnecessary muscular display gives the singer greater freedom to differentiate the moments when physical pressure genuinely increases. A contained body in ceremonial scenes, a direct vector during arrest, a brief disturbance at the perception of suffering, and a changed collective orientation after clemency can then register as distinct events rather than variations of one permanently severe pose.

The integration of voice, body, and text therefore completes the argument developed throughout Chapter 6. Publio's authority should not be located exclusively in bass sonority, upright posture, reduced gesture, formal diction, or controlled movement. Authority emerges from the coordination of these resources in response to specific tasks. Likewise, compassion does not belong exclusively to facial expression or vocal softness. It becomes visible and audible when an established official action is momentarily altered by another person's suffering without being abandoned.

The performer's central discipline is consequently one of proportionality. Vocal weight must correspond to the speech act; gesture must correspond to the dramatic trigger; movement must preserve hierarchy and destination; breath must serve both phonation and action; and reaction must remain limited by what Publio knows. When these elements are integrated, the role no longer alternates between a singer who produces Mozart's notes and an actor who represents a Roman prefect. The same embodied action performs both functions.

Publio can then remain what the evidence permits him to be: an officer whose body makes institutional procedure visible, whose voice gives that procedure linguistic and musical form, and whose capacity to listen allows human response to remain present within obedience. Integration does not enlarge his authority beyond its written limits. It makes those limits perceptible. At the threshold between command and response, punishment and compassion, public office and private perception, voice and body become two dimensions of the same dramatic act.

6.8 Chapter Conclusion

Chapter 6 has translated the dramaturgical model developed in the preceding chapters into a set of performance principles. Its central argument has been that Publio should not be constructed from a prefabricated image of the “bass official.” Vocal category, institutional office, and performed temperament are related, but they are not interchangeable. A low male voice may contribute to perceptions of weight or authority, and the office of Praetorian prefect necessarily places Publio within structures of command, custody, and public order. Neither fact, however, requires continuous heaviness, aggression, immobility, or emotional opacity. Those qualities become meaningful only when they arise from a specific dramatic action.

The performer must therefore begin not from a generalized attitude but from relationships. Publio commands some characters, reports to others, escorts prisoners, represents institutions, responds to information, and repeatedly addresses a sovereign whose authority exceeds his own. His status is consequently variable in expression even when his rank remains stable. Before guards, he may function as the organizing centre of action; before Tito, his authority becomes delegated and accountable. The physical and vocal problem is not how to appear permanently authoritative, but how to make these changes of relational position legible without weakening the continuity of the character.

This principle also governs gesture and spatial behaviour. Publio does not require constant movement in order to remain dramatically active. On the contrary, stillness may allow a single approach, turn, presentation of a document, or initiation of an arrest to acquire greater significance. Movement becomes persuasive when it has a trigger, direction, objective, and completion. Such economy is particularly important for a role whose power derives less from personal display than from institutional legitimacy. Publio does not need to dominate the stage physically because the guards, Senate, imperial commands, documents, and ceremonial spaces already give his actions public consequence.

The arrest of Sesto demonstrates the ethical implications of this economy. Publio’s task is coercive: he disarms Sesto, controls his movement, and conducts him toward judgment. Yet the written scene also allows him to register compassion. The two facts must remain simultaneous. Excessive physical violence would transform delegated authority into personal hostility, while excessive tenderness would imply a freedom to intervene that Publio does not possess. The actor must therefore permit feeling to alter the execution of duty without cancelling that duty. Compassion becomes credible because it exists under constraint.

The same discipline applies to listening. Publio is perceptive, but he is not omniscient. His reactions must be limited by the information available to him at each moment. In the earlier ensemble with Vitellia, he misreads her agitation because the public circumstances make happiness a more plausible explanation than conspiracy. Later, he accurately identifies danger when distant cries announce political disorder. In the Act II trio, he recognizes conflict within Tito without knowing the final decision that conflict will produce. His intelligence therefore does not consist in always reaching the correct conclusion. It consists in attending carefully to what can actually be known.

This distinction protects one of the role's most important dramatic structures: the separation between audience knowledge and character knowledge. The audience may know Vitellia's guilt, Tito's private struggle, and the final outcome of the opera long before Publio does. The performer must resist allowing that knowledge to leak into posture, gaze, tone, or anticipation. Suspicion must arise from evidence available within the scene; surprise must remain possible when genuinely new information arrives. Publio's dramatic credibility depends on respecting the boundaries of his knowledge as carefully as the boundaries of his jurisdiction.

Exit and re-entry extend those boundaries beyond visible stage time. Publio's absence is rarely empty. He leaves to carry out instructions, obtain institutional decisions, supervise custody, follow Tito, or bring Sesto into a new public setting. Re-entry must consequently contain the result of an action that has continued offstage. The Senate's decree is the clearest example: Publio leaves with apprehension and returns with verified judgment embodied in a document. His absence has changed the conditions of the drama.

At the same time, absence can create ignorance. When Tito dismisses Publio and the guards in order to question Sesto privately, Publio continues his official responsibilities but does not gain access to the conversation. His later return must therefore preserve both readiness and incomplete knowledge. This limitation is not a weakness in characterization; it is one of the mechanisms through which the opera distinguishes sovereign decision from delegated execution. Publio remains close enough to enact the consequences of Tito's judgment but far enough away that the judgment does not become his own.

Section 6.7 brought these principles together through the integration of voice, body, and text. Vocal production cannot be treated as a technical layer that exists independently of acting, and dramatic action cannot be imposed upon the singer without regard for respiratory and phonatory demands. Breath, language, movement, attention, posture, and vocal colour must therefore be coordinated around the same objective. A command, report, warning, observation, question, and act of compassion require different relations among these elements because they perform different kinds of work.

This integrated model also clarifies the meaning of authority. Authority is not equivalent to continuous loudness, darkness of timbre, rigidity, or physical size. In Publio's case it becomes legible through precision: accuracy of information, economy of action, readiness to respond, clear relationship to hierarchy, and consistency in carrying institutional tasks to completion. A quiet report can be authoritative if it is verified and consequential; a restrained movement can exert pressure if it removes another character's options; a moment of stillness can contain more institutional weight than repeated gestures.

Nor should compassion be reduced to softness. Publio's sympathy matters precisely because it does not free him from obligation. His emotional responsiveness exists within a political structure in which he cannot pardon, suspend judgment, or replace Tito's decision with his own. The performer should therefore avoid making compassion a separate "human" layer added to an otherwise "official" character. The official and the human are present at the same time. Publio feels because he is present at the execution of law, and the cost of that law becomes visible because he must continue executing it.

The threshold model developed throughout this study consequently becomes fully embodied in performance. Publio stands between command and execution, knowledge and uncertainty, public judgment and private suffering, coercion and compassion, presence and absence. Chapter 6 has shown that these thresholds can be made perceptible not through explanatory gesture or invented biography, but through disciplined relations among voice, movement, listening, text, space, and institutional action.

Such discipline also preserves the role's proper scale. Publio should not be enlarged into the hidden protagonist of *La clemenza di Tito*. His dramatic force lies partly in the fact that he does not possess the sovereign freedom available to Tito or the sustained emotional centrality granted to Sesto and Vitellia. His interventions are concentrated. Their significance comes from placement, consequence, and the precision with which he connects separate parts of the political and emotional action.

For this reason, the performance model proposed here remains intentionally flexible. It does not prescribe a fixed stance, gesture vocabulary, vocal colour, costume, or blocking pattern. Different productions may locate the opera in ancient Rome, eighteenth-century court culture, a modern political environment, or an abstract theatrical space. The performer's task is not to reproduce one historical image but to preserve the relationships established by the text and score: Publio must remain recognizably subordinate to Tito, capable of exercising delegated force, responsive to suffering, limited in knowledge, and responsible for converting decisions into action.

These principles prepare the transition to Chapter 7. The question will no longer be only how Publio can be performed according to the textual, musical, psychological, and embodied analysis developed above. It will become how documented productions have actually framed the opera's political environment, hierarchy, space, costume, and theatrical relationships, and how far those documents permit responsible comparison. The evidence rule established in Chapter 1 remains decisive: written documentation can support claims about specific production choices, whereas unsupported visual inference cannot.

Chapter 7 will therefore test the interpretive flexibility established here against documented performance practice. The production case studies will not be used to discover a single "correct" Publio. Instead, they will provide evidence of the theatrical conditions within which the role has

been placed. By comparing those conditions while preserving the limits of the available documentation, the study can ask which aspects of Publio's threshold function remain stable across different theatrical conceptions and which depend upon the particular institutional, spatial, and political framework created by each production.

CHAPTER 7. DOCUMENTED PRODUCTION CASE STUDIES

7.1 Method and Limits of Written Production Comparison

The preceding chapters have constructed Publio through sources whose relationship to the work can be comparatively stable: the libretto, critical musical editions, historical documents, theoretical writings, and empirical research. A staged production presents a different evidentiary problem. Performance is temporary. Even when a production is recorded, photographed, reviewed, described in a programme, or discussed by its creators, none of these documents is identical with the event that occurred before an audience. Chapter 7 therefore does not attempt to reconstruct any production in its totality. It compares only those aspects of productions that survive in independently accessible written documentation.

This limitation is methodological rather than merely practical. Elaine McGirr describes theatre as an especially ephemeral art and demonstrates that elements of past performance may nevertheless survive through traces dispersed across playbills, reviews, accounts, casting records, printed texts, and other documentary forms.¹⁸⁹ Such traces are valuable precisely because they preserve aspects of an event that no longer exists, but they must not be confused with the event itself. A programme can establish a cast or production concept; a director's statement can establish an articulated intention; a review can establish what a particular observer reported or interpreted. None alone establishes every visual, musical, or interpersonal detail of a performance.

The corpus of this chapter is therefore organized according to source type and claim type. Institutional documents issued by theatres, festivals, conservatories, or universities are used principally to establish verifiable information such as dates, venues, creative teams, cast lists, announced concepts, educational contexts, and publicly described production frameworks. Programme essays and interviews may support claims about intentions when the statement can be attributed directly to a director, conductor,

¹⁸⁹ Elaine M. McGirr, *A Performance History of The Fair Penitent* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2024), abstract, DOI: 10.1017/9781009351850, freely accessible Cambridge frontmatter PDF.

performer, dramaturg, or institution. Contemporary reviews are used to establish reception: what a named critic noticed, praised, criticized, or interpreted. A review is not transformed into neutral documentation merely because it was written at the time of the performance.

This distinction between event and document is especially important when interpreting visual description. If a review states that performers appeared in contemporary clothing, the present study may report that the critic described the production in those terms. It may not proceed from that sentence to invent colors, fabrics, insignia, gestures, distances, or patterns of movement that the reviewer did not describe. Similarly, an institutional announcement that a production places the opera in a political or contemporary framework may establish the production's declared conception, but it does not prove that every individual staging decision consistently realized that conception.

The evidentiary hierarchy used here is consequently functional rather than absolute. An official production archive may be highly reliable for cast and date but silent about audience response. A contemporary review may be indispensable for reception and descriptive detail but subjective in evaluation. A director's interview may be authoritative concerning intention while remaining insufficient evidence for what spectators actually perceived. These sources do not need to agree in order to be useful. Their differences reveal the distinct positions from which performance becomes documented.

Performance-documentation scholarship reinforces the need to preserve that positionally. Giselle G. Garcia argues that documentation contributes to performance history from a particular subject position rather than from an all-knowing perspective; her discussion of the documenter emphasizes the multiplicity of viewpoints that accumulate within theatre history.¹⁹⁰ Although Garcia develops an auto-ethnographic methodology rather than a method for Mozart production comparison, the epistemological caution is transferable: every document has a maker, a location, a purpose, and a limited field of perception. Chapter 7 will therefore identify who produced a document and what kind of statement that document is capable of supporting.

A contemporary critic, for example, may describe a production as politically severe, emotionally distant, visually modern, traditional, ironic, or ceremonial. Such descriptions are important evidence of reception. They may also preserve specific observable facts when the critic names them. Yet evaluative language must remain attributed. The statement "the production was politically cold" belongs to the reviewer unless independent evidence allows a more precise factual formulation. By contrast, "the production was directed by X and conducted by Y" may be established through institutional documentation and treated as a factual production record.

The same discipline applies to Publio. Documentation about *La clemenza di Tito* frequently concentrates on Tito, Sesto, Vitellia, the director's overarching concept, or the

¹⁹⁰ Giselle G. Garcia, "The Walking Dramaturg: An Autoethnographic Methodology for Performance Documentation," *Proceedings from the Document Academy* 5, no. 1 (2018): 2–4, <https://doi.org/10.35492/docam/5/1/5>, open-access published version.

political meaning of clemency rather than on the comparatively short bass role. Absence of detailed commentary on Publio cannot be converted into evidence that the character was dramatically invisible. It means only that the surviving source does not describe him in sufficient detail. This chapter will distinguish explicitly among three conditions: Publio is described; Publio can be located within a documented production structure; or the source provides no reliable evidence concerning his individual staging.

The second category is particularly important. A document need not mention Publio by name in order to establish a condition relevant to his performance. If an institutional or critical source documents that the production relocates the imperial court into a modern governmental setting, that information changes the theatrical environment in which the office of Praetorian prefect must be understood. If a source establishes a highly ceremonial conception of the court, Publio's delegated authority exists within that ceremonial framework. If a production is documented as emphasizing political surveillance, public judgment, or the fragility of autocratic rule, the documented framework may be compared with Publio's textual functions. What cannot be done is infer his specific gesture or facial expression merely from the general concept.

The distinction between framework and individual staging prevents two opposite errors. The first would be excessive skepticism: refusing to say anything about Publio unless a source describes every movement he makes. Such a rule would make production history nearly unusable for secondary roles. The second would be excessive inference: treating the documented concept of the entire production as proof of how Publio was personally directed. The method adopted here occupies the middle position. General documentation can establish the theatrical conditions surrounding the character, while claims about Publio's individual behavior require correspondingly specific evidence.

Source disagreement will also remain visible. A theatre programme may describe a production as an exploration of mercy, while a critic may experience the same staging principally as a critique of authoritarian power. These statements are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but neither should they automatically be synthesized into a single intention. The institutional document establishes one articulated framework; the review establishes one act of reception. When multiple critics disagree, the disagreement itself becomes evidence of reception rather than a problem to be eliminated.

Temporal proximity does not remove this subjectivity. A review written on the night of a premiere may preserve details unavailable elsewhere, yet immediacy does not make interpretation objective. Conversely, a retrospective institutional archive may offer reliable production metadata while simplifying or omitting controversy surrounding the original reception. Every source must therefore be evaluated according to what it records rather than according to a universal ranking of prestige.

Open accessibility forms a second limitation. As established in Chapter 1, this study admits only evidence that can be independently checked without institutional subscription or private access. The restriction inevitably excludes potentially useful materials, including paywalled criticism, inaccessible production books, private rehearsal notes, and archival documents that cannot be consulted remotely. The resulting corpus is

therefore not claimed to represent everything that survives about each production. It represents the body of evidence that a reader can independently inspect.

This limitation is intentional. A comparison that relies on inaccessible evidence may contain more information, but it cannot be reproduced by a reader who lacks the same institutional privileges. The present study prefers a narrower corpus whose evidentiary path remains visible. Stable institutional pages, open repository documents, freely available programmes, public interviews, open reviews, and archived production descriptions consequently receive priority. When a source disappears or changes substantially, the source register should preserve enough bibliographic and access information to identify what was originally consulted.

Video remains outside the evidentiary corpus for visual claims. This exclusion does not imply that video is useless for performers. A recording can be invaluable for studying pacing, musical coordination, vocal interpretation, and directorial possibilities. The restriction applies specifically to the comparative argument of this study. A production video selected, framed, edited, and distributed by an institution is itself a mediated artefact, and detailed visual analysis of recordings would require a separate methodology concerning camera position, editing, version, date, and representativeness. Introducing such a methodology here would change the scope of the project.

Photographs are treated with similar caution. A publicity photograph may document costume, set, or spatial arrangement at the instant captured, but it cannot by itself establish how that relationship functioned across an entire scene. A single image of Publio standing near Tito does not establish persistent intimacy, subordination, surveillance, or distance throughout the production. Unless corroborating written evidence exists, photographs remain contextual rather than analytical sources for the claims made in the comparative sections.

The production cases that follow are therefore not reviews of artistic quality. They will not rank one Tito, Publio, director, or institution above another, nor will they attempt to reconstruct an ideal production through selective borrowing. Each case instead asks a limited series of questions. What political or historical frame is explicitly documented? What institution produced or presented the performance? What can be established about hierarchy, space, costume, modernity or historicity, and public reception? Is Publio himself discussed? If not, which documented conditions materially affect the interpretation of his office? Which claims remain impossible because the evidence is silent?

These questions allow productions of very different kinds to be compared without pretending that their documentation is equivalent. A university opera programme, an international festival archive, an institutional production page, and a professional newspaper review do not perform the same documentary function. Their value lies in the distinct evidence each makes available. Comparison will therefore occur at the level of supported categories rather than through an artificial requirement that every production supply the same type or quantity of documentation.

The method also preserves the difference between historical evidence and performance possibility. If a documented production uses contemporary clothing, the fact demonstrates that modern dress has been used as one solution for staging the political relations of the opera. It does not prove that contemporary clothing is inherently more faithful to Mozart or Mazzolà. If another production emphasizes eighteenth-century ceremony, that choice likewise demonstrates an interpretive possibility rather than a normative historical conclusion. Production evidence shows what artists have done and how those choices have been described or received; it does not automatically establish what future performers ought to do.

For Publio, the comparative purpose is therefore diagnostic rather than prescriptive. The documented productions will test how the threshold model developed in Chapters 1–6 operates under different theatrical conditions. A production may strengthen the visibility of institutional hierarchy, reduce ceremonial distance, relocate imperial power into contemporary politics, foreground compassion, or place greater emphasis on coercion and surveillance. The relevant question is whether the documented environment clarifies, complicates, or places pressure upon Publio's textual position between command and obedience, law and suffering, knowledge and limitation.

The case studies begin with Opera McGill, where surviving institutional and contemporary documentation permits the 2019 production to be located within an explicitly political reception of Mozart's work. Subsequent sections will examine the Conservatori Liceu, Mozarteum, Salzburg Festival, Glyndebourne, and Teatro Real according to the same evidentiary discipline. The objective is not uniformity of interpretation but uniformity of method. Every claim will remain no larger than the document that supports it.

7.2 Opera McGill: Political Context and Contemporary Reception

Opera McGill's 2019 production of *La clemenza di Tito* offers a particularly useful case for the present study because two different kinds of open documentary evidence survive: the institution's official production program, which includes Michael Hidetoshi Mori's director's notes, and a contemporary published review by Benjamin Goron. These sources should not be treated as interchangeable. The program establishes the production's personnel, educational context, and declared directorial framework, whereas Goron's review records the reception of one performance by an independent contemporary observer.

The official program identifies *La clemenza di Tito* as an Opera McGill production presented in collaboration with the chamber orchestra Pronto Musica at Pollack Hall on November 8, 9, and 10, 2019. Stephen Hargreaves conducted, Michael Hidetoshi Mori served as stage director, Vincent Lefèvre designed the set, Ginette Grenier designed the costumes, Serge Filiatrault designed the

lighting, and Florence Cornet was responsible for makeup and hair.¹⁹¹ These details establish the institutional and creative framework of the production without requiring reconstruction from photographs or video.

The cast list also documents Publio directly. Paxton Gillespie performed the role on November 8 and 10, Elliot Harder on November 9, and Raphaël Laden-Guindon was listed as cover. Four performers are separately identified as guards.¹⁹² The documentation therefore confirms that Publio existed within a visible structure of organized coercive authority. It does not, however, establish how the guards were positioned, how closely they interacted with Publio, or what physical vocabulary was used in the arrest scenes. Such details remain outside the claims permitted by the surviving written evidence.

Opera McGill's own description also places the production inside a pedagogical framework. Patrick Hansen explains that the 2019–20 season included an expanded training program offering individualized work in Mozart repertoire, acting, dramatic interpretation, innovation, media interviews, and other professional areas.¹⁹³ This context is relevant because the production was not simply a public presentation of the score; it was also part of a university-based performer-training environment in which vocal, musical, and theatrical preparation were explicitly combined. The program does not prove that each performer achieved the same degree of integration, but it establishes that such interdisciplinary preparation belonged to the institution's declared educational structure.

The political framework of the production is documented most clearly in Mori's director's notes. He begins by stating that, when he started researching *La clemenza di Tito*, the work felt "very politically familiar." He describes Tito as an idealistic ruler who begins his reign through virtue rather than "force or fear."¹⁹⁴ This language establishes that contemporary political recognition was not imposed retrospectively by the present study; it formed part of the director's own stated interpretive approach.

Mori then connects the opera's original commission with questions of political representation. He characterizes the work as closely aligned with the political agenda surrounding Leopold II's coronation and asks whether this relationship may be considered propaganda. From there, his discussion moves to Vespasian and Titus, the construction of imperial reputation, patronage, and the

¹⁹¹ Opera McGill, *La clemenza di Tito*, official performance programme (Montreal: Schulich School of Music, McGill University, 2019), 2.

¹⁹² Opera McGill, *La clemenza di Tito*, 3.

¹⁹³ Patrick Hansen, "Welcome to Opera McGill's 63rd Season!," in Opera McGill, *La clemenza di Tito*, 4–5.

¹⁹⁴ Michael Hidetoshi Mori, "Director's Notes," in Opera McGill, *La clemenza di Tito*, 7.

political usefulness of narratives surrounding benevolent rule.¹⁹⁵ The historical accuracy of every assertion in a director's program note must be evaluated independently when used as historical evidence. For the purposes of production history, however, the document reliably establishes the ideas that Mori himself brought into the staging process.

The strongest direct evidence of the production's theatrical political framework appears near the end of Mori's note. He states that the chorus "sits above the action in contemporary clothes," providing "a public and sometimes political view of the story." He also connects the production with calculated political storytelling, recent political campaigns, idealism, populism, and fear-based rhetoric.¹⁹⁶ This passage permits several specific claims: the chorus wore contemporary clothing; it was positioned above the principal action; and Mori intended it to function as both a public and, at times, political observing body.

Those claims must nevertheless remain distinct from claims about Publio. Nothing in Mori's surviving written note establishes Publio's costume, gesture vocabulary, physical severity, spatial proximity to Tito, or individual political symbolism. The fact that the production created a contemporary political environment does not justify describing Publio as a modern policeman, security officer, propagandist, or surveillance figure. The evidence supports a political environment around the character, not a complete reconstruction of the character's staging.

The official synopsis provides a more limited but useful description of Publio's institutional function. In the English version, Tito sends "Publio, his captain of the guard," to carry a marriage proposal to Vitellia.¹⁹⁷ The terminology differs from the historically more precise "Prefect of the Praetorian Guard," but the document preserves the role's essential association with organized authority and direct service to the emperor. It also demonstrates how Opera McGill introduced Publio to its audience: principally through action and office rather than through an independent psychological biography.

The contemporary review by Benjamin Goron provides a second documentary perspective. Published in the Winter 2020 issue of *L'Opéra*, the review identifies the performance at Pollack Hall on November 8, 2019, and records Olivier Gagnon as Tito, Avery Lafrentz as Vitellia, Maddie Studt as Sesto, Éva-Marie Cloutier as Annio, Elisabeth Boudreault as Servilia, and Paxton Gillespie as Publio. Stephen Hargreaves is listed as conductor, Pronto Musica as orchestra, and Michael Hidetoshi Mori as stage director.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁵ Mori, "Director's Notes," 7.

¹⁹⁶ Mori, "Director's Notes," 7–8.

¹⁹⁷ Opera McGill, *La clemenza di Tito*, 10.

¹⁹⁸ Benjamin Goron, "Opéra McGill: Une rentrée sous le signe de la clémence," *L'Opéra*, no. 22 (Winter 2020): 36.

Goron frames the opera itself through its connection with Leopold II's coronation and with the image of a benevolent ruler. He writes that, in a revolutionary environment in which royal heads were falling, Mozart chose to depict a "good and magnanimous" head of state.¹⁹⁹ This observation should be attributed to the reviewer rather than converted into a neutral statement about Mori's staging. It does, however, establish that political questions surrounding the image of the ruler were present in the reviewer's interpretation of the work and performance.

More important for production comparison, Goron specifically noticed a political quality in the staging of the chorus. He describes its entrance as an awkward parade "with the appearance of a political event" and interprets the gesture as an allusion to the propagandistic abilities of Vespasian. He judged the effect distracting rather than successful.²⁰⁰ This point is especially valuable because the review does not merely reproduce the director's note. Mori had explicitly intended the chorus to provide a public and sometimes political viewpoint; Goron independently perceived a political-event quality in the choral staging, while disagreeing with its effectiveness.

The distinction between intention and reception is therefore particularly clear in this case. The official program establishes that political commentary was intentionally incorporated into the conception of the chorus. The review establishes that an independent observer perceived that political dimension in performance. The two documents overlap concerning the existence of a political frame but differ in evaluation. This difference is more useful than simple agreement because it demonstrates how a documented directorial intention could remain legible while producing a response the director may not have intended.

Goron also criticizes the dramatic preparation more generally. He observes that singers were often immobile during instrumental passages or occupied them with awkward staging "fillers," and later states that he would have preferred greater attention to acting in the preparation of the production.²⁰¹ These comments are significant, but they cannot be assigned specifically to Publio because the reviewer does not single out Gillespie's acting.

The criticism nevertheless intersects productively with the acting model developed in Chapter 6. The previous chapter argued that neither continuous movement nor complete theatrical vacancy constitutes a satisfactory solution for Publio. Stillness can be dramatically active when supported by attention, objective, and spatial relation, while unnecessary movement can become mere visual filler. Goron's criticism therefore should not be simplified into the claim that the production needed

¹⁹⁹ Goron, "Une rentrée sous le signe de la clémence," 36.

²⁰⁰ Goron, "Une rentrée sous le signe de la clémence," 36.

²⁰¹ Goron, "Une rentrée sous le signe de la clémence," 36.

“more movement.” His objection to both immobility and awkward filling suggests the more precise problem of whether instrumental time remained dramatically motivated.

The review’s description of Tito is also relevant to the political hierarchy surrounding Publio. Goron writes that Olivier Gagnon’s attitude and vocal presence presented a Tito who commanded respect while also knowing how to make himself loved through wise and thoughtful decisions. He describes the character as at times contemplative and impulsive but ultimately able to remain on the correct path.²⁰² This is a reception statement about one performance, not a universal description of Tito. Yet it establishes that the sovereign center of this production was perceived through a combination of respect, affection, deliberation, and moral authority.

For Publio, however, the review becomes silent beyond the cast identification. Goron does not offer an individual assessment of Gillespie’s vocal performance, acting, physical characterization, relationship with Tito, handling of the guards, or treatment of Sesto. That silence must remain part of the evidence. It cannot legitimately be filled through visual inspection of publicity photographs or through assumptions based on the production’s general political framework.

This evidentiary limit does not make the McGill case unhelpful. On the contrary, it demonstrates the distinction developed in Section 7.1 between a documented production environment and a documented individual characterization. Opera McGill provides unusually strong evidence concerning the environment around Publio: the production was explicitly framed through contemporary political concerns; questions of political storytelling and propaganda were part of the director’s stated conception; the chorus was deliberately placed above the action in contemporary clothing and assigned a public-political function; and a contemporary critic independently recognized political-event imagery in the staged chorus.

Within that environment, Publio remained institutionally legible as the captain of the guard and as a character whose actions connect the emperor with organized authority. The production documents therefore create a useful context for the threshold model developed earlier in this study. Publio’s textual function as an intermediary between sovereign intention and institutional action operates within a staging already concerned with how political authority is publicly represented and interpreted.

The conclusion must nevertheless remain proportional to the evidence. The surviving documents establish the political framing of the production far more securely than they establish the individual staging of Publio. Opera McGill therefore cannot be used as proof that Publio was performed with a specific contemporary political identity. It can, however, demonstrate that his institutional role was

²⁰² Goron, “Une rentrée sous le signe de la clémence,” 36.

placed within a documented production environment in which the public construction of leadership, propaganda, political observation, and benevolent authority were explicitly foregrounded.

In this respect, Opera McGill provides an instructive example of how a secondary role may acquire interpretive relevance even when the surviving criticism does not discuss the performer in detail. The political framework does not tell us exactly what Publio did; it tells us what kind of theatrical world his actions inhabited. That distinction will remain essential in the production comparisons that follow.

7.3 Conservatori Liceu: Performer Training and Ensemble Practice

The Conservatori Liceu production of *La clemenza di Tito* presents a different documentary situation from the Opera McGill case. Whereas the McGill materials preserve an extended political statement by the stage director and an independent contemporary review, the surviving Liceu documentation is primarily institutional and pedagogical. Its principal value therefore lies not in reconstructing a critical reception of the production but in establishing the conditions under which the opera was prepared: professionalization, specialist vocal coaching, stage direction, musical preparation, ensemble work, and collaboration with the Conservatori Liceu Orchestra.

The Conservatori describes its Master's Degree in Opera Performance as a professionalizing program for talented young lyric singers who are given the opportunity to prepare and perform a major operatic title under the guidance of specialists in operatic stagecraft and interpretation.²⁰³ The institution further identifies the annual operatic production as one of the principal milestones in the students' artistic development and progression toward professional practice. This language is significant because it establishes performance itself—not merely individual vocal study—as a central component of the educational model.

The 2024 *La clemenza di Tito* project was correspondingly organized through multiple areas of specialist preparation. The Conservatori states that work on the production was complemented by specialists in Mozart repertoire with extensive experience in the performance of his operas. Elena Copons and Joan Martín-Royo were assigned to the students' vocal preparation, while Luciana Serra served as artistic director and Oriol Rosés coordinated the pedagogical component.²⁰⁴ The production documentation additionally lists Anna Crexells as musical coach, Susana Egea as stage

²⁰³ Fundació Conservatori Liceu, "Òpera *La clemenza di Tito*," Liceu Cambra – Masterclasses & Concerts, 2024, institutional production page, accessed August 21, 2026.

²⁰⁴ Fundació Conservatori Liceu, "Òpera *La clemenza di Tito*," discussion of specialist Mozart preparation and vocal coaching.

director, Luna Maestro as assistant stage director, and Diego Martín-Echevarría as musical director.²⁰⁵

This structure matters for the present study because it makes visible the institutional separation—and necessary eventual integration—of several kinds of operatic labor. Vocal preparation, musical coaching, stage direction, artistic direction, conducting, and pedagogical coordination were assigned to distinct specialists. The documentation does not reveal the content of every rehearsal or the instructions given to individual singers, and it would therefore be improper to reconstruct a specific rehearsal methodology from the personnel list alone. It does establish, however, that the preparation of a role was embedded within a collaborative system rather than entrusted solely to the singer's private vocal work.

Publio was explicitly included in this professionalizing framework. The Conservatori's official documentation lists Jiyoul Lee as Publio in the 2024 cast, alongside Marc Garcia as Tito, Rowena Saraniti as Vitellia, Alba Boix as Servilia, Marta Roca as Sesto, and Cristina Tena as Annio.²⁰⁶ A second institutional listing for the same project documents an alternate cast in which Camila Mena sang Vitellia, Ariadna Moraleda Servilia, and Madeleine Gutiérrez Sesto, while Jiyoul Lee remained listed as Publio.²⁰⁷ The two surviving cast listings therefore demonstrate that the production incorporated cast variation while maintaining Publio as part of the same pedagogical and institutional structure.

The documentation also identifies the chorus as students of the Master's Degree in Vocal Performance and the orchestra as the Conservatori Liceu Orchestra.²⁰⁸ More importantly, the institutional description explains that the orchestral musicians were themselves students of orchestral instruments and that performing the opera offered them an opportunity to experience an operatic evening from the orchestra pit with the artistic responsibility that this entails.²⁰⁹ The project was therefore pedagogical on both sides of the pit. Singers were learning to function within a staged operatic production, while instrumental students were learning the demands of accompanying one.

²⁰⁵ Fundació Conservatori Liceu, "Òpera *La clemenza di Tito*," production personnel and pedagogical coordination.

²⁰⁶ Fundació Conservatori Liceu, "Òpera *La clemenza di Tito*," 2024 cast listing: Marc Garcia, Rowena Saraniti, Alba Boix, Marta Roca, Cristina Tena, and Jiyoul Lee.

²⁰⁷ Fundació Conservatori Liceu, "Òpera *La clemenza di Tito*," alternate 2024 cast listing: Marc Garcia, Camila Mena, Ariadna Moraleda, Madeleine Gutiérrez, Cristina Tena, and Jiyoul Lee.

²⁰⁸ Fundació Conservatori Liceu, "Òpera *La clemenza di Tito*," chorus and Conservatori Liceu Orchestra listing.

²⁰⁹ Fundació Conservatori Liceu, "Òpera *La clemenza di Tito*," institutional description of the student orchestra's participation from the orchestra pit.

This dual educational structure has direct implications for ensemble practice. In *La clemenza di Tito*, Publio rarely exists in musical isolation. Even his relatively brief solo presence must be understood against recitative, ensemble, orchestral timing, and the actions of other characters. The Act II trio requires him to coordinate text and musical timing with Sesto and Vitellia; other scenes require precise responses to Tito, the guards, the Senate's judgment, and collective action. A training environment that places singers and an educational orchestra inside the same full operatic project therefore creates conditions in which ensemble responsibility can be experienced as practical work rather than treated solely as an analytical concept.

The documentary evidence should not, however, be extended beyond what the Conservatori states. The institutional page confirms the existence of vocal coaches, a musical coach, stage direction, an orchestra, a chorus, and a pedagogical coordinator. It does not record whether a particular passage was rehearsed in a specific way, how often Publio rehearsed with Sesto or Tito, what gestures were prescribed, or whether the performer was instructed to emphasize authority, compassion, restraint, or any other interpretive quality. Those would require rehearsal records, interviews, or other direct documentation.

The distinction is particularly important because educational context can easily be romanticized retrospectively. The presence of several distinguished specialists demonstrates the resources available to the production; it does not prove that every interpretive problem was resolved in rehearsal or that every performance decision originated from one named teacher. Operatic training is inherently collaborative, and the surviving institutional page records the architecture of that collaboration rather than the detailed causal history of individual acting choices.

The Conservatori's description of the project nevertheless makes professionalization an explicit institutional objective. The Master's program is presented as an opportunity for young singers to prepare and perform a work from the major repertoire under expert guidance, and the 2024 production is described as an important point in the students' path toward professional life.²¹⁰ Within such a framework, ensemble competence becomes more than the ability to sing accurately at the same time as other performers. It involves the capacity to respond to a conductor, coordinate with an orchestra, sustain dramatic continuity through recitative and ensemble, accept stage direction, and integrate individual vocal preparation into a collective theatrical result.

For Publio, this is especially relevant because the role's dramatic effectiveness depends on coordination rather than quantity of material. His comparatively limited stage time does not reduce the need for precision. A late entrance, an incorrectly timed response, an unmotivated interruption of another character's line, or poorly coordinated physical movement can weaken the dramatic credibility of arrest, custody, reporting, or public judgment. The educational structure documented

²¹⁰ Fundació Conservatori Liceu, "Òpera *La clemenza di Tito*," description of the Master's Degree in Opera Performance as a professionalizing program.

by the Conservatori therefore provides an appropriate institutional context for understanding Publio as an ensemble-dependent role.

This point is reinforced by the Conservatori's broader documented practice. In a 2020 *Escenes Líriques* program, the institution presented Mozart's trio "Se al volto mai ti senti" from *La clemenza di Tito*, with separate student performers assigned to Vitellia, Sesto, and Publio under musical and stage direction.²¹¹ The event predates the 2024 full production and should not be treated as direct evidence of the later rehearsal process. It does, however, demonstrate that ensemble scenes from *La clemenza di Tito*, including the trio in which Publio's compassion and official duty coexist, had already functioned within the Conservatori's pedagogical performance activity.

The trio is particularly pertinent to the interpretive model developed in Chapters 4 and 6. Its difficulty does not lie simply in producing three competent vocal lines. Each character inhabits a different dramatic trajectory while sharing musical time. Vitellia attempts to manage concealed guilt and fear; Sesto confronts separation and possible judgment; Publio must continue the arrest while acknowledging suffering he cannot prevent. The educational value of such a scene therefore lies in coordinating independent dramatic objectives within a shared musical structure.

The Conservatori documentation does not tell us how the 2024 Publio physically enacted this conflict. It does, however, establish the institutional conditions within which such coordination was prepared: specialist Mozart coaching, musical coaching, stage direction, conductor-led orchestral work, and participation in a complete operatic production. In this sense, the Liceu case contributes a type of evidence different from McGill. McGill allows relatively detailed discussion of an explicitly stated political concept and its contemporary reception; Liceu permits a more secure discussion of performer formation and the collaborative structure of operatic preparation.

The distinction also prevents an inappropriate comparison of artistic outcomes. The purpose of this section is not to argue that one institution prepared *La clemenza di Tito* more successfully than another. No common evidentiary basis exists for such a judgment. Instead, the available documents show different aspects of production history. Opera McGill preserves unusually explicit evidence concerning political framing and a published critical response. Conservatori Liceu preserves unusually clear evidence that its *Tito* functioned as a professionalizing educational project involving singers, vocal specialists, stage personnel, musical coaches, and an orchestra of student instrumentalists.

For the present study, this context supports an important distinction between private preparation and operatic embodiment. A singer may analyze Publio's text, range, diction, psychology, and

²¹¹ Fundació Conservatori Liceu, "Concert Escenes Líriques," December 18, 2020, program listing Mozart's "Se al volto mai ti senti" with Vitellia, Sesto, and Publio.

institutional position independently, but the role becomes theatrical only when those preparations enter relationships with other performers. Authority must be timed against another character's response; an arrest requires another body; a report requires a recipient; compassion must be perceived without interrupting ensemble momentum; and a return with the Senate's decree acquires force only within a larger musical and dramatic sequence.

The Liceu case therefore demonstrates that Publio can be understood pedagogically as a role of coordination. His value in performer training does not depend on the number of solo minutes he receives. Instead, the role demands that a singer move between solo statement, recitative exchange, ensemble listening, institutional action, and orchestral coordination while maintaining a coherent dramatic identity. These requirements closely correspond to the threshold function established throughout this study: Publio continually operates between individual and ensemble, singer and actor, command and response, and private preparation and collective execution.

The evidence nevertheless remains deliberately limited. No surviving institutional statement examined here describes the 2024 production as adopting a particular political ideology, visual interpretation of Publio, or specific theory of his compassion. Nor does the institutional documentation constitute an independent critical assessment of the performance. Unlike the McGill case, the Liceu section therefore cannot responsibly make claims about contemporary critical reception unless an independently accessible review is identified.

What can be established is substantial enough. The 2024 *La clemenza di Tito* was officially presented as a major professionalizing project for students of the Conservatori's Master's Degree in Opera Performance; specialist Mozart singers and teachers participated in vocal preparation; musical, stage, artistic, and pedagogical responsibilities were differentiated among named professionals; the production incorporated the Conservatori's orchestra and master's-level vocal students; and Publio was explicitly cast within this structure. These conditions situate the role within a documented model of collaborative performer training.

The resulting contribution to the present thesis is therefore not a reconstructed image of one Publio but an institutional model of how such a role enters professional preparation. The Conservatori Liceu case shows that a comparatively brief role can function as a site where vocal technique, musical accuracy, ensemble awareness, dramatic responsiveness, and stage discipline must converge. In such a setting, Publio's marginality in terms of solo duration becomes pedagogically productive: the singer must remain specific and dramatically continuous without relying on sustained solo prominence to command attention.

7.4 Mozarteum: Institutional Documentation and Mozart Performance

The 2021 production of *La clemenza di Tito* at the Universität Mozarteum Salzburg provides a third model of institutional documentation. Unlike the Opera McGill case, the surviving public record

does not depend primarily on an independent review, and unlike the Conservatori Liceu case, its institutional description places comparatively strong emphasis on the political and dramaturgical meaning of the work itself. The official archive identifies the production as an opera project of the Department of Opera and Music Theater and preserves the production team, performance dates, cast, orchestra, and an extended institutional account of the work's political context.²¹²

The production was conducted by Gernot Sahler and directed by Alexander von Pfeil, with Thorben Schumüller responsible for stage design, Lisa Behensky for costume design, and Malte Krasting for dramaturgy. The musical forces were the chorus and chamber orchestra of the Universität Mozarteum. Performances were scheduled for January 29 and 30 and February 1, 2021, in the Max Schlereth Saal. Because of the conditions under which the production took place, the official archive specifies that the performances occurred without an audience.²¹³ These details establish a university opera production with clearly differentiated musical, theatrical, and dramaturgical responsibilities rather than a concert presentation of selected numbers.

Publio is explicitly documented in the cast. Taesung Kim was assigned the role for January 29 and February 1, while Xiaofei Liu sang Publio on January 30.²¹⁴ The existence of two documented performers is useful because it reinforces an important methodological point: the role cannot be equated with the personal physical or vocal characteristics of a single interpreter. What remains stable across the cast structure is the written role and its place within the production; individual embodiment necessarily varies.

The official production description frames Tito through a tension between political authority and personal life. It introduces a ruler whose earlier career is associated with violence and whose imperial position forces private desire into conflict with tradition, law, and political expectation. The summary culminates in the problem of a captured conspirator who must be judged while Tito has become tired of killing. The institutional description then condenses the musical-dramatic problem into the aspiration to reconcile "public power and private happiness."²¹⁵ This formulation is especially relevant to the threshold model developed in the present study because Publio repeatedly occupies the administrative space through which public power becomes action while remaining excluded from the ruler's private emotional decision-making.

²¹² Universität Mozarteum Salzburg, "Wolfgang Amadé Mozart: *La clemenza di Tito*," Opera Production Archive, January 29, 2021, official institutional production page.

²¹³ Universität Mozarteum Salzburg, "Wolfgang Amadé Mozart: *La clemenza di Tito*," production personnel, performance dates, venue, and university chorus and chamber orchestra.

²¹⁴ Universität Mozarteum Salzburg, "Wolfgang Amadé Mozart: *La clemenza di Tito*," cast list, Publio: Taesung Kim and Xiaofei Liu.

²¹⁵ Universität Mozarteum Salzburg, "Wolfgang Amadé Mozart: *La clemenza di Tito*," official production synopsis and dramaturgical framing.

The longer German-language production account places the opera within the destabilized political environment of 1791. It recalls the French Revolution, the imprisonment of the French royal family, Leopold II's coronation as King of Bohemia, and the ceremonial circumstances of Mozart's commission. The text nevertheless resists reducing *La clemenza di Tito* to uncomplicated imperial flattery. It proposes that Mozart's coronation opera also exposes truths that do more than hold a flattering mirror before absolute rule.²¹⁶ This is an institutional interpretation produced for the 2021 staging, not direct evidence of Mozart's private political intention. Within the present chapter, its value lies in documenting the political framework through which the Universität Mozarteum publicly presented the opera.

The distinction is important because the Mozarteum production materials do not merely describe the plot as a private drama of friendship and betrayal. They explicitly locate the opera at the intersection of sovereignty, violence, law, private affection, and the problem of political legitimacy. Such a framework creates an environment in which Publio's office is potentially highly legible. As Prefect of the Praetorian Guard, he belongs to precisely the machinery through which political power becomes custody, movement, information, and judgment. Yet the institutional page does not state that the director interpreted Publio as a symbol of authoritarianism, bureaucracy, policing, or resistance. Those character-specific meanings should therefore not be attributed to the staging without further written evidence.

The production's dramaturgical framing instead allows a more restrained conclusion. If Tito is understood as struggling between public power and private happiness, Publio represents one of the structures that makes the distinction between those spheres theatrically concrete. He can accompany prisoners, convey institutional information, and respond to imperial commands, but he cannot enter every private space in which Tito deliberates. The written libretto itself repeatedly constructs this boundary, while the 2021 institutional description supplies a production framework in which the conflict between public and private responsibility was explicitly foregrounded.

This relationship is particularly clear in the Act II sequence surrounding Sesto's judgment. Publio participates in the public and institutional handling of the accused, yet Tito eventually dismisses him and the guards in order to confront Sesto privately. When Publio later returns, he must act on the basis of what the emperor tells him rather than on knowledge of the private conversation. The political framework documented by the Universität Mozarteum therefore gives additional theatrical relevance to a distinction already established by the libretto: public power depends upon officials, but the sovereign's private moral decision remains inaccessible to them.

The 2021 production was also connected institutionally to the newly founded Mozartforum of the Universität Mozarteum. A university media release describes the production of *La clemenza di Tito* as the opening project of the 2021 Mozartforum and explains that one of the forum's central goals

²¹⁶ Universität Mozarteum Salzburg, "Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: *La clemenza di Tito*," "Über die Produktion," January 29, 2021.

was to connect and stimulate Mozart-related activities across the university's institutes and departments.²¹⁷ The production was therefore situated not only within opera training but within a broader institutional engagement with Mozart's work, biography, and continuing artistic relevance.

This context differentiates the Mozarteum case from the preceding examples. Opera McGill documented a contemporary political directorial concept and an independent critical response. Conservatori Liceu documented an explicitly professionalizing training structure. Universität Mozarteum documented a staged educational production embedded within an institution whose broader Mozartforum sought interdisciplinary engagement with Mozart's oeuvre. None of these contexts is inherently more authoritative as a performance model. They reveal different institutional conditions under which the opera can be studied, rehearsed, and performed.

The relationship between performance and scholarship is further strengthened by the broader Mozarteum documentary environment, but here institutional distinctions must remain exact. The Universität Mozarteum Salzburg and the Stiftung Mozarteum Salzburg are separate institutions. The 2021 production belongs to the university. The Digital Mozart Edition and the online *Neue Mozart-Ausgabe* materials used throughout this study are provided through the Stiftung Mozarteum Salzburg in cooperation with the relevant scholarly publication infrastructure. They should not be treated as documentation of the university staging simply because both institutions contain the name "Mozarteum."

This separation is methodologically important. The Digital Mozart Edition provides an openly accessible critical textual and musical basis against which performance claims may be checked. Its online *Neue Mozart-Ausgabe* identifies Franz Giegling's 1970 edition of *La clemenza di Tito* and provides the complete work, including the individual recitatives, ensembles, and arias, in searchable or directly accessible form.²¹⁸ The Digital Mozart Edition's libretto interface likewise permits comparison among the critical edition of the sung text, the critical libretto, and earlier textual sources.²¹⁹

For a performer, this type of institutional documentation has consequences different from those of a director's note. A production statement may explain how one team understood political power in the opera; a critical edition establishes what textual and musical evidence the performer must confront before accepting or rejecting a particular interpretation. The two source types should therefore

²¹⁷ Universität Mozarteum Salzburg, "Auftakt zum Mozartforum 2021," media information, January 27, 2021.

²¹⁸ Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, K. 621, ed. Franz Giegling, *Neue Mozart-Ausgabe*, ser. 2, work group 5, vol. 20 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1970), Digital Mozart Edition, Stiftung Mozarteum Salzburg, open-access score.

²¹⁹ Stiftung Mozarteum Salzburg, Digital Mozart Edition, "Mozart-Libretti – Online-Edition: *La clemenza di Tito*, KV 621," synoptic critical edition.

interact without being confused. A director may relocate Roman power into a contemporary setting, but the performer can still return to the critical text to determine when Publio enters, leaves, speaks, remains silent, accompanies guards, carries information, or participates in an ensemble.

The Digital Mozart Edition is particularly useful in this respect because the surviving textual versions can be displayed comparatively. The synoptic interface presents, among other witnesses, the *Kritische Edition des vertonten Textes* and the *Kritische Edition des Librettos* side by side.²²⁰ Such comparison is significant for a role like Publio because small differences in stage directions, entrances, exits, and textual allocation can materially affect a performer's understanding of dramatic function. The value of the edition is therefore not that it dictates one correct staging but that it clarifies the documentary boundaries within which staging decisions are made.

The final scene offers a clear example. The Digital Mozart Edition preserves the direction in which Tito, Publio, and Sesto appear among the lictors before Vitellia enters.²²¹ This establishes a public configuration of sovereign, officer, prisoner, and representatives of punishment. It does not prescribe the exact distance among the performers, their costumes, facial expressions, or the visual design of the procession. Those remain production decisions. What the critical text does establish is that Publio belongs within the public apparatus through which Sesto is formally brought before Tito immediately before clemency is declared.

This distinction between textual requirement and theatrical realization is central to the present study. The 2021 Universität Mozarteum production demonstrates one institution's explicit interest in the conflict between public power and private happiness. The Stiftung Mozarteum's digital scholarly resources independently preserve the textual and musical evidence through which Publio participates in that conflict. The first source documents a production framework; the second documents the work. Neither should be made to prove what only the other can establish.

The same caution applies to performance photographs and the archived gallery associated with the 2021 production. The university page contains numerous photographs, but the present study does not use those images to reconstruct Publio's costume, gestures, spatial relationships, or facial responses. The existence of photographic documentation is acknowledged, but the written-evidence rule established in Chapter 1 remains in force. The argument therefore depends on the cast list, production description, personnel records, institutional statements, and critical textual sources rather than on visual inference.

²²⁰ Stiftung Mozarteum Salzburg, Digital Mozart Edition, "*La clemenza di Tito*, KV 621," synoptic comparison of the *Kritische Edition des vertonten Textes*, *Kritische Edition des Librettos*, and textual source.

²²¹ Caterino Mazzolà, after Pietro Metastasio, *La clemenza di Tito*, "Kritische Edition des vertonten Textes," act 2, scene 17, Digital Mozart Edition, version 138 (Stiftung Mozarteum Salzburg, 2014), open-access critical edition.

Within these limits, the Mozarteum case contributes significantly to the comparison. It demonstrates a production environment in which Mozart's opera was framed through the instability of political authority and the desire to reconcile public power with private happiness. It also documents Publio as a cast role within a fully staged university production employing a conductor, director, dramaturg, stage designer, costume designer, chorus, and chamber orchestra. At the same time, the wider Mozarteum documentary ecosystem makes available critical musical and textual sources through which the performer can test interpretations against the work itself.

For Publio, this combination reinforces the central argument of the thesis. His dramatic identity does not emerge from an isolated aria or a generalized image of a bass official. It becomes visible at the junction between documented text and theatrical institution. The libretto determines where his knowledge begins and ends; the score determines when and how he participates musically; the production determines how those facts acquire bodies, space, costume, and social visibility. Responsible interpretation requires movement among all three levels without allowing one to substitute for the others.

The 2021 Mozarteum production therefore cannot be reconstructed here as a complete visual interpretation of Publio, nor should it be. Its stronger contribution is methodological and institutional. It shows how a contemporary opera department located *La clemenza di Tito* within a political and dramaturgical discourse concerning sovereignty, violence, law, and private happiness, while the broader Salzburg Mozarteum environment preserves open critical documentation that permits the work's textual and musical structures to be independently checked. For a performer-centered study, this conjunction provides an especially useful model: interpretation begins from evidence, enters collaborative theatrical practice, and remains answerable to the documented work even when the stage conception changes.

7.5 Salzburg Festival: Festival Framing and Historical Memory

The Salzburg Festival's 2017 *La clemenza di Tito* offers a particularly important case for the present study because the production was presented in a city whose institutional identity is inseparable from Mozart, yet its staging deliberately resisted treating the opera as a protected monument of local musical heritage. Directed by Peter Sellars and conducted by Teodor Currentzis, the production used the historical prestige of Salzburg not to stabilize the opera in the eighteenth century but to reopen it through contemporary political questions. The Festival's own retrospective account later characterized Sellars's interpretation as one that simultaneously approached what it understood as the heart of Mozart's intentions and raised contemporary questions concerning terrorism and migration.²²²

²²² Salzburg Festival, "21 July–30 August," retrospective history of the 2017 Festival season, discussion of Peter Sellars and Teodor Currentzis's *La clemenza di Tito*, official Festival archive.

This framing matters because Salzburg carries a distinctive burden of historical memory. A Mozart opera presented at the Salzburg Festival does not enter a culturally neutral space. The city's association with Mozart, the Festival's long history of Mozart performance, and the symbolic authority attached to repertory tradition create expectations of historical continuity even before a production begins. The 2017 *Tito* used that inheritance as a point of departure rather than as a limit. In the Festival's retrospective history of the season, the production is remembered as evidence that Mozart interpretation in Salzburg could remain alive precisely by allowing contemporary political questions to enter the work.²²³

The production was led by Currentzis and Sellars, with Russell Thomas as Tito, Marianne Crebassa as Sesto, Golda Schultz as Vitellia, Jeanine De Bique as Annio, Christina Gansch as Servilia, and Willard White as Publio. Contemporary critical documentation confirms these principal performers and identifies the production as a major event in the opening phase of Markus Hinterhäuser's artistic directorship.²²⁴

Sellars's political reframing was unusually explicit. Contemporary accounts describe his interpretive essay under the title "Mozart und Mandela," connecting the opera's politics of clemency with modern questions of violence, reconciliation, humanitarian responsibility, and the possibility of political transformation after conflict. *Opéra Magazine* reported that Sellars treated the work as evidence of Mozart's engagement with the upheavals of his own period and connected the production to Enlightenment and humanitarian concerns.²²⁵ Such a statement should not be converted into proof of Mozart's personal ideology. It establishes instead the conceptual position from which Sellars approached the 2017 production.

Contemporary reception confirms that the staging translated this conceptual position into a recognizably modern political environment. BR-KLASSIK reported that Sellars and Currentzis did not look backward toward an archaeological image of ancient Rome but placed the story close to contemporary social reality. The review describes a refugee-camp environment, Tito's relationship with displaced people, and the attempted assassination within imagery connected to contemporary political violence.²²⁶

²²³ Salzburg Festival, "21 July–30 August," institutional retrospective on the 2017 season and the contemporary political questions raised by *La clemenza di Tito*.

²²⁴ Meret Forster, "*La clemenza di Tito* bei den Salzburger Festspielen: Inspirierender Opernabend mit Teodor Currentzis," BR-KLASSIK, July 28, 2017; *Opéra Magazine*, "La clemenza di Tito à Salzbourg," September 25, 2017.

²²⁵ "La clemenza di Tito à Salzbourg," *Opéra Magazine*, September 25, 2017, discussion of Peter Sellars's "Mozart et Mandela" conception.

²²⁶ Forster, "*La clemenza di Tito* bei den Salzburger Festspielen," BR-KLASSIK, July 28, 2017.

This evidence permits a stronger claim than would be possible from a generalized description such as “the production was modern.” The staging did not merely replace Roman dress with contemporary costume. According to the surviving written reception, displacement, migration, terrorist violence, mourning, and political reconciliation were incorporated into the theatrical world through which the opera’s conflict was understood. The Festival’s own later historical account similarly remembers the production in relation to terrorism and migration. The agreement between the institutional retrospective and an independent contemporary review is significant because it establishes the broad political frame without requiring visual inference from photographs or recordings.

For Publio, however, the evidentiary situation again requires restraint. The written materials confirm Willard White as Publio, but the strongest accessible sources concentrate primarily on Tito, Sesto, the political concept, the chorus, and the production’s treatment of violence and forgiveness.²²⁷ The political environment surrounding Publio can therefore be described with greater confidence than his individual physical characterization.

This limitation is especially important because Sellars’s reframing substantially changes the audience’s horizon of expectation. In an environment shaped by refugees, political violence, and contemporary collective trauma, an official associated with custody and state authority inevitably enters a different theatrical field from that of an eighteenth-century ceremonial officer. Yet “different theatrical field” is not equivalent to a documented character interpretation. Without direct written evidence concerning Publio’s individual direction, it would be methodologically unsafe to claim that White’s Publio represented a policeman, military commander, intelligence officer, or ideological agent.

One contemporary open-access review does provide a brief direct evaluation of White’s singing, describing his Publio in terms of a strongly resonant, weighty vocal presence.²²⁸ This evidence is useful for documenting reception of the performer’s sound, but it remains very limited. A description of vocal weight cannot establish gesture, psychology, costume, or moral alignment. Nor should the qualities of an individual singer be retroactively converted into defining characteristics of the role itself.

The more useful connection to Publio lies in the production’s treatment of clemency as a response to violence. Sellars’s staging was widely understood as turning the opera toward the question of how political communities respond after acts that appear unforgivable. Mark Swed described the production as transforming Mozart’s final opera into a modern statement of humanity confronted by terror, while another contemporary account characterized the Sellars–Currentzis version as a call for

²²⁷ “La clemenza di Tito à Salzbourg,” *Opéra Magazine*, September 25, 2017; Forster, “La clemenza di Tito bei den Salzburger Festspielen.”

²²⁸ Ilana Walder-Biesanz, “Boldly Rewritten, Tito Condemns the War on Terror,” *Opera Online*, July 31, 2017.

dialogue and mercy in response to violence.²²⁹ These formulations belong to critics, not to the score itself, but they establish the reception environment in which the production operated.

This environment intensifies one of Publio's central dramaturgical problems. He belongs to the apparatus that must continue functioning after political violence has occurred. He cannot erase the attempted assassination, release the accused on his own authority, or decide that compassion cancels the judicial process. His task is to preserve the credibility of law until the sovereign changes the legal outcome. In a production that foregrounds terrorism and reconciliation, the distinction between punishment and clemency consequently becomes more than an abstract moral opposition. It becomes the question of how institutions respond to violence without allowing violence to determine the final shape of the political community.

The 2017 staging also appears to have enlarged the collective dimension of mourning. BR-KLASSIK emphasizes scenes of mourners, candles, flowers, and a prominently active chorus.²³⁰ The review's description allows the production to be understood as presenting political violence not solely as an affair among Tito, Sesto, and Vitellia but as something witnessed and suffered collectively.

This collective frame is relevant to Publio because his actions repeatedly move private wrongdoing into public consequence. Sesto's conspiracy begins within intimate relationships, but Publio's institutional activity participates in transforming that private betrayal into arrest, judgment, custody, and eventual public release. When the chorus and community are theatrically foregrounded, the consequences of his actions become socially visible. The officer is therefore not merely transferring one individual from one place to another; he is participating in the public management of a political rupture.

At the same time, the production's contemporary frame places pressure on any simplistic reading of Publio as an embodiment of repression. If the entire dramatic problem concerns the possibility of responding to extreme violence through mercy rather than retaliation, Publio's obedience to institutional procedure cannot automatically be treated as moral failure. The opera requires the punishment to remain credible before the pardon can acquire force. A Publio who visibly anticipates or independently enacts the final clemency would weaken the sovereign transformation on which the drama depends.

²²⁹ Mark Swed, "Peter Sellars Turns Mozart's Last Opera into a Modern Message of Humanity in the Face of Terror," *Los Angeles Times*, August 14, 2017; Walder-Biesanz, "Boldly Rewritten, Tito Condemns the War on Terror."

²³⁰ Forster, "*La clemenza di Tito* bei den Salzburger Festspielen."

The Salzburg case therefore reinforces the distinction between compassion and unauthorized intervention developed earlier in this study. Publio may recognize suffering, but his office restricts what he can do with that recognition. In a production concerned with terrorism, refugees, and reconciliation, this limitation may become especially uncomfortable, because contemporary audiences are invited to evaluate institutions as well as individuals. Yet discomfort should not be resolved by rewriting the character into either a brutal enforcer or a covert humanitarian hero. His dramatic function lies precisely in remaining inside the institutional mechanism until clemency legally changes that mechanism.

The Festival context adds another layer to this interpretation. The Salzburg Festival's retrospective account does not remember the 2017 *Tito* primarily as an exercise in historical reconstruction. Instead, it places the production within Hinterhäuser's first season and celebrates the capacity of the Festival to generate surprising artistic constellations and renewed debate about Mozart interpretation.²³¹ The importance of the production in institutional memory therefore lies partly in its refusal to allow Mozart's status within Salzburg to make the opera theatrically untouchable.

This creates an important contrast with the historical origins of *La clemenza di Tito*. The opera was written for a coronation and emerged from a ceremonial environment in which political representation, ruler imagery, and dynastic legitimacy were central. More than two centuries later, the Salzburg production returned the work to another highly prestigious ceremonial cultural environment—but used that environment to question contemporary political violence, migration, leadership, and forgiveness. Historical memory was therefore not reproduced unchanged. It was activated through confrontation with present concerns.

The difference between the 1791 ceremonial context and the 2017 Festival context should not be collapsed. The first belongs to the political circumstances of Leopold II's coronation; the second belongs to a twenty-first-century cultural institution consciously reinterpreting that history. Yet their juxtaposition reveals the durability of the opera's central political vocabulary. Authority, public representation, violence, judgment, and clemency remain available for reinterpretation because they are already structurally embedded in the work.

Publio is particularly useful within this continuity because he is one of the characters through whom abstract authority becomes materially organized. Tito can desire mercy, but Publio and the other representatives of institutional order make punishment possible enough for mercy to have consequences. In a historical coronation setting, that function could support the theatrical visibility of sovereign hierarchy. In Sellars's contemporary frame, the same function could exist within a theatrical world shaped by terrorism, displaced populations, and collective mourning. The text remains, but the political pressure surrounding its execution changes.

²³¹ Salzburg Festival, "21 July–30 August," retrospective history of the 2017 Festival season.

The Salzburg production consequently demonstrates why production history should not be used simply to collect different costumes or directorial concepts. Its value lies in showing how the same structural role can enter radically altered political environments while retaining certain textual limits. The written evidence supports the claim that Sellars and Currentzis placed the opera within contemporary concerns of terrorism, migration, political violence, and reconciliation. It confirms Willard White as Publio. It does not provide enough detailed written evidence to reconstruct White's individual gesture system or precise scenic relationship to Tito and Sesto.

The responsible conclusion is therefore again proportional. Salzburg 2017 does not establish a definitive modern Publio. It establishes a modern political world in which Publio's institutional function would be perceived under intensified contemporary pressure. The production's significance for this study lies in demonstrating how historical memory and current political crisis can coexist in the reception of Mozart's opera without erasing the character's textual function.

Within the comparative sequence of this chapter, Salzburg adds a new dimension. Opera McGill documented contemporary political commentary within a university setting; Conservatori Liceu demonstrated professionalizing ensemble training; Universität Mozarteum connected university performance with institutional Mozart scholarship; Salzburg Festival demonstrates how a major international festival can use its own Mozart tradition as the ground for radical contemporary reinterpretation. In each case, Publio remains a relatively small role. Yet the political and institutional world around him changes substantially, proving that brevity of stage time does not isolate him from the production's larger conception of authority.

7.6 Glyndebourne: Production Documentation and Modern Theatricality

Glyndebourne's 2017 *La clemenza di Tito*, directed by Claus Guth, provides one of the clearest examples in this chapter of a production in which modern theatricality was understood through institutional space rather than through the simple replacement of historical costume with contemporary dress. The official Glyndebourne Archive documents a new Festival production conducted principally by Robin Ticciati with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, directed by Guth, designed by Christian Schmidt, lit by Olaf Winter, with projections by Arian Andiel and dramaturgy by Ronny Dietrich.²³² The production ran at Glyndebourne from July 26 through August 26, 2017.

²³² Glyndebourne, "La Clemenza di Tito / Glyndebourne Festival 2017," Opera Archive, production record; Glyndebourne, "La Clemenza di Tito, 24 August 2017," Opera Archive.

The documented cast included Richard Croft as Tito, Alice Coote as Vitellia, Anna Stéphany as Sesto, Michèle Losier as Annio, Joëlle Harvey as Servilia, and Clive Bayley as Publio.²³³ The official archive therefore provides secure evidence of Publio's participation in the production but, as in the preceding case studies, does not by itself establish his physical interpretation.

Contemporary criticism, however, provides unusually specific written descriptions of the production environment. Tim Ashley, reviewing the opening in *The Guardian*, states that Guth transformed the Roman Empire into a "soulless modern bureaucracy." He describes the adult political world as dominated by a decaying landscape and an office block in which Tito is surrounded by the constant demands of civil servants.²³⁴ This description establishes that bureaucratic modernity was not merely an abstract interpretive association made by the present study; it was legible to a contemporary critic in the scenic and social organization of the production.

The significance of this transformation lies in the way political authority is relocated. Rather than being represented primarily through imperial ceremony, antique architecture, or visible Roman military symbolism, power is interpreted through administrative space. The emperor is still sovereign, but sovereignty appears inside a world of offices, officials, procedures, and individuals seeking access to power. In such a theatrical environment, Publio's institutional identity becomes especially important because his textual function already belongs to administration: he delivers information, coordinates custody, transmits the Senate's judgment, and acts upon imperial commands.

This does not mean that Guth necessarily interpreted Publio simply as a bureaucrat. The available evidence must remain more precise. Ashley explicitly identifies the wider Roman political environment as a modern bureaucracy, and he describes the Roman populace as being reimagined as self-interested civil servants. He does not state that Publio's historical office was translated into one exact modern bureaucratic job title. The production context therefore supports the claim that Publio operated inside a bureaucratically reframed political world, but not that he was literally staged as a particular civil-service official, police officer, or intelligence agent.

A second contemporary review, published by the British Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, offers a partially different reading of the same spatial structure. Peter Schofield describes Christian Schmidt's set as divided into two levels: a lower area containing sparse vegetation and an upper level resembling the mezzanine of an office building. He interprets the upper level as the public

²³³ Glyndebourne, "La Clemenza di Tito, 24 August 2017," cast list: Richard Croft (Tito), Alice Coote (Vitellia), Anna Stéphany (Sesto), Michèle Losier (Annio), Joëlle Harvey (Servilia), and Clive Bayley (Publio).

²³⁴ Tim Ashley, "La Clemenza di Tito Review—A Magical, Maddening Return to Glyndebourne," *The Guardian*, July 27, 2017.

face of the characters and the lower level as their private worlds.²³⁵ Schofield presents this as his own interpretation rather than as a documented statement of Guth's intention, and that distinction must be preserved. Nevertheless, the review confirms that the division between institutional/public space and more private space was visibly strong enough to generate this contemporary reading.

This public-private division intersects directly with the dramaturgical model of Publio developed in Chapter 5. Publio repeatedly controls or marks transitions between official and private spheres. He may be present when information is delivered publicly but required to withdraw before intimate disclosure; he may bring Sesto into Tito's presence but then be ordered to leave so that sovereign and friend can confront one another privately. The 2017 Glyndebourne setting therefore provides an especially productive modern theatrical context for a character whose textual function already depends upon thresholds of access.

The distinction should not be overstated into a claim that every entrance and exit of Publio was explicitly staged according to a public/private binary. No surviving written evidence examined here documents each of his blocking patterns. The value of the Glyndebourne case lies instead in establishing that the production's overall scenic organization made institutional and private worlds visibly distinguishable. Publio's textual movements can then be interpreted within that documented environment without inventing undocumented details.

Costume also contributed to the contemporary reception of institutional sameness. Schofield reports that the singers were largely dressed in drab gray costumes and complains that the similarity made the characters difficult to distinguish visually.²³⁶ His judgment of the design is subjective, but the descriptive observation itself is useful. It indicates that the production did not depend upon sharply differentiated historical rank through elaborate individual costume. Instead, the visual world could be perceived as producing a degree of social or administrative uniformity.

This has particular implications for the performance of a secondary official such as Publio. In a historically differentiated production, rank may be made visible through costume, insignia, weapons, attendants, or ceremonial architecture. In a modern bureaucratic setting with comparatively uniform dress, a performer may need to make status legible through other means: precision of address, spatial confidence, responsiveness to command, the management of other bodies, and the timing of entrances and exits. This is not evidence of what Bayley specifically did; it is a performer-centered implication of the documented production conditions.

²³⁵ Peter Schofield, "La Clemenza di Tito at Glyndebourne," *Criticks Reviews*, British Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, August 9, 2017.

²³⁶ Schofield, "La Clemenza di Tito at Glyndebourne." Schofield, "La Clemenza di Tito at Glyndebourne."

Ashley's review provides the most direct individual characterization of Publio. He describes Clive Bayley's Publio as "cunning" and "insidious."²³⁷ This is a significant departure from the interpretive model developed earlier in this thesis, where Publio has been understood as perceptive and institutionally exact but not as a concealed antagonist. The review therefore offers a valuable example of how a modern production can generate a more suspicious reading of the same official role.

The language must nevertheless remain attributed to Ashley. There is no basis for converting one critic's impression into a factual description of Guth's directorial intention or of Bayley's full characterization. Nor does the review explain precisely which gestures, vocal choices, blocking patterns, or interactions created the impression of cunning or insidiousness. The evidence supports only the narrower statement that at least one major contemporary critic received Bayley's Publio in those terms.

A different review complicates that reception. Stephen Pritchard, writing in *The Observer*, describes Tito as pressured by a "manipulative Publio," while characterizing Bayley as vocally "rock-solid."²³⁸ This again suggests that the Glyndebourne production could make Publio appear more actively influential over Tito than the present thesis's textual model would normally prescribe. Yet the wording remains a critic's interpretation. It cannot by itself prove that Guth assigned Publio a deliberate strategy of political manipulation.

The coexistence of these two reviews is analytically useful. Ashley perceives Publio as cunning and insidious; Pritchard perceives him as manipulative. Independent critics therefore converged on a more interventionist and politically suspicious reading of Bayley's Publio. That convergence deserves attention, but it must still be separated from the libretto. Mazzolà's text gives Publio the right to warn Tito, report evidence, and deliver institutional conclusions; it does not explicitly authorize him to pursue an independent political agenda.

This distinction makes the Glyndebourne production especially valuable for a performer-centered study. It demonstrates how modern theatrical framing can alter the perceived moral temperature of an official action without changing the words themselves. A warning that appears prudent in one production may appear manipulative in another. A factual report can sound protective, bureaucratic, threatening, or opportunistic depending on its timing, physical relation to the emperor, vocal pressure, and surrounding scenic language.

The modern bureaucratic environment described by Ashley potentially intensifies this instability. When the emperor is surrounded by self-interested officials, any subordinate who supplies advice risks being perceived as participating in the machinery that isolates the ruler. Publio's accurate

²³⁷ Ashley, "La Clemenza di Tito Review."

²³⁸ Stephen Pritchard, "La clemenza di Tito; Prom 16 Review—Dark Deeds in a Roman Quagmire," *The Observer*, July 30, 2017.

warning—that Tito’s own goodness may prevent him from recognizing deception—can therefore be heard either as responsible institutional counsel or as the intervention of another court figure attempting to shape imperial judgment.

Chapter 5 argued that Publio’s authority should be understood as delegated rather than sovereign. The Glyndebourne reception shows what can happen when a production deliberately places pressure on that distinction. If the performer appears to enjoy access, influence, or informational superiority too strongly, delegated authority can begin to look like political manipulation. This does not necessarily make the interpretation invalid; it changes the ethical position from which the audience encounters the character.

The production’s concentration on Tito and Sesto’s relationship also altered the relative importance of the institutional world. Guth opened with filmed images of Tito and Sesto as boys in an idyllic natural environment. Ashley describes their adult friendship as corrupted by politics and sexual desire, while Schofield similarly identifies their childhood relationship as a central organizing device.²³⁹ The adult political world therefore appears in contrast to an imagined pre-political intimacy.

For Publio, such a structure can produce a difficult dramatic position. He belongs almost entirely to the adult world of office, evidence, arrest, judgment, and institutional consequence. He has no access to the childhood history that the production uses to explain Tito and Sesto’s emotional bond. The result is a structural asymmetry: the audience may understand the friendship through information Publio does not possess, while Publio must act according to the evidence available within the political present.

This aligns closely with the information model developed in Chapter 6. Publio should react to what he knows, not to privileged knowledge supplied only to the audience. In a production that invents a highly visible shared childhood for Tito and Sesto, that discipline becomes even more necessary. Publio may appear harsh or suspicious precisely because the audience knows something about the relationship that the official does not.

The critical response to the production also demonstrates that modern theatricality does not automatically produce greater political clarity. Ashley argues that Guth’s decision to turn the Roman populace into ambitious civil servants reduced the sense that lives outside the corridors of power were at stake.²⁴⁰ Schofield was even more negative, describing the staging as detached from the opera and finding its visual system confusing.

²³⁹ Ashley, “La Clemenza di Tito Review”; Schofield, “La Clemenza di Tito at Glyndebourne.”

²⁴⁰ Ashley, “La Clemenza di Tito Review.”

These criticisms are important because they prevent this chapter from treating modern staging as inherently more perceptive than historical staging. A modern administrative setting may clarify bureaucracy while simultaneously narrowing the opera's public scale. It may make the operation of offices legible while weakening the visibility of Rome as a larger political community. Production choices redistribute meaning; they do not simply add relevance.

Publio sits directly within that redistribution. If the Roman world becomes primarily a corridor of administrative power, his official function may gain visibility because the production foregrounds people who manage access, information, and procedure. Yet his relationship to a broader population may become less apparent. The character can therefore appear more politically powerful while paradoxically becoming less connected to the public consequences of law.

This problem is particularly relevant to the final act. Publio's dramatic importance at the point of clemency depends not only on his relationship with Tito but on the transformation of a public sentence. If the production's political world feels confined mainly to officials and court insiders, the pardon risks appearing as the resolution of an elite personal crisis rather than the reorganization of a broader civic order. Ashley's criticism of the narrowed public dimension therefore has direct consequences for how Publio's final participation may be understood.

The Glyndebourne case also demonstrates why individual critical adjectives must be tested against textual structure rather than adopted uncritically. A performer reading Ashley's "cunning, insidious Publio" or Pritchard's "manipulative Publio" might be tempted to construct the role around hidden intention. But the libretto does not supply a private conspiracy, personal ambition, or desire to control Tito. Such an interpretation therefore requires production-specific justification rather than being treated as inherent in the role.

At the same time, the reviews should not simply be dismissed because they differ from the interpretive argument of this thesis. Their value lies precisely in demonstrating another plausible reception produced by theatrical context. If two critics perceived manipulation, something in the relation among Bayley's performance, Guth's bureaucratic world, and the broader staging encouraged that interpretation. Production history is useful not because every past choice should be copied but because it exposes how differently the same textual actions can be made legible.

The Glyndebourne evidence therefore sharpens the threshold model rather than overturning it. Publio remains positioned between ruler and institution, but a modern production can make that position appear either responsibly mediating or politically invasive. The difference may depend on relatively small choices: whether he waits to be addressed, how quickly he interrupts, how closely he occupies Tito's space, whether factual statements sound like warnings or pressure, and whether his attention remains on duty or appears to anticipate personal advantage.

These specific choices cannot be reconstructed from the reviews and should not be attributed to Bayley without direct documentation. They are rehearsal questions generated by reception evidence rather than historical claims about the 2017 performance. This distinction preserves the methodological boundary established in Section 7.1: a review can reveal how a performance was received, but it cannot automatically supply a complete map of the physical behavior that caused that reception.

The Glyndebourne case consequently contributes something distinct to the comparative chapter. Opera McGill documented explicit political commentary; Liceu documented collaborative professional training; Mozarteum documented institutional Mozart engagement; Salzburg transformed clemency through terrorism, migration, and reconciliation. Glyndebourne, by contrast, demonstrates how modern bureaucratic space can reorganize hierarchy itself. Roman political authority becomes recognizable through offices, administrators, and institutional sameness rather than through antique ceremony.

Within such a world, Publio's visibility increases because administration is itself theatricalized. Yet that increased visibility carries interpretive danger. The same efficiency that makes an official useful can make him seem calculating; the same access to information that makes him responsible can make him appear manipulative; the same warning intended to protect the ruler can sound like pressure upon him. Modern theatricality therefore does not merely update Publio's costume. It can alter the ethical meaning of delegated authority.

The responsible conclusion is not that Glyndebourne discovered the "true" darker Publio, nor that its interpretation was textually mistaken. Rather, the 2017 production demonstrates the extent to which scenic systems and social framing can reshape the reception of a secondary role. The documentary record securely establishes Guth's modern bureaucratic environment, the office-building imagery, the division that critics perceived between public and private worlds, and Clive Bayley's presence as Publio. Contemporary critics additionally perceived Bayley's character as cunning, insidious, or manipulative. Those judgments belong to reception history and should remain attributed as such.

For the performer, the case offers a practical warning. When adapting Publio to a modern production, institutional authority must be made legible without accidentally generating a private political agenda unless the production explicitly intends one. The threshold model remains useful precisely because it allows the actor to occupy bureaucratic space, command institutional action, and convey uncomfortable truths while still preserving the distinction between delegated authority and sovereign ambition.

7.7 Teatro Real: Political Framing and Public Reception

The Teatro Real's 2016 revival of *La clemenza di Tito* presents a distinctive case because it combines institutional memory, inherited staging, and contemporary reception. The theater's official archive identifies the production as a revival of the staging by Ursel and Karl-Ernst Herrmann, conducted in 2016 by Christophe Rousset. The production had already appeared at Teatro Real in the 2011–12 season and belonged to a longer performance history extending through Salzburg and other European institutions.²⁴¹ The Madrid revival therefore did not present itself as an entirely new theatrical response to Mozart's opera; it reactivated an established staging within a new institutional and political moment.

Teatro Real's official 2016 page lists Rousset as musical director, Ursel and Karl-Ernst Herrmann as stage directors, and Karl-Ernst Herrmann as responsible for set, costumes, and lighting. The production ran for nine performances between November 19 and 28, 2016.²⁴² The documented cast included Jeremy Ovenden as Tito, Karina Gauvin as Vitellia, Monica Bacelli as Sesto, Sylvia Schwartz as Servilia, Sophie Harmsen as Annio, and Guido Loconsolo as Publio.²⁴³

The official institutional framing emphasizes the opera as a drama of jealousy, love, conspiracy, and clemency and describes the production as one of the Herrmanns' most emblematic stagings. Teatro Real also explicitly links the revival to the production's previous success in the 2011–12 season and to its Salzburg provenance.²⁴⁴ This institutional description is not in itself a political analysis, but it establishes the production's status as part of an already accumulated European performance tradition rather than a new Madrid-specific staging.

Independent criticism, however, places the work within a more explicitly political frame. Raúl Chamorro Mena, writing in *Codalarío*, describes *La clemenza di Tito* as a work shaped by the political turbulence of late eighteenth-century Europe and interprets the opera through Enlightenment ideals of magnanimity, tolerance, and indulgence in government. He connects the coronation commission for Leopold II with a political environment threatened by the spread of the

²⁴¹ Teatro Real, "*La clemenza di Tito*," 2016–17 season archive; Teatro Real, "*La clemenza di Tito*," 2011–12 season archive.

²⁴² Teatro Real, "*La clemenza di Tito*," 2016–17 season, creative team and performance schedule.

²⁴³ Teatro Real, "*La clemenza di Tito*," 2016–17 season, cast listing, including Guido Loconsolo as Publio.

²⁴⁴ Teatro Real, "*La clemenza di Tito*," 2016–17 season, institutional description of the Herrmann production and its previous Teatro Real and Salzburg history.

French Revolution and reads Tito's governing ethos as an idealized model of enlightened sovereignty.²⁴⁵

This interpretation is particularly relevant to Publio because the role belongs to the political structure through which such sovereignty becomes operative. If Tito embodies the possibility of humane rule, Publio represents the institutional system that gives rule practical consequence. The emperor may refuse severity, but the Senate can condemn, the guards can arrest, and Publio can transmit and execute decisions. Clemency therefore acquires theatrical meaning only against a credible structure of judgment.

The Herrmann production itself was not received as a realistic reconstruction of Roman politics. Fernando Remiro, writing for *Bachtrack*, characterizes it as a living still life or baroque *vanitas*, built from minimal scenic objects such as skulls, fruit, daggers, and books. He argues that these objects construct a compact "theater of the world" in which pleasure, sin, love, and death circulate.²⁴⁶ The production's theatricality therefore works through symbolic condensation rather than through documentary historical realism.

This symbolic environment changes how authority can be perceived. In a naturalistic governmental setting, Publio's role might be defined by recognizable bureaucratic or military behavior. In the Herrmann production, however, political function exists inside a highly composed visual and symbolic system. The performer's institutional identity must therefore coexist with a scenic language in which objects and movement carry allegorical weight.

Chamorro likewise emphasizes the precision of the production's stage movement and character direction. He describes the revival as depending upon carefully worked movement, stage direction, and characterization.²⁴⁷ This is especially important for a role such as Publio, whose theatrical significance often depends less on extended solo singing than on exact entrance, exit, address, escort, and response.

The strongest interpretive statement concerning public and private authority appears in Luis Gago's review for *El País*. Gago describes the production as a meticulously organized theatrical action that

²⁴⁵ Raúl Chamorro Mena, "Crítica: *La clemenza di Tito* en el Teatro Real de Madrid," *Codalarío*, November 23, 2016.

²⁴⁶ Fernando Remiro, "La clemenza di Tito vuelve al Real en la mítica producción de los Herrmann," *Bachtrack*, November 24, 2016.

²⁴⁷ Chamorro Mena, "Crítica: *La clemenza di Tito*."

demonstrates how public affairs may be resolved in private.²⁴⁸ This formulation closely corresponds to one of the central structures identified in this thesis: Publio repeatedly participates in public authority while being excluded from the private deliberations through which Tito ultimately transforms legal consequence.

The relationship is especially clear in the Sesto sequence. Publio belongs to the public and judicial mechanism: he participates in the arrest, communicates information, and remains connected to the Senate's judgment. Yet Tito's most consequential decisions occur within spaces from which Publio is removed. The emperor's friendship with Sesto, his personal struggle with betrayal, and his decision to destroy the death decree are not processes over which Publio has direct control. The institutional system prepares the conditions for punishment; the private sovereign decision interrupts them.

Gago's observation therefore offers a particularly useful reception parallel to the threshold model. Public authority is not shown as independent of private emotion; the two are structurally entangled. Political judgment enters private space, and private feeling returns as public consequence. Publio exists on the line between those processes. He delivers what institutions have determined but does not own the sovereign decision that can reverse them.

The Teatro Real documentation also confirms Publio's participation without supplying an extensive institutional interpretation of the character. Guido Loconsolo is listed consistently as Publio throughout the run.²⁴⁹ Critical reception of his performance was mixed and relatively brief. Chamorro notes that Loconsolo had substantial vocal presence but considers style a weaker aspect of the interpretation, while Gago simply describes the Publio as improvable.²⁵⁰

These comments are useful precisely because they are limited. Neither critic supplies enough detail to reconstruct Loconsolo's acting method, physical relationship with Tito, handling of Sesto, or gestural characterization. They provide evidence of reception, especially vocal reception, but not of the precise scenic mechanisms that produced that reception.

The contrast with Glyndebourne is instructive. In the 2017 Glyndebourne reviews, critics explicitly described Publio as cunning, insidious, or manipulative. In the 2016 Teatro Real reviews examined here, Publio is not assigned a similarly strong independent political psychology. Instead, criticism is directed more broadly toward vocal style, ensemble balance, theatrical tension, and the production's

²⁴⁸ Luis Gago, "Ópera de verdad," *El País*, November 20, 2016.

²⁴⁹ Teatro Real, "*La clemenza di Tito*," 2016–17 season, cast listing.

²⁵⁰ Chamorro Mena, "Crítica: *La clemenza di Tito*"; Gago, "Ópera de verdad."

symbolic architecture. The absence of an explicit characterization should not be interpreted as evidence that Publio was neutral; it simply marks a limit in the available documentation.

The production's inherited status adds another layer. This was not a staging conceived specifically for Madrid in 2016. Teatro Real's official materials describe it as a revival of an established Herrmann production, previously seen at the theater and historically associated with Salzburg and Gerard Mortier's European career. Bachtrack similarly notes that the production had circulated across European houses for decades.²⁵¹

This longevity is significant because it demonstrates a different form of production memory from Salzburg 2017. Sellars's Salzburg production was remembered for aggressively contemporary political questions. The Herrmann staging acquired authority through repetition, institutional circulation, and visual recognizability. A production can therefore become historically meaningful not because it reconstructs the eighteenth century, but because its own theatrical history becomes part of operatic memory.

Such a staging also complicates the distinction between historical and modern theater. The Herrmann production is neither straightforwardly period nor narrowly contemporary. Its symbolic white space, baroque *vanitas* imagery, and stylized objects produce a theatrical language that is historically suggestive without claiming archaeological realism. For Publio, this means authority cannot depend solely on contemporary bureaucratic coding or Roman military reconstruction. It must function within a more abstract symbolic order.

That abstraction may actually intensify the importance of bodily precision. When scenic objects are few and movement is highly composed, unnecessary gesture can become disproportionately visible. Publio's economy of movement, exact placement, and clarity of institutional action become especially valuable in such an environment. Again, this is not a reconstruction of Loconsolo's specific acting. It is a performer-centered implication derived from the documented characteristics of the production.

The reception also reveals disagreement concerning theatrical effectiveness. Remiro praises the production as a major classic of modern opera staging and emphasizes its unique, sophisticated, painful theatrical universe. Chamorro admires the production's stage movement and characterization but argues that the performance as a whole lacked theatrical tension.²⁵² These responses should not be reconciled artificially. They demonstrate that a production can be admired structurally while still producing differing judgments in revival.

²⁵¹ Remiro, "La clemenza di Tito vuelve al Real"; Teatro Real, "*La clemenza di Tito*," 2016–17 season.

²⁵² Remiro, "La clemenza di Tito vuelve al Real"; Chamorro Mena, "Crítica: *La clemenza di Tito*."

Such disagreement is central to the methodology of this chapter. Production history should not search for one definitive critical verdict. What matters is identifying which elements multiple observers found legible and where their evaluations diverged. In the Teatro Real case, critics broadly recognize the stylization, symbolic construction, and detailed stage action; they differ on the degree of dramatic tension and musical success.

The political significance of clemency also remained visible in reception. Chamorro explicitly links Tito's final moral position to enlightened ideals of government, while Gago emphasizes the movement between public and private decision. These are different interpretive emphases, but both understand the opera as more than a private story of betrayed friendship. Authority and moral governance remain central to the work's theatrical reception.

For Publio, the implications are substantial. A ruler defined through magnanimity requires an institutional contrast: someone must preserve the possibility of lawful punishment for clemency to become legible as an act. Publio does not create the death sentence, but he belongs to the chain through which judgment moves toward execution. His presence therefore maintains the political reality that Tito can interrupt.

This is also why Publio should not be performed as though he already shares the emperor's final moral conclusion. If he visibly anticipates pardon before Tito declares it, the institutional tension collapses. The role's usefulness lies in keeping legal consequence credible while remaining capable of registering human suffering.

The Teatro Real case thus reinforces one of the thesis's principal claims: clemency is not meaningful merely as an emotion inside Tito. It becomes politically meaningful when it alters the institutional actions of other people. Publio is one of those people. His authority is subordinate, but his obedience gives the emperor's change of decision something concrete to transform.

At the same time, the production demonstrates that this transformation need not be represented through literal political realism. A symbolic, stylized, historically layered theatrical environment can still make public authority, private judgment, and institutional consequence legible. The question is not whether the production looks historically accurate but whether its theatrical language preserves the relationships among authority, law, intimacy, and clemency.

Within the comparative sequence of this chapter, Teatro Real therefore offers another distinct model. Opera McGill foregrounded political commentary; Liceu documented professional training; Mozarteum connected institutional Mozart study and university performance; Salzburg 2017

connected clemency to terrorism and migration; Glyndebourne relocated imperial Rome into bureaucratic modernity. Teatro Real, by contrast, demonstrates how an established symbolic staging can accumulate institutional history while continuing to generate political interpretations concerning enlightened rule, private deliberation, and public consequence.

The surviving evidence does not support a detailed reconstruction of Loconsolo's individual Publio. It does, however, establish his presence within a production whose visual and movement language was highly controlled, whose critical reception continued to read the opera politically, and whose institutional history extended across several European contexts. For the performer-centered argument of this study, the case confirms that Publio's dramatic effectiveness depends less on a single historical visual identity than on his ability to remain structurally legible within whatever theatrical system surrounds him.

7.8 Comparative Findings: Costume, Space, Hierarchy, and Publio's Visibility

The preceding case studies demonstrate that there is no single modern performance tradition through which Publio can be defined visually. Across Opera McGill, Conservatori Liceu, Universität Mozarteum, Salzburg Festival, Glyndebourne, and Teatro Real, the political and theatrical worlds surrounding *La clemenza di Tito* differ substantially. Some productions foreground contemporary politics; others emphasize professional training, institutional research, bureaucratic modernity, historical memory, or symbolic theatricality. The comparative value of these cases therefore lies not in identifying one preferred image of Publio but in distinguishing what changes from production to production from what remains structurally anchored in the libretto.

Costume is among the most variable and least transferable elements. Opera McGill provides unusually explicit written documentation concerning the costume and placement of its chorus. Michael Hidetoshi Mori states that the chorus appeared in contemporary clothing above the action and functioned as a public and at times political viewpoint.²⁵³ This establishes a contemporary political visual environment, but it does not establish Publio's individual costume or assign him an equivalent contemporary identity. The distinction is crucial: a production's visual vocabulary may surround a character without defining every element of that character's social coding.

The evidence from Conservatori Liceu illustrates the opposite documentary condition. Its 2024 institutional materials explicitly identify costume design, stage direction, vocal coaching, musical coaching, artistic direction, musical direction, chorus, and orchestra, but they do not provide a

²⁵³ Michael Hidetoshi Mori, "Director's Notes," in Opera McGill, *La clemenza di Tito*, official performance programme (Montreal: Schulich School of Music, McGill University, 2019), 7–8.

written description of Publio's individual visual characterization.²⁵⁴ Consequently, the Liceu case can securely establish the collaborative theatrical system within which Publio was prepared, but it cannot be used to reconstruct his appearance by inference. The official documentation describes the production as a professionalizing project in which singers prepare and stage a major operatic work within an environment of high artistic and musical competence.

These two examples already demonstrate a central methodological result. Costume cannot serve as the primary comparative measure for Publio because the documentary record is uneven. One production may describe costume explicitly, another may preserve only personnel and pedagogical information, and a third may be documented primarily through critical reception. The absence of costume documentation does not imply visual neutrality; it means only that the surviving written evidence does not authorize a more precise claim.

Space offers a more productive comparative category because Publio's textual function repeatedly depends on access, exclusion, transit, and institutional position. The Universität Mozarteum's 2021 documentation describes the opera through the aspiration to reconcile "public power and private happiness."²⁵⁵ Although this phrase refers to the opera as a whole rather than specifically to Publio, it identifies a conflict directly relevant to his dramatic placement. Publio belongs predominantly to the sphere in which public power must become action, while Tito repeatedly enters private spaces of friendship, emotional conflict, and sovereign deliberation that the official cannot fully share.

The distinction between public and private authority does not require one particular set design. A palace, a bureaucratic office, an abstract symbolic stage, or a contemporary political environment may each make the boundary visible in different ways. What matters for Publio is that access is not unlimited. His institutional proximity to Tito gives him unusual authority, yet that proximity does not erase hierarchy or grant unrestricted admission to the emperor's personal deliberation.

This distinction becomes especially significant when the broader production environment is aggressively contemporary. The Salzburg Festival's retrospective history describes Peter Sellars's 2017 *La clemenza di Tito* as raising contemporary questions of terrorism and migration.²⁵⁶ Such framing changes the audience's horizon of association. Arrest, guards, political violence, displacement, and clemency may acquire meanings connected with contemporary state power and political crisis rather than with ceremonial Roman antiquity. The Festival itself therefore remembers

²⁵⁴ Fundació Conservatori Liceu, "Òpera *La clemenza di Tito*," Liceu Cambra – Masterclasses & Concerts, April 25–26, 2024, official institutional production documentation.

²⁵⁵ Universität Mozarteum Salzburg, "W. A. Mozart: *La clemenza di Tito*," January 29–February 1, 2021, official production archive.

²⁵⁶ Salzburg Festival, "21 July–30 August," retrospective history of the 2017 Festival season, discussion of Peter Sellars and Teodor Currentzis's *La clemenza di Tito*.

this production not as an exercise in archaeological reconstruction but as a contemporary political reinterpretation.

Yet political modernization does not automatically determine Publio's individual identity. The fact that a production raises questions of terrorism and migration does not itself authorize the claim that Publio has become a policeman, intelligence officer, military commander, or security official in a precise modern sense. Those identities require direct documentation. The broader political frame can be established; individual character coding must remain proportionate to the evidence.

Glyndebourne provides the clearest example of how a production environment can alter the perceived moral quality of Publio's authority. Tim Ashley describes Claus Guth's 2017 production as transforming the Roman Empire into a "soulless modern bureaucracy." Within this environment, Tito exists among civil servants and institutional pressures rather than within a conventional reconstruction of Roman imperial ceremony. Ashley also characterizes Clive Bayley's Publio as "cunning" and "insidious."²⁵⁷ These judgments belong to critical reception rather than to the libretto, but their combination is analytically significant.

The Glyndebourne case demonstrates that delegated authority is not theatrically neutral. When the surrounding political world is represented as bureaucratic, the official who brings information to the ruler can appear responsible or calculating; advice can appear prudent or manipulative; institutional access can appear necessary or threatening. The words and dramatic functions may remain recognizable, yet the production's social environment alters the moral lens through which those functions are perceived.

This is precisely why hierarchy must be understood relationally rather than iconographically. Publio's authority does not depend exclusively upon a military costume, visible insignia, or a particular physical stereotype. It becomes legible through relationships: who may give him orders, whom he may command or escort, what information he is authorized to deliver, where his access ends, and which decisions remain beyond his jurisdiction.

A convincing hierarchy therefore does not require Publio to appear permanently submissive in Tito's presence. His status is asymmetrical, but it is not powerless. He can bring difficult information to the emperor and participate in the physical enforcement of political decisions. What distinguishes him from Tito is not the absence of authority but its source and limit. Publio exercises delegated power; Tito retains sovereign power.

²⁵⁷ Tim Ashley, "La Clemenza di Tito Review—A Magical, Maddening Return to Glyndebourne," *The Guardian*, July 27, 2017.

The Glyndebourne reception reveals one danger of overemphasizing the former. If Publio's access to information and proximity to the ruler are staged too aggressively, the character can be perceived as exercising influence for its own sake. Ashley's reception of Bayley as cunning and insidious illustrates one possible outcome. This interpretation is historically important as reception evidence, but it cannot be converted into a universal characteristic of the role.

Teatro Real provides an illuminating contrast. Luis Gago's 2016 review of the Herrmann production praises a meticulously organized theatrical action that demonstrates how public affairs are resolved in private.²⁵⁸ Unlike the bureaucratic realism described at Glyndebourne, the Herrmann production relied upon a stylized and highly controlled theatrical language. Yet the relationship between public consequence and private decision remained critically legible.

The comparison suggests that Publio's threshold function is not dependent upon one visual style. A modern office can make hierarchy legible through administrative organization; an abstract symbolic production can make the same hierarchy legible through position, movement, and controlled access. The visual vocabulary may change drastically while the underlying dramatic problem remains recognizable.

This has direct implications for the category of visibility. Publio's theatrical visibility should not be measured simply by stage time, volume, costume prominence, or the number of gestures assigned to him. A secondary character may become structurally visible when his entrance or exit changes what other characters are able to do.

Publio repeatedly belongs to precisely such transitions. His presence can convert suspicion into custody, information into official knowledge, or an accused person into a prisoner subject to institutional control. His departure can remove the apparatus of public authority from a scene and permit a more private encounter. His return can reconnect decisions made elsewhere with the public mechanisms required to enact them.

Visibility is therefore relational rather than quantitative. The actor does not necessarily need additional movement, invented psychological business, or exaggerated command behavior to make Publio important. Such additions may actually obscure the structural significance already contained in his position within the dramatic network.

The final scene provides the most secure textual control for this comparison because the Digital Mozart Edition preserves an explicit stage direction: "Tito, Publio e Sesto fra' littori, poi Vitellia e

²⁵⁸ Luis Gago, "Ópera de verdad," *El País*, November 20, 2016.

detti.”²⁵⁹ Publio is therefore present with Tito and Sesto among the lictors as the condemned man is brought into the public scene immediately before Vitellia’s confession and the declaration of clemency.

The importance of this direction lies not in prescribing exact blocking. It does not tell a modern director how far Publio should stand from Sesto, whether he touches him, what costume he wears, or what expression he maintains. What it does establish is the political structure of the moment. Tito, the official, the condemned man, and representatives of coercive authority coexist immediately before the legal outcome changes.

The same critical text then gives Publio an audible response to Vitellia’s confession. When Tito reacts to her revelation, Sesto and Servilia exclaim “Oh stelle!” while Annio and Publio answer “Oh numi!”²⁶⁰ Publio is therefore not an emotionally absent object within the scene. The text registers his surprise, but his response is deliberately shared rather than transformed into an independent commentary.

This distinction is particularly useful for performance. Publio is present enough to register the revelation but not given a separate dramatic platform from which to interpret it for the audience. The performer must therefore remain responsive without appropriating the climax from Vitellia and Tito. The role’s visibility depends upon exact participation in the changing institutional situation rather than upon the creation of an additional personal climax.

The final scene also clarifies why clemency requires institutional visibility. Tito’s decision is not merely an internal emotional change. The condemned man has already been delivered into a public structure of judgment. Clemency becomes politically meaningful because the status of that prisoner and the actions of those surrounding him must now change. Publio’s presence helps make the transition legible: the officer who participated in the machinery of custody becomes a witness to the sovereign decision that interrupts its expected result.

Across the six production cases, four especially variable elements can therefore be distinguished: costume, scenic environment, political analogy, and critical emphasis. McGill explicitly contemporized the observing chorus; Liceu documented a collaborative professional-training structure; Mozarteum framed the work through the tension between public power and private happiness; Salzburg connected it with terrorism and migration; Glyndebourne transformed Rome

²⁵⁹ Caterino Mazzolà, after Pietro Metastasio, *La clemenza di Tito*, “Kritische Edition des vertonten Textes,” act 2, scene 17, Digital Mozart Edition, version 138 (Stiftung Mozarteum Salzburg, 2014), 38.

²⁶⁰ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, scene 17, 38.

into modern bureaucracy; Teatro Real preserved political and private tensions within an inherited, highly stylized staging.

None of these solutions constitutes a canonical Publio. Instead, they establish a range of environments within which the same role can be made differently legible.

Some elements, however, are much less flexible. Publio does not possess sovereign authority. He cannot independently determine Sesto's sentence or pardon. His political access does not make him omniscient. His proximity to Tito does not erase the distinction between official presence and private sovereignty. His participation in coercive action does not automatically establish personal cruelty. His emotional responsiveness does not grant him the authority to suspend procedure on his own initiative.

These limits provide the stable framework within which visual and political reinterpretation can occur.

The comparison also demonstrates why contemporary staging can alter ethical perception without necessarily altering dramatic structure. In Salzburg, the political environment can make state authority resonate with modern experiences of terrorism and migration. In Glyndebourne, bureaucracy can make official advice appear manipulative. In Teatro Real, abstraction can make the movement between public and private decision especially visible. The surrounding theater changes what the audience notices, but the performer must still negotiate the hierarchy written into the role.

For this reason, costume should not substitute for status; a uniform cannot do all the work of authority. Space should not substitute for dramatic action; standing in an official location does not make a character active unless relationships are altered through presence. Hierarchy should not substitute for psychology; being subordinate to Tito does not require intellectual or emotional emptiness. Visibility should not substitute for proportion; making Publio more noticeable is not automatically equivalent to making him more dramatically truthful.

The comparative evidence therefore supports a model of controlled adaptability. A period production may require Publio's authority to be communicated through ceremonial organization, formal address, and historical social coding. A contemporary production may place the same authority in an office, governmental institution, military environment, or abstract political landscape. The actor's physical vocabulary can change substantially. What should remain recognizable is the architecture of delegated power.

This distinction is especially important for secondary roles. Principal characters frequently receive enough music and dramatic time to recover from momentary ambiguity. Publio does not. His entrances and short exchanges must establish function efficiently. If a production does not visually distinguish rank through costume, the actor may need greater precision of address and spatial confidence. If the production heavily foregrounds state violence, restraint may become necessary to prevent Publio from collapsing into a generalized image of cruelty. If the production makes bureaucracy central, the actor must decide carefully whether factual efficiency should read as service or as political pressure.

The case studies therefore produce rehearsal questions rather than a universal set of gestures. Does Publio's entrance alter the choices available to another character? Does his physical relation to Tito make delegated rather than sovereign authority legible? Does the production's visual language already communicate rank, or must the actor do more relational work? When the political environment is contemporary, which associations are intentionally generated by the production and which would be accidental additions by the performer?

Such questions allow production history to inform performance without turning previous stagings into prescriptions.

The overall comparative finding can therefore be stated simply: Publio's theatrical visibility is strongest when the production clarifies relationships rather than enlarging the role artificially. His significance lies not in competing for attention with Tito, Sesto, or Vitellia but in making transitions of authority theatrically intelligible. He occupies the points at which political information acquires practical consequence and at which private sovereign decisions must eventually re-enter the public world.

The six case studies demonstrate how differently that relationship may be staged. They do not identify one correct costume, one correct political period, or one correct degree of severity. Instead, they reveal a structural field within which interpretation can remain flexible without becoming arbitrary.

Publio may inhabit ancient Rome, a contemporary political world, an abstract symbolic environment, or modern bureaucracy. What must remain legible is that his authority is real but delegated, his access substantial but limited, and his participation in punishment subordinate to a sovereign decision he cannot make himself.

This distinction provides the bridge from production history to the performer-centered synthesis developed in Chapter 8. The purpose of examining previous productions has not been to select a model to imitate. It has been to identify which theatrical variables can legitimately change and

which dramatic relationships must be consciously preserved. The performer can therefore adapt Publio to radically different visual and political environments while maintaining the structural precision that makes the role dramatically necessary.

7.9 Chapter Conclusion

The production case studies examined in this chapter demonstrate that Publio cannot be defined through a single theatrical tradition. Across university productions, major festivals, historically established stagings, and contemporary political reinterpretations, the visual and dramaturgical environment surrounding *La clemenza di Tito* changes substantially. Costume, scenic architecture, political analogy, rehearsal context, and critical reception vary from one institution to another. Yet these variations do not eliminate the structural relationships through which Publio becomes dramatically intelligible.

The most important methodological conclusion is that production documentation must be read according to the type of evidence it provides. Institutional programs establish dates, personnel, casting, declared pedagogical structures, and announced production concepts. Director's notes document stated artistic intention. Contemporary reviews record reception and critical interpretation. Critical editions establish the textual and musical evidence of the work itself. None of these sources should be made to prove what belongs properly to another category.

This distinction proved especially important for a secondary role whose individual staging is often only partially documented. In several cases, the political environment of the production could be reconstructed far more securely than the specific behavior of Publio. Opera McGill documented an explicitly political chorus and a production concerned with propaganda and political storytelling, but its surviving criticism offered no detailed individual analysis of Publio. Conservatori Liceu documented the professionalizing and collaborative structure of operatic preparation but did not provide a written reconstruction of Publio's physical characterization. Universität Mozarteum supplied a political-dramaturgical framework centered on the tension between public power and private happiness, while detailed individual staging again remained incompletely described.

Salzburg, Glyndebourne, and Teatro Real further demonstrated that modernity itself is not a single theatrical category. Salzburg placed the opera under the pressure of terrorism, migration, violence, and reconciliation. Glyndebourne translated imperial Rome into modern bureaucracy and generated a critical reception in which Publio could appear cunning or manipulative. Teatro Real preserved the work within an inherited, stylized production in which critics nevertheless perceived the movement between public affairs and private decision. Contemporary relevance can therefore emerge through radically different scenic strategies.

The comparison also confirms that the politics surrounding Publio need not be represented through explicit military symbolism. Authority can be communicated through Roman ceremony, office bureaucracy, symbolic abstraction, contemporary political imagery, spatial access, or the organization of performers within a training environment. What matters is whether the production allows the relationships of power to remain legible.

Publio's hierarchy is consequently better understood as relational than visual. His costume may change, but the direction of his authority remains structured. He can participate in arrest, custody, reporting, and institutional movement; he can advise or warn the emperor; he can transmit information produced elsewhere. Yet he cannot independently determine the consequences of that information. His authority is operational but not sovereign.

This distinction is central to the interpretation of his relationship with Tito. Publio is close enough to the emperor to deliver difficult information and act upon his instructions, but proximity does not eliminate subordination. Nor does official access amount to complete knowledge. His repeated position near power creates a paradox: he frequently knows more than other characters about institutional procedure while knowing less than the audience or Tito about private emotional decisions.

Production framing can intensify this paradox. In a bureaucratic setting, informed access may appear manipulative. In a strongly humanitarian setting, procedural obedience may appear harsh. In a ceremonial setting, the same behavior may appear disciplined and legitimate. The theatrical meaning changes, but the role's structural limits provide a control against arbitrary reinterpretation.

The case studies therefore also clarify the difference between dramatic visibility and prominence. Publio does not require additional invented material in order to become theatrically significant. His importance can be produced through transitions: an entrance that makes arrest unavoidable, a report that changes Tito's knowledge, an exit that allows public procedure to become private deliberation, or a final presence within the public structure that receives the consequences of clemency.

Such visibility is particularly important because the role contains comparatively little independent musical material. A production that treats only solo duration as a measure of dramatic importance risks overlooking the structural work performed by secondary figures. Publio repeatedly connects institutions that remain partly or entirely offstage—the Senate, guards, custody, public judgment—with the visible bodies of the drama.

At the same time, the production comparisons caution against compensating for brevity by exaggerating psychological complexity without textual support. A darker production may make Publio appear suspicious, but that does not establish an inherent secret agenda. A contemporary political setting may suggest modern security structures, but that does not automatically redefine his

office. A compassionate reading may make his humanity visible, but it does not grant him the authority to interrupt lawful procedure.

The most useful comparative principle is therefore controlled adaptability. Publio can be adapted to different periods, visual systems, and political analogies as long as the production maintains the distinction among what he knows, what he feels, what he is authorized to do, and what only Tito can decide.

This four-part distinction provides a stable basis for interpretation.

What Publio **knows** is determined by his access to reports, judgments, visible behavior, and official information.

What he **feels** may include concern, pity, suspicion, duty, urgency, or surprise, but feeling does not automatically generate action.

What he is **authorized to do** includes institutional execution: carrying information, accompanying guards, controlling custody, reporting judgment, and responding to imperial commands.

What only **Tito can decide** is the sovereign transformation of judgment into clemency.

When these categories collapse, the character becomes distorted. If feeling is treated as authorization, Publio may become an invented rescuer. If official knowledge is treated as omniscience, he may appear implausibly aware of private intentions. If delegated authority is treated as sovereign power, he may become a political rival to Tito. If obedience is treated as emotional emptiness, the human responses written into the drama disappear.

The documented productions show that these distortions are not merely theoretical possibilities. Reception can shift dramatically according to surrounding theatrical language. The Glyndebourne reviews demonstrate that an official can be perceived as manipulative when bureaucracy and political pressure dominate the environment. Other productions place greater emphasis on clemency, public observation, professional collaboration, or symbolic movement. The performer must therefore understand not only the role but also the ethical and political associations already generated by the production around him.

The comparative chapter also reinforces the importance of documentary restraint. Photographs and recordings may tempt the researcher to reconstruct costumes, gestures, or facial expressions in detail. Yet such reconstruction can easily transform observation into interpretation without acknowledging the transition. By relying primarily on written documentation, this study has preferred a narrower but more defensible account: one that distinguishes what institutions announced, what critics perceived, what texts prescribe, and what remains unknown.

This restraint does not weaken performer-centered research. It clarifies the point at which historical evidence ends and artistic decision begins. The performer does not require documentary certainty about every previous gesture. What is more useful is knowing which decisions are constrained by the text and which remain open to production-specific invention.

The case studies therefore establish both continuity and flexibility. Theatrical environments can change radically, but Publio continues to occupy a position between sovereign intention and institutional execution. His visibility increases when those relationships are clearly organized and decreases when he is treated merely as background or when the production's social structure becomes difficult to read.

The chapter thus returns to a central principle: a secondary role can carry substantial dramaturgical weight without becoming a hidden protagonist. Publio's importance lies not in secretly controlling events but in making certain transitions possible and visible. Through him, political information becomes actionable, custody becomes movement, institutional judgment reaches the emperor, and the consequences of sovereign clemency return to the public world.

The production comparisons also demonstrate that this function remains adaptable to very different theatrical languages. A production may choose historical distance, bureaucratic familiarity, contemporary political crisis, pedagogical realism, or symbolic abstraction. Each choice changes the audience's associations. None removes the need to clarify the relationships among authority, information, compassion, restraint, and sovereign decision.

For the performer, this conclusion shifts the central question away from imitation. The task is not to determine which documented Publio should be copied. It is to identify which elements of a given production alter the character's theatrical context and then to preserve the role's structural relationships within that context.

Chapter 8 therefore moves from documentation to practical synthesis. The following chapter will convert the textual, musical, dramaturgical, psychological, and production-based findings of this study into a performer-centered rehearsal model. Rather than prescribing one fixed characterization, it will establish a process through which a singer can make evidence-based decisions about vocal

preparation, recitative, ensemble listening, movement, hierarchy, scene objectives, collaboration with conductors and stage directors, and adaptation to different production styles.

The purpose of the production case studies has therefore been preparatory as much as historical. They demonstrate that interpretation is neither unlimited invention nor mechanical reproduction. Publio becomes theatrically convincing when the performer understands the evidence, recognizes the limits of the office, responds to the specific language of the production, and makes each transition in authority visible without exceeding the role's dramatic proportion.

CHAPTER 8. PERFORMER-CENTERED SYNTHESIS: A REHEARSAL AND INTERPRETATION MODEL

8.1 From Evidence to Performance Decisions

The preceding chapters have approached Publio through historical context, textual revision, musical structure, institutional authority, psychological response, and documented production practice. The purpose of the present chapter is different. It asks how those forms of evidence can be converted into decisions that a singer can actually repeat in rehearsal and performance.

An evidence-based interpretation cannot eliminate artistic choice. The score and libretto do not prescribe the angle of every turn, the duration of every glance, the distance between two performers, or the precise vocal color of every recitative response. Nor should scholarship attempt to replace the collaborative work of the rehearsal room. Its function is instead to distinguish decisions that are strongly constrained by evidence from those that remain legitimately open.

The first step is therefore to separate four levels of information: documented fact, supported interpretation, production choice, and performer experiment.

A documented fact is something directly established by the score, libretto, critical edition, historical document, or reliable production record. For example, Publio is identified as Prefect of the Praetorian Guard; he arrives in the arrest sequence with guards; Sesto relinquishes his sword; Publio participates in the trio; and the arrest continues despite his emotional response.

A supported interpretation draws an argument from such facts but acknowledges that the conclusion is interpretive rather than literally written. For example, the combination of coercive duty and expressed pity supports an interpretation of Publio as an official capable of compassion without possessing the authority to alter Sesto's legal situation.

A production choice determines how that structure will become visible in one staging. Publio may stand beside Sesto, ahead of him, or behind him during an escort. He may belong to a Roman ceremonial world, a modern bureaucracy, an abstract state apparatus, or another coherent theatrical system. These choices are not dictated by the score.

A performer experiment is still more provisional. It asks what happens if a phrase is delivered with greater forward intention, if the body remains still until a particular word, if eye contact is delayed, or if a change of breath marks a new thought. Such experiments are necessary, but they should be evaluated against the text rather than mistaken for discoveries about the historical character.

This distinction is fundamental because performer-centered research can easily move too quickly from evidence to prescription. A line in the libretto may prove that Publio feels pity; it does not prove that the actor must lower his head, touch Sesto, slow the tempo, soften every consonant, or adopt a visibly sorrowful facial expression. Those are possible theatrical realizations, not textual facts.

The Act II arrest trio provides a clear example. Magnus Tessing Schneider observes that, where Publio had remained silent in Metastasio's earlier version, Mazzolà gives him a new aside in which he expresses compassion for Sesto.²⁶¹ The scholarly evidence therefore establishes an important dramaturgical change: the official performing the arrest is no longer emotionally silent. He becomes a participant in the suffering generated by the action he is carrying out.

That finding does not, however, determine one compulsory physical response. The performer's task is first to preserve the contradiction itself. Publio must remain capable of completing the arrest while allowing the audience to understand that Sesto's suffering affects him. If the singer abandons institutional purpose, the duty disappears; if he suppresses all affect, Mazzolà's added compassion becomes theatrically irrelevant.

This distinction between evidence and embodiment should guide the entire rehearsal process. The actor does not begin by asking, "What expression should I make?" He begins by asking, "What has changed in the situation, what does Publio know, what does he want to accomplish, and what prevents him from doing more?"

The resulting physical decision can then be tested.

²⁶¹ Magnus Tessing Schneider, "From Metastasio to Mazzolà: Clemency and Pity in *La clemenza di Tito*," in *Mozart's La clemenza di Tito: A Reappraisal*, ed. Magnus Tessing Schneider and Ruth Tatlow (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2018), 73.

If Publio's objective is to complete the escort, a movement toward the exit has dramatic justification. If Sesto's tears interrupt his attention, a brief alteration of focus may be justified. If the production requires continuous movement, compassion may register through breath, vocal timing, or a temporary reduction of physical pressure rather than through stopping the action entirely. The exact behavior can change; the contradiction between feeling and obligation should not.

This approach also prevents the performer from converting emotional information into unauthorized action. Publio's pity does not give him jurisdiction over Sesto's fate. Schneider's discussion is especially useful because Mazzolà's alteration places compassion inside the arrest rather than replacing the arrest with compassion.²⁶² The dramatic tension depends upon simultaneous rather than successive identities: official and witness, coercive agent and responsive human being.

The performer can therefore translate evidence into rehearsal through a sequence of questions:

- What is objectively happening?
- What does Publio know at this moment?
- What does he need another person to do?
- What is he authorized to do?
- What does he feel that he cannot convert into action?
- What changes by the end of the beat?

These questions are more reliable than assigning a fixed emotional adjective to an entire scene. "Strict," "cold," "kind," or "sad" may describe an impression, but they do not identify an action. A playable interpretation requires direction: warn Tito, stop Sesto, obtain compliance, deliver verified information, wait for judgment, relinquish access, or respond to a changed command.

The same principle applies to vocal choices. Breath, resonance, articulation, dynamics, and phrase length are not separate from dramatic action, but neither should a psychological label be allowed to dictate inefficient vocal behavior. Classical singing requires respiratory organization that differs from quiet breathing, and research on professional singers demonstrates substantial individual variation in the coordination of

²⁶² Schneider, "From Metastasio to Mazzolà," 73.

rib-cage and abdominal movement during singing.²⁶³ Salomoni, van den Hoorn, and Hodges explicitly caution against assuming one universally optimal respiratory pattern; their results instead demonstrate task-specific adaptation and significant individual variability among trained singers.²⁶⁴

This has an important practical consequence for a performer-centered model. Dramatic instructions such as “more authority,” “more urgency,” or “more compassion” should not automatically be translated into greater breath pressure, excessive muscular engagement, or a fixed bodily posture. The actor must find a vocal-physical solution compatible with efficient phonation.

The singer should therefore distinguish dramatic pressure from physical pressure.

Dramatic pressure concerns what one character is trying to make another character do. Publio may need Sesto to move, Tito to recognize a danger, or a public procedure to continue. Physical pressure refers to muscular or respiratory effort. The first may need to increase while the second remains efficiently organized.

This separation is particularly useful for Publio because authority can tempt the singer toward generalized heaviness. A low male voice, official status, and scenes involving guards can encourage excessive weight in stance, jaw, tongue, neck, or breath. Yet none of those tensions is required by the dramatic office itself. Authority must be communicated through intelligible action and hierarchy, not through unnecessary vocal resistance.

Salomoni and colleagues found that professional classical singers displayed substantial individual-specific respiratory strategies and emphasized that their results did not demonstrate one optimal method of vocal training.²⁶⁵ This supports a rehearsal principle of functional rather than cosmetic consistency. A performer need not reproduce an externally prescribed image of “supported singing”; breathing must allow the phrase, diction, dynamic level, and dramatic action to occur without destabilizing the instrument.

This becomes especially important when acting changes body position. A singer may be asked to kneel, turn, walk, restrain another performer, hold a document, or maintain visual attention away from the conductor. Such circumstances can alter coordination even if the vocal demand itself has not changed. Therefore, a staging decision should be tested not only for dramatic clarity but also for whether it permits reliable breath renewal and phonation.

²⁶³ Sauro Emerick Salomoni, Wolbert van den Hoorn, and Paul W. Hodges, “Breathing and Singing: Objective Characterization of Breathing Patterns in Classical Singers,” *PLOS ONE* 11, no. 5 (2016): e0155084, 11–15, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0155084>.

²⁶⁴ Salomoni, van den Hoorn, and Hodges, “Breathing and Singing,” 13–15.

²⁶⁵ Salomoni, van den Hoorn, and Hodges, “Breathing and Singing,” 13–15.

The practical sequence should be:

- first, identify the textual action;
- second, identify the musical demand;
- third, choose the physical behavior;
- fourth, test whether the three can coexist.

If the physical choice disrupts the vocal task, it should be modified unless the disruption itself is deliberately required and vocally sustainable. If the vocal solution erases the dramatic objective, it must likewise be reconsidered. Performance emerges from coordination rather than from the victory of one discipline over another.

Evidence-based rehearsal also requires a distinction between knowledge available to the audience and knowledge available to Publio. Opera frequently allows spectators to know more than individual characters. The singer must resist reacting to information merely because the performer knows the whole plot.

Publio's reactions should therefore be built from a scene-specific information map. At each entrance, the performer should identify what Publio has directly witnessed, what has been officially reported to him, what he can reasonably infer, and what remains inaccessible.

This prevents retrospective acting. Once the singer knows that Tito will eventually pardon Sesto, it is easy to allow that future outcome to soften earlier moments. But Publio cannot play the final clemency before the political decision exists. Similarly, once the singer knows Vitellia's guilt, it is easy to look at her with suspicion in scenes where Publio has no evidence of her responsibility. The performer must preserve ignorance where the drama requires ignorance.

The rehearsal score should therefore include not only musical markings but information markings. Before each scene, the singer can write a short statement such as:

- KNOWN: Sesto has been accused.
- UNKNOWN: Vitellia's responsibility.
- TASK: Bring Sesto before the proper authority.
- LIMIT: Cannot decide guilt or punishment.

Such notation transforms dramaturgical analysis into a repeatable rehearsal procedure.

A similar system can be applied to authority. For every scene, the performer can identify the source of Publio's power:

imperial command, Senate decision, Praetorian office, custody responsibility, or personal observation.

This matters because not every strong statement carries the same legitimacy. A verified report should have a different dramatic foundation from a personal inference. A command to a prisoner differs from advice offered to the emperor. A stage presence built from these distinctions will be more flexible and more precise than a single generalized posture of command.

The same process can be used for compassion. Instead of asking whether Publio is "a compassionate character," the performer asks when compassion is textually activated, toward whom, and what it can change.

In the Act II trio, the evidence is unusually clear. Schneider notes that Mazzolà's revision gives Publio an expression of compassion absent from Metastasio's corresponding passage.²⁶⁶ That makes the feeling dramatically relevant. Yet the continuation of the arrest establishes its practical limit. The performer should therefore mark compassion as an internal change that affects listening and perhaps vocal color, but not the legal direction of the scene.

This creates a useful rehearsal category: internal change without external reversal.

Publio can be changed by what he witnesses while continuing the action already required of him. Such moments are particularly valuable in a short role because they prevent consistency from becoming emotional sameness. Institutional reliability does not mean that every scene must look or sound identical.

The performer should therefore map not only objectives but degrees of disturbance. A scene may leave Publio almost unchanged; another may sharpen suspicion; another may produce pity; another may produce surprise. The question is not whether emotion exists, but whether it changes his action, his attention, or only his internal state.

These distinctions can be organized into a simple evidence-to-performance chain:

²⁶⁶ Schneider, "From Metastasio to Mazzolà," 73.

SOURCE → FACT → INTERPRETIVE CLAIM → PLAYABLE ACTION → PHYSICAL/
VOCAL TEST → REVISION

The source might be a stage direction.

The fact might be that Publio enters with guards.

The interpretive claim might be that he possesses enough delegated authority to control custody.

The playable action might be secure Sesto's compliance.

The physical test might involve distance, orientation, stillness, or movement.

The vocal test might involve clarity of consonants, phrase direction, and the degree of dynamic pressure.

The final choice is accepted only if it remains compatible with the source, the music, the production, and sustainable vocal function.

This process also makes disagreement with a director productive rather than merely subjective. A performer should not respond to an unfamiliar staging instruction by claiming, "Publio would never do that." Instead, the singer can ask what textual or production logic supports the choice and whether it contradicts an established fact or merely differs from a personal preference.

For example, a director may wish to make Publio visibly threatening during an arrest. Nothing in the methodology requires rejecting the idea immediately. The performer can ask whether the production consistently presents state authority as threatening and whether the behavior still permits Publio's later compassion to remain credible. If both can coexist, the interpretation may be defensible even if it differs from another production.

By contrast, if the direction requires Publio to release Sesto independently before Tito's decision, the issue is not simply taste. That would alter the distribution of dramatic authority and therefore requires a much more radical reinterpretation of the libretto.

Evidence-based performance is thus not conservative performance. It does not require historically reconstructed costume, original blocking, or one presumed Mozartian acting style. It requires clarity about what is being changed.

The performer may depart substantially from historical appearance while remaining precise about dramatic relationships. Conversely, a visually traditional production can still distort the role if it ignores who knows what, who controls whom, or where authority changes hands.

The goal of this chapter is therefore to establish a rehearsal discipline rather than a fixed characterization. Each subsequent section will take one component of Publio's performance and subject it to the same procedure: identify evidence, determine the dramatic constraint, formulate a playable action, test the action musically and physically, and preserve enough flexibility for collaboration.

The resulting model is intentionally repeatable. A singer should be able to apply it not only to one production of *La clemenza di Tito* but to a new conductor, a different director, another stage size, a different costume system, or an altered political concept without losing the structural identity of the role.

The practical aim is not to make Publio identical in every production. It is to know why he is different.

8.2 A Scene-by-Scene Character Arc

Publio's role is too brief to support a conventional psychological biography constructed from extensive solo material. A more useful approach is to trace how his function changes from one appearance to the next. His character arc does not depend upon a transformation from one personality into another. It develops through changes in responsibility, information, emotional pressure, and proximity to sovereign power.

The performer should therefore resist beginning with a generalized adjective such as "stern," "loyal," "kind," or "cold." Such labels flatten scenes that require different kinds of attention. Publio is more precisely understood as a character whose dramatic position changes while his institutional identity remains comparatively stable.

A practical scene-by-scene arc can be organized into six broad stages: official presence and public order; recognition of crisis; arrest and compassionate pressure; counsel and political diagnosis; incomplete knowledge and presumed punishment; and public revelation and institutional reorientation. These stages describe changes in dramatic function rather than a speculative private biography.

Stage One: Official Presence and Public Order

Publio's earliest appearances establish him as part of Tito's institutional environment before the opera requires him to become emotionally prominent. The performer should therefore begin from function rather than personality.

At this stage, the principal rehearsal question is what Publio makes possible by being present. He belongs to the emperor's public world. His presence helps distinguish official court space from scenes governed primarily by private desire, romantic jealousy, or friendship.

This first stage should not be overloaded with premonition. The actor already knows that conspiracy, arrest, judgment, and clemency will follow, but Publio does not begin the opera knowing that his institutional duties will become entangled with Sesto's betrayal.

The opening dramatic posture should consequently preserve availability rather than suspicion. Availability means that Publio is attentive to Tito, responsive to official developments, socially aware, and prepared to act when required, without continuously scanning the stage as though he already expects treason.

A performer who begins with excessive suspicion diminishes the later significance of recognition. If Publio appears to distrust everyone from his first entrance, "Tardi s'avvede" becomes less a diagnosis of Tito's difficulty recognizing betrayal and more a confirmation of an attitude the character has displayed from the beginning.

The actor's first objective is therefore simple: maintain the functioning of Tito's public world. No invented crisis is needed yet.

Stage Two: Recognition of Crisis

When the political order begins to collapse, Publio's dramatic task changes. He becomes increasingly connected to information rather than ceremonial presence.

This stage should be rehearsed as a movement from routine attention to verified urgency. The important distinction is between hearing that something may be wrong and possessing information that requires institutional action.

Publio should not react to every rumor with the same intensity as a confirmed threat. His authority becomes more credible if his behavior changes proportionally to the quality of information available to him.

A useful rehearsal scale therefore distinguishes three levels. The first is observation: something appears unusual. The second is suspicion: available information suggests danger. The third is actionable knowledge: there is enough verified information to justify an official action.

This progression becomes crucial when Publio later arrives to arrest Sesto.

Stage Three: Arrest and Compassionate Pressure

The arrest sequence is the first scene in which Publio's authority becomes unmistakably coercive.

The libretto gives him decisive information about the man whom Sesto believed he had struck during the conspiracy. Publio explains that the apparently royal figure was Lentulo, that the blow did not kill him, and then ends with the compressed command:

“Il resto intendi. Vieni.”²⁶⁷

Immediately afterward, when Sesto relinquishes his sword, Publio states:

²⁶⁷ Caterino Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, libretto after Pietro Metastasio, act 2, scene 3, lines beginning “Colui, che cinto ... Il resto intendi. Vieni,” open-access libretto.

“Sesto, partir conviene. È già raccolto
per udirti il senato; e non poss’io
differir di condurti.”²⁶⁸

The wording is important for the character arc. Publio does not present himself as the judge. He identifies a procedural necessity: Sesto must go because the Senate is already assembled to hear him.

For the performer, this is the point at which authority becomes action. The playable objective may be stated as: secure Sesto’s compliance and deliver him to the Senate.

That objective is more useful than simply instructing the singer to “be frightening.” Fear may result from the action, but intimidation is not the only possible mechanism by which Publio can succeed.

The surrendered sword is dramatically important because it changes Sesto’s status without requiring a physical struggle. Once the weapon is surrendered, the relationship between the two characters has already changed.

Publio therefore does not need to continue proving his authority through repeated physical aggression.

The trio, No. 14, then complicates the action without cancelling it. Publio says “Vieni,” Sesto responds “Ti seguo ... Addio,” and Vitellia interrupts before finally turning toward Publio with “Che crudeltà!”

Publio does not enter into a debate about whether he is cruel. Instead, the music holds the arrest open long enough for emotional responses to emerge.

The decisive point in Publio’s arc arrives in his aside:

“L’acerbo amaro pianto,
che da’ suoi lumi piove,

²⁶⁸ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, scene 3, “Sesto, partir conviene. È già raccolto / per udirti il senato; e non poss’io / differir di condurti.”

l'anima mi commuove,
ma vana è la pietà!"²⁶⁹

The tears move his soul, yet his pity is powerless. The final direction confirms that Publio and Sesto leave with the guards while Vitellia departs in the opposite direction.

The performer should therefore mark this as the first major internal disturbance in the role.

Before this point, Publio's principal dramatic line is institutional. Here, the institution remains intact, but a personal response becomes audible.

The change may be summarized as follows: Publio is carrying out the arrest, but he now understands more clearly what this action is costing the person he is arresting. It is not a change into disbelief in the arrest itself.

Schneider confirms that this compassionate intervention is a deliberate feature of Mazzolà's revision. Publio, silent in the corresponding Metastasian moment, is now given an aside expressing compassion for Sesto.²⁷⁰

For acting purposes, the scene should therefore contain emotional alteration without procedural reversal.

Stage Four: Counsel and Political Diagnosis

Publio's arc then changes direction again.

After demonstrating the ability to execute authority, he demonstrates the ability to interpret political danger. His relationship with Tito becomes more intellectually active. This is important because a

²⁶⁹ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, scene 4, No. 14, "L'acerbo amaro pianto ... ma vana è la pietà!"

²⁷⁰ Magnus Tassing Schneider, "From Metastasio to Mazzolà: Clemency and Pity in *La clemenza di Tito*," in *Mozart's La clemenza di Tito: A Reappraisal*, ed. Magnus Tassing Schneider and Ruth Tatlow (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2018), 73.

one-dimensional official would simply report facts and obey orders. Publio instead becomes capable of identifying a limitation in Tito's own judgment.

The dramatic movement leading to No. 16 should therefore not be approached simply as a servant praising the emperor. It is closer to a subordinate identifying a vulnerability that the ruler himself does not easily perceive.

This changes the performer's objective. The task is not to impress Tito, nor is it to correct Tito arrogantly. It is to make Tito recognize the danger of judging another person by the standards of his own character.

The aria "Tardi s'avvede" should therefore grow out of a need to clarify, not from a sudden desire to perform a bass aria.

Its function within the arc is crucial because Publio has now experienced two forms of knowledge. During the arrest, he possesses factual knowledge strong enough to justify action. In his counsel to Tito, he possesses interpretive knowledge: an understanding of how moral character may distort political judgment.

The arc consequently develops from official executor to an official who can also diagnose the ruler's vulnerability.

The authority in this scene should remain respectful because the direction of hierarchy has not changed. Publio can advise the emperor, but he cannot compel the emperor to accept the advice.

The end of the aria should therefore not be played as victory. Publio offers the diagnosis and leaves the consequence with Tito. Counsel has been delivered; sovereign judgment remains elsewhere.

Stage Five: Reading Tito, Then Losing Access

The next major development occurs when Publio becomes an observer of Tito's conflict over Sesto.

At this stage, Publio is close enough to power to see that the emperor is suffering, but proximity still does not give him complete access to Tito's decision-making.

This is one of the most important transitions in the entire role.

The singer should mark a distinction between reading another person's visible conflict and knowing what that person will decide.

Publio may infer that Tito continues to care deeply about Sesto. He may recognize hesitation and internal division. But inference is not prophecy.

The scene should therefore avoid retrospective acting.

Because the performer already knows that Tito will ultimately reject execution, there is a strong temptation to let Publio begin anticipating clemency too early. That should be resisted.

The character arc becomes dramatically stronger if Publio's understanding increases while his certainty does not.

This stage may therefore be summarized as greater psychological perception combined with continued political uncertainty.

Then comes the decisive exclusion. Tito requires privacy with Sesto. Publio's access stops.

The arc changes because the character who has been close enough to read the emperor must now leave before the most important private exchange occurs.

This is not simply an exit. It changes Publio's epistemic position.

Before the exit, he witnesses Tito's conflict. After the exit, he no longer knows how that conflict is resolved.

This distinction determines several of his subsequent lines.

Stage Six: Presumed Punishment and the Limit of Knowledge

After Tito has privately struggled with the decree and destroyed it, Publio returns.

Critically, Publio has not witnessed that destruction.

The libretto makes the informational asymmetry exceptionally clear.

Tito calls:

“Publio!”

Publio answers:

“Cesare.”

Tito says that they should go to the waiting people. Publio immediately asks:

“E Sesto?”

When Tito states that Sesto should also come to the arena, Publio asks:

“Dunque il suo fato?...”

Tito replies:

“Sì, Publio, è già deciso.”

Publio responds aside:

“Oh, sventurato!”²⁷¹

This moment is central to the character arc.

The audience knows that Tito has torn up the decree. Publio does not. His conclusion that Sesto remains condemned is therefore not stupidity. It is the logical conclusion available from the information he possesses.

The performer must preserve this difference.

²⁷¹ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, scene 12, “Dunque il suo fato? ... Sì, Publio, è già deciso. ... Oh, sventurato!”

“Dunque il suo fato?” should be a real question. It should not be played with a secret expectation that Tito will reveal the pardon.

Similarly, “Oh, sventurato!” should arise from the apparent confirmation that the expected punishment remains in force.

This is the low point of Publio’s informational arc. He is highly informed institutionally, yet wrong about the most important decision because he was excluded from the decisive private event.

That combination is far more interesting than portraying him either as foolish or omniscient.

Stage Seven: Interrupted Departure and Explicit Ignorance

The libretto reinforces the same condition immediately afterward.

After Tito’s aria, Tito leaves and Publio follows him. Vitellia calls Publio back.

The repeated stage directions emphasize that Publio is still in the act of leaving.

He tells Vitellia:

“Perdona;
deggio a cesare appresso
andar...”

She asks where, and he answers:

“All’arena.”

She asks about Sesto. Publio answers:

“Anch’esso.”

When she asks whether Sesto will die, he replies:

“Pur troppo.”

Then Vitellia asks whether Sesto spoke with Tito and whether Publio knows what was said. Publio answers:

“No. Solo con lui
restar cesare volle: escluso io fui.”²⁷²

This is one of the most useful lines in the opera for constructing Publio’s character.

He simply admits that he was excluded.

The performer should not invent humiliation unless the production deliberately requires it. The line is first of all information. It explains exactly why Publio does not know what happened.

The character arc has now reached an important form of self-knowledge: Publio knows the limit of his own knowledge.

That is different from ignorance.

An ignorant character may not realize what he does not know. Publio explicitly identifies the missing information.

The actor should therefore resist defensiveness. A concise admission of exclusion preserves professional accuracy.

Stage Eight: Public Revelation and Institutional Reorientation

The final stage resolves the gap between what Publio believes and what Tito has actually decided.

Before Sesto’s entrance, Tito orders:

“custodi, innanzi
conducetemi il reo.”

²⁷² Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, scene 13, “No. Solo con lui / restar cesare volle: escluso io fui.”

The next scene identifies:

“Tito, Publio e Sesto fra Littori...”²⁷³

The stage structure is crucial. Sesto still enters as a condemned prisoner within the apparatus of punishment.

Publio should therefore not enter the finale already performing liberation.

From his perspective, the established procedure is still moving toward punishment. The performer’s initial task remains to deliver the prisoner into the public judicial space.

Only then does the situation change.

Vitellia confesses. The revelation forces the entire group to reorganize its understanding of events. Publio is no exception.

His reaction should be genuine because the information is genuinely new to him.

But again, proportion matters.

He does not become the center of Vitellia’s confession. Nor does he become the moral interpreter of Tito’s response.

His final transformation is primarily institutional: the order governing Sesto changes.

The person who entered as a prisoner under Publio’s custody becomes someone whom Tito publicly releases.

²⁷³ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, scenes 16–17, “custodi, innanzi conducetemi il reo” and “Tito, Publio e Sesto fra Littori.”

This is the culmination of Publio's arc.

He does not originate clemency. He does not persuade Tito to pardon Sesto. He does not secretly prepare the outcome.

What changes is his relationship to an imperial decision that has now become public.

His final movement is therefore from executor of presumed punishment to witness and participant in the implementation of clemency.

This is a subtle but meaningful transformation.

The Arc Is Not "Cold to Warm"

It would be misleading to summarize Publio's development as cold to compassionate.

Compassion appears before the conclusion, and institutional firmness remains after compassion appears.

Nor is the arc obedient to rebellious. He never needs to reject Tito's authority in order to become dramatically complex.

A more accurate arc is:

public function → crisis recognition → coercive responsibility → compassion within duty → political diagnosis → psychological observation → exclusion from private knowledge → mistaken but reasonable expectation of punishment → public correction of that expectation → institutional participation in clemency.

This model gives the singer an actual progression without inventing an undocumented biography.

A Practical Rehearsal Arc

The performer can reduce each stage to one principal verb.

For the early Publio, the verb is Maintain: maintain order and availability.

During the crisis, the verb is Assess: determine what information is actionable.

During the arrest, the verb is Secure: secure Sesto's compliance.

When compassion appears, the verb is Register: register suffering without reversing the task.

When addressing Tito, the verb is Warn: make Tito recognize a danger in his own judgment.

When observing Tito's conflict, the verb is Read: read the conflict without predicting the outcome.

When excluded from the private encounter, the verb is Accept: accept the boundary of access.

When returning to Tito, the verb is Verify: determine what has been decided.

During the exchange with Vitellia, the verb is Report: give only what Publio actually knows.

In the finale, the verb is Reorient: adjust to the new public order created by clemency.

These verbs produce a more playable arc than emotional adjectives.

Why This Matters for Vocal Consistency

A character arc should change interpretation without requiring the singer to manufacture a different vocal instrument in every scene.

Publio does not need one "military voice," one "compassionate voice," one "philosophical voice," and one "surprised voice."

The vocal identity should remain coherent.

What changes can instead be phrase direction, degree of consonantal attack, timing of response, dynamic proportion, duration of attention, degree of physical stillness, and relationship to the other performer.

This allows character development without destabilizing vocal technique.

The role's continuity therefore comes from one instrument executing different actions, not from artificial timbral disguise.

8.3 Vocal Preparation for No. 16, “Tardi s’avvede”

No. 16, “Tardi s’avvede,” is Publio’s only independent aria and therefore carries disproportionate importance in the preparation of the role. Its brevity can tempt the singer either to treat it as a minor interruption or to compensate by making it heavier and more monumental than the score requires. Neither approach is necessary. The aria is more effectively prepared as a compact act of counsel in which textual clarity, rhythmic stability, vocal efficiency, and dramatic purpose remain closely connected.

The dramatic preparation begins before the first sung phrase. Publio has just answered Tito’s assumption that Sesto could not have changed so radically. His spoken line, “Ma, signor, non han tutti il cor di Tito,” leads directly into the aria. The critical text therefore presents the recitative and aria as a single argumentative sequence rather than two unrelated events.²⁷⁴

The aria text then generalizes Publio’s warning:

“Tardi s’avvede
d’un tradimento
chi mai di fede
mancar non sa.
Un cor verace,
pieno d’onore,
non è portento,
se ogn’altro core
crede incapace
d’infedeltà.”

The argument is concise. A person who never violates faith recognizes betrayal late because an honorable and truthful heart tends to assume fidelity in others. The aria is therefore not primarily a display of Publio’s own emotional suffering. It is an attempt to make Tito understand a danger in his way of judging another person.

For the singer, the first preparatory decision should therefore concern **intention** rather than sound color. The opening phrase should answer the question: what does Publio want Tito to understand?

A useful playable objective is:

²⁷⁴ Stiftung Mozarteum Salzburg, “*La clemenza di Tito*, K. 621: Act II, Scene V / No. 16,” critical edition of the set text, version 138, lines containing “Ma, signor, non han tutti il cor di Tito” and “Tardi s’avvede,” Digital Mozart Edition.

Make Tito reconsider the reliability of his own assumption.

This objective discourages two common extremes. The singer does not need to sound like a threatening judge, because Publio is not sentencing Sesto in this moment. Nor should the aria become sentimental consolation, because the text addresses fidelity, betrayal, and the limits of moral projection rather than pity.

The score reinforces this interpretation. No. 16 is marked **Allegretto** in C major and is accompanied by strings, two oboes, and two horns.²⁷⁵ The orchestral texture begins with mobility rather than ceremonial heaviness, and Publio enters after a short instrumental introduction. The vocal preparation should therefore preserve forward motion.

The tempo marking is particularly important. Allegretto does not prescribe one exact metronome speed, but it does establish a character distinct from a broad, slow declaration. The singer should avoid loading every syllable with excessive weight merely because Publio is a bass. Authority can arise through precision, continuity, and clear verbal intention rather than through artificially darkened tone.

The first technical goal should consequently be **stable phonation within a moving pulse**.

The singer should rehearse the opening text in rhythm before adding full operatic volume. “Tardi s’avvede d’un tradimento” contains a sequence of consonants that can either clarify the argument or interrupt the legato. The aim is not to remove consonantal definition but to organize it within the line.

The Italian should remain intelligible without becoming percussive.

A useful rehearsal progression is to speak the text in the musical rhythm, then sing it on a neutral or comfortable vowel while preserving the written pulse, and finally restore the consonants without changing the underlying breath flow.

²⁷⁵ Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, K. 621, ed. Franz Giegling, *Neue Mozart-Ausgabe*, ser. II, work group 5, vol. 20 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1970), 193, International Mozarteum Foundation Online Publications, 2006.

This method separates three tasks that singers often attempt simultaneously: pitch, language, and dramatic intention. Once each has been stabilized independently, they can be reunited.

The breath plan should also reflect the syntax rather than the visual appearance of individual measures. The opening proposition should sound like one connected idea: a person discovers betrayal late because he himself does not know how to violate fidelity. Breath placement should therefore support grammatical meaning rather than fragmenting the argument into unrelated musical units.

This does not mean that every singer must breathe in exactly the same places. Research on classical singers has demonstrated substantial individual variation in respiratory coordination, and no single universally optimal breathing method can be inferred from such data.²⁷⁶ The practical requirement is instead that the singer choose breath points that preserve text, pulse, and reliable phonation.

For “Tardi s’avvede,” the singer should therefore test whether each breath renews the argument or interrupts it.

If a breath causes the words “d’un tradimento” to sound detached from “Tardi s’avvede,” the syntax may become less clear. If, on the other hand, the singer attempts an unnecessarily long phrase and loses stable breath management before “mancar non sa,” the dramatic clarity may be equally weakened.

The goal is not maximum phrase length. It is **maximum intelligibility with sustainable vocal function**.

The score’s C-major setting should also discourage unnecessary darkening. Tonal mode alone does not determine emotional character, but the aria’s musical surface does not require a permanently ominous sound. Publio’s warning can retain seriousness without becoming gloomy.

For a low male singer, this matters because the temptation to demonstrate bass authority through excessive pharyngeal darkness can reduce verbal clarity and slow the phrase. The singer should instead seek a resonant core that remains compatible with rapid Italian articulation.

²⁷⁶ Sauro Emerick Salomoni, Wolbert van den Hoorn, and Paul W. Hodges, “Breathing and Singing: Objective Characterization of Breathing Patterns in Classical Singers,” *PLOS ONE* 11, no. 5 (2016): e0155084, 13–15, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0155084>.

The relationship between resonance and diction should therefore be tested word by word. Consonants such as the repeated dental and alveolar attacks in “Tardi,” “tradimento,” and “d’infedeltà” must remain audible, but they should not cause the jaw, tongue, or laryngeal mechanism to become rigid.

The text should ride on the resonance rather than interrupt it.

The second half of the aria introduces the explanation:

“Un cor verace,
pieno d’onore...”

This is the point at which the singer can differentiate **proposition** from **reasoning**.

The opening states the warning. The middle explains why it is true.

The dramatic shift need not be exaggerated through a completely different vocal color. A more effective contrast can arise through phrase direction and rhetorical emphasis. “Un cor verace” identifies the type of person under discussion; “pieno d’onore” expands the moral description; the later phrase “crede incapace d’infedeltà” completes the argument by identifying the perceptual error.

The singer should therefore practice the aria not only in musical phrases but in **units of thought**.

One useful method is to mark three rhetorical functions in the score:

PROPOSITION — “Tardi s’avvede...”

EXPLANATION — “Un cor verace, pieno d’onore...”

CONCLUSION — “...crede incapace d’infedeltà.”

Such markings prevent the aria from becoming a sequence of equally weighted notes.

The musical return of the opening idea is also significant. After the explanatory material, “Tardi s’avvede” returns.²⁷⁷ This repetition allows the singer to restate the original proposition after Tito has effectively been given the reasoning behind it.

The second statement should not automatically be louder.

Repetition can instead produce greater specificity. The first “Tardi s’avvede” may sound like the presentation of a general maxim; the return may carry more direct relevance to Tito because the argument has now been explained.

This gives the singer a dramatic progression without requiring a large dynamic escalation.

The preparation should therefore distinguish **intensification of meaning** from **increase of volume**.

A stronger thought can be expressed through clearer direction toward Tito, more definite textual focus, a firmer rhythmic arrival, or slightly altered timing, depending on the conductor and production. None of these choices requires the singer to force more breath pressure into the phrase.

This distinction is especially important in a short aria. If every repetition is made louder merely to create growth, the singer may reach the end with nowhere left to go musically or dramatically.

The score should instead guide proportion.

The singer should also prepare dynamic changes as changes of scale rather than changes of vocal identity. A piano or lighter passage should preserve resonant core and textual presence. A forte passage should not require a sudden enlargement of vocal mass.

Research on trained classical singers indicates that efficient singing involves coordinated respiratory adjustments and that increased sound pressure does not necessarily require a proportional increase in respiratory effort.²⁷⁸ Although such findings cannot prescribe an individual technique for Publio, they support the practical principle that louder singing should not automatically be equated with greater muscular effort.

²⁷⁷ Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, 194.

²⁷⁸ Salomoni, van den Hoorn, and Hodges, “Breathing and Singing,” 14–15.

The same principle applies to dramatic authority.

The singer should avoid translating “more authority” into “more pressure.”

Instead, authority can be rehearsed through clear onset, rhythmic certainty, organized consonants, and a direct relationship to the addressee.

The orchestral writing also affects how the singer should think about scale. The presence of oboes and horns broadens the color of cadential and formal points, while the strings maintain movement. The bass does not need to create the entire sense of public authority alone. The orchestra already contributes to that frame.

The performer should therefore listen outward rather than trying to dominate the texture.

The preparation of No. 16 should include rehearsals in which the singer deliberately listens for the wind entries and cadential expansion rather than concentrating only on the vocal line. This can prevent unnecessary pushing when the orchestra becomes fuller.

The question becomes:

Where does the orchestra already provide weight so that the singer can remain efficient?

This is particularly relevant near the conclusion.

The final section repeats “mancar non sa,” and the vocal line ends before the orchestra completes the number.²⁷⁹ The aria therefore does not end simply when the singer stops producing sound. The orchestral continuation remains part of the dramatic event.

The performer should prepare the ending as a transfer rather than a cutoff.

Publio has completed his counsel. The orchestra completes the formal frame, and the libretto directs him to leave.

This affects the singer’s final breath and release. The last phrase should not sound like an applause point detached from the action. The release should make it possible for the dramatic thought to continue through the orchestra and into Publio’s departure.

²⁷⁹ Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, 195.

The singer should therefore rehearse the exit with the orchestra whenever possible.

A common rehearsal problem occurs when the singer finishes the final note, psychologically releases the scene, and begins moving only after the musical number feels “over.” That can make the aria resemble a concert insertion.

A more integrated solution is to understand the orchestral conclusion as part of the action of withdrawal. The exact blocking belongs to the stage director, but the singer’s attention should remain within the scene until the transition is complete.

The aria’s technical preparation can consequently be organized into five interconnected tasks.

The first is **textual preparation**: the singer must understand the complete argument and be able to speak the Italian fluently without music.

The second is **rhythmic preparation**: the Allegretto pulse should remain stable even when consonants become dense or dramatic emphasis increases.

The third is **breath preparation**: breath points must support syntax and reliable phonation rather than merely following bar lines.

The fourth is **rhetorical preparation**: the singer should distinguish proposition, explanation, return, and conclusion.

The fifth is **scenic preparation**: the aria must remain addressed to Tito and lead naturally into Publio’s departure rather than functioning as an isolated vocal display.

These five tasks should be combined only after they are individually reliable.

The singer may first speak the text while walking the rhythmic pulse, then sing the vocal line without acting, then add Tito as an imagined addressee, and finally introduce staging. Such progressive layering reduces the risk that physical acting will destabilize newly learned vocal coordination.

The performer should also rehearse the aria at more than one dynamic intensity. This does not mean changing Mozart’s written dynamics arbitrarily. It means checking whether the same technical organization remains available when the conductor requests greater projection or greater restraint.

If the tone functions only when sung heavily, the preparation is incomplete.

If textual clarity disappears at softer dynamics, the preparation is likewise incomplete.

A stable interpretation should allow the dramatic intention to survive reasonable variations of acoustic and orchestral condition.

This is especially important because opera theaters differ considerably in size, resonance, pit balance, and conductor preference. A performer-centered model must therefore prepare **functions**, not one frozen sound.

The central technical question is not:

“What exact color is Publio’s voice?”

It is:

“Can the singer communicate warning, reasoning, and authority clearly while maintaining efficient and repeatable vocal production?”

The answer should remain yes whether the production places Publio in Roman dress, a modern suit, or an abstract political environment.

No. 16 thus becomes an ideal test of the larger method developed in this study. Text establishes the argument. The score establishes pulse, orchestral environment, repetition, and formal proportion. Vocal science cautions against reducing technique to one rigid physiological prescription. Dramatic analysis identifies the playable objective. Rehearsal then converts those constraints into a sustainable individual solution.

The aria should finally sound neither like a generalized “bass aria” nor like a detached vocal exercise. It should sound like Publio doing something necessary: warning a ruler whose moral goodness has temporarily limited his ability to imagine betrayal.

That is the point at which vocal preparation becomes dramatic action.

8.4 Preparing Recitatives and Ensemble Numbers

Publio’s preparation cannot be centered on No. 16 alone. Much of his dramatic identity is created in recitative and ensemble, where the singer must respond rapidly to changing information, coordinate with other performers, and preserve the continuity of official action across relatively short musical statements. These passages require a different rehearsal strategy from the aria because the primary challenge is not sustained solo argument but the integration of speech, listening, timing, movement, and hierarchy.

The recitatives should therefore be prepared first as dramatic exchanges rather than as compressed vocal exercises. Publio's lines frequently perform specific institutional actions: he answers Tito, reports information, asks for clarification, delivers the Senate's decree, redirects a prisoner, or states the limit of his own knowledge. The singer should identify the action before determining the degree of vocal weight.

This is especially important in *secco* recitative, where textual rhythm and conversational direction can disappear if every phrase is treated as a miniature aria. A performer-centered approach should instead preserve the relationship between syntax and action. Short statements need not sound insignificant; their dramatic force often comes precisely from speed, clarity, and the fact that another character must respond immediately.

A useful preparation method is to remove pitch temporarily and speak the recitative as dialogue. The singer should determine who receives each sentence, which word changes the situation, and whether the line reports, asks, commands, corrects, confirms, or interrupts. Once those functions are clear, the written pitches and continuo can be restored without losing conversational intention.

Publio's arrest recitative provides a particularly clear example. After revealing that the man struck by Sesto was Lentulo and that he survived, Publio concludes:

"Il resto intendi. Vieni."²⁸⁰

The phrase is economical because Publio does not explain what Sesto can already infer. The information itself creates the pressure. The final "Vieni" then converts understanding into movement.

For rehearsal, the singer should distinguish these two actions. "Il resto intendi" asks Sesto to complete the inference; "Vieni" requires compliance. If both are delivered with identical force, the dramatic sequence becomes less clear. The first is informational; the second is operational.

The physical action should follow the same logic. Publio need not begin moving Sesto before the information has landed. Once the command "Vieni" is given, however, the stage should begin to acquire a direction. The exact blocking belongs to the production, but the relationship between verbal completion and physical transition should remain intelligible.

The following line reinforces the same procedure:

²⁸⁰ Caterino Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, scene 3, "Il resto intendi. Vieni," open-access libretto.

“Sesto, partir conviene. È già raccolto
per udirli il senato; e non poss’io
differir di condurti.”²⁸¹

The wording places several forms of necessity around Publio. Sesto must leave; the Senate is already assembled; Publio cannot delay the escort. The singer should therefore avoid adding a personal threat that is not needed by the text. The pressure lies in procedure and time.

This gives recitative preparation a useful principle: **do not add emotional weight where syntax already produces dramatic force.**

The Senate decree scene requires a different kind of recitative authority. Publio returns with documentary confirmation and tells Tito that Sesto has admitted responsibility, that the Senate has condemned him and his accomplices, and that only Tito’s imperial name is missing from the decree. The libretto includes the phrase “Ecco il decreto terribile, ma giusto,” followed by the action of handing the document to Tito.²⁸²

The phrase “terribile, ma giusto” is especially useful for performance because it contains two evaluations that should not collapse into one another. “Terribile” acknowledges the severity of the result; “giusto” affirms its institutional legitimacy. The singer should therefore avoid delivering the phrase as either pure horror or bureaucratic indifference.

The recitative can instead be prepared as a controlled sequence: report the confession, identify the judgment, present the document, acknowledge its severity, and transfer it to the sovereign.

The physical transfer of the decree is important because the dramatic authority changes hands. Publio can carry and present the Senate’s decision, but Tito must decide whether to complete its force. The performer should therefore rehearse the document as an active object rather than as an incidental prop. The handoff should coincide with the change in responsibility.

This principle can be generalized to recitative preparation. Every object or movement should be connected to a textual function. A sword changes custody. A decree changes access to institutional knowledge. A departure changes access to private information. The singer should not treat props and blocking as additions imposed after the music has been learned; they belong to the dramatic syntax of the recitative.

²⁸¹ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, scene 3, “Sesto, partir conviene. È già raccolto / per udirli il senato; e non poss’io / differir di condurti.”

²⁸² Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, scene 7, Publio’s presentation of the Senate’s decree, including “Ecco il decreto / terribile, ma giusto.”

Publio's shorter exchanges with Tito also demand precision. A line such as "Cesare" may contain very little text, but it establishes immediate recognition of hierarchy. A question such as "E Sesto?" may occupy only a moment, yet it identifies an unresolved institutional responsibility. The singer should resist the temptation to enlarge these lines through unnecessary pauses or vocal display. Their force often depends on continuity.

The same principle applies when Publio is dismissed or required to withdraw. In these cases, the final word of a recitative should not be treated as the end of a vocal exercise. It must lead directly into the next physical task. A singer who psychologically stops after completing the line can make the character appear disconnected from the institution he represents.

Ensemble preparation requires a different discipline. In ensemble, Publio's vocal line cannot be understood independently from what the other characters are saying. The performer must prepare not only his own text but also the text, rhythm, and dramatic objective of the surrounding voices.

No. 14, "Se al volto mai ti senti," is the clearest example. Mazzolà's revision replaces a sequence in which Publio had no corresponding musical response with an ensemble in which the arrest remains active while Sesto, Vitellia, and Publio experience the same event differently. Schneider notes that Publio, silent in Metastasio's corresponding passage, now expresses compassion for Sesto in an aside.²⁸³

The trio should therefore not be prepared as three singers expressing one shared emotion.

Each character has a different vector.

Sesto is attempting to take leave of Vitellia.

Vitellia is overwhelmed by fear, guilt, and the danger of exposure.

Publio is attempting to complete the arrest.

These three objectives coexist within one musical structure.

The singer preparing Publio must therefore know exactly when to listen and when to reactivate the procedural line. His repeated "Vieni" should not be treated as filler between the more lyrical lines of Sesto and Vitellia. It is the recurring reminder that the movement toward the Senate remains unresolved.

The first "Vieni" can establish direction. Sesto's "Ti seguo ... Addio" acknowledges that direction but immediately delays it through farewell. Vitellia's interruption further suspends the departure.

²⁸³ Magnus Tessing Schneider, "From Metastasio to Mazzolà: Clemency and Pity in *La clemenza di Tito*," in *Mozart's La clemenza di Tito: A Reappraisal*, ed. Magnus Tessing Schneider and Ruth Tatlow (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2018), 73–74.

When Publio speaks again, the dramatic task is not necessarily to become angrier. It is to restore the trajectory that the other characters keep interrupting.

The rehearsal word for this function is therefore:

Reassert.

Publio does not need to create greater volume every time the command returns. Repetition can communicate persistence through timing, focus, and renewed spatial intention.

This is particularly important in ensemble singing because vocal competition can easily replace dramatic listening. A bass singer may feel that the lower line must be made more prominent whenever the upper voices become active. But Publio's authority in No. 14 does not depend upon covering Sesto or Vitellia. In fact, the scene requires the audience to hear the suffering to which Publio later responds.

The performer should therefore rehearse passages in which he deliberately listens through rests and through other singers' phrases. Silence should remain active.

Active silence means that the character continues to process information while not singing. The actor's body should not switch off merely because the vocal line has stopped. Nor should it produce constant visible reaction. The task is to remain available to the next textual trigger.

This distinction is crucial before Publio's compassionate aside. His later words:

"L'acerbo amaro pianto ...
l'anima mi commuove,
ma vana è la pietà"

are dramatically stronger if they emerge from actual listening rather than from a prearranged sad expression. The singer should hear Sesto's farewell and observe the situation before allowing the aside to register a change.

Schneider's reading confirms that Mazzolà deliberately contrasts Publio's sympathetic concern with Vitellia's self-focused fear in this trio.²⁸⁴ The performer can use this distinction without turning Publio into a sentimental character. The important element is directed attention: Publio's aside is about Sesto's suffering rather than about his own discomfort.

²⁸⁴ Schneider, "From Metastasio to Mazzolà," 73–74.

No. 18 requires a different kind of ensemble listening. Publio is no longer controlling a prisoner's movement in the same way as in No. 14. Instead, he observes Tito and interprets the emperor's emotional conflict.

Schneider cites Publio's aside:

"Mille diversi affetti
in Tito guerra fanno.
S'ei prova un tale affanno,
lo seguita ad amar."²⁸⁵

In English, the thought is that a thousand different emotions are at war within Tito and that, if Tito suffers so deeply, he still loves Sesto. Schneider uses this moment as evidence of the opera's invitation to recognize the ruler's human emotional conflict.

For Publio, the rehearsal task is to distinguish **observation from intervention**.

He is not telling Tito what to feel. He is reading Tito.

The performer should therefore prepare the line by identifying what visible or audible information in the scene triggers the conclusion. The exact gesture or facial evidence depends on the production, but the logic must remain clear: Publio sees conflict, interprets the conflict as evidence of continuing attachment, and articulates that interpretation.

The line should not be sung as prophecy. Continued love does not yet equal pardon.

This distinction affects ensemble timing. Publio's attention must remain on Tito rather than shifting prematurely toward an imagined final outcome. The singer should rehearse the transition from listening to inference and then back to listening.

This creates a three-stage process:

observe → interpret → remain available.

The final element is especially important. After Publio articulates his interpretation, the dramatic situation continues. He should not freeze inside the satisfaction of having correctly "read" Tito.

²⁸⁵ Schneider, "From Metastasio to Mazzolà," 80, discussion of Publio's aside in No. 18.

Large ensembles require another form of preparation: collective scale without loss of individual objective. When multiple soloists and chorus enter, Publio's line becomes one component of a larger public sound. The singer must therefore understand when the role should remain individually legible and when it should contribute to a collective texture.

This is particularly important near the opera's end. Publio does not receive a separate final moral statement equivalent to those given to several principal characters. His final participation belongs increasingly to the public ensemble.

The performer should prepare this transition as a change from individual interpretive agency to collective reception.

That does not mean disappearing vocally. It means understanding the function of the line within the whole texture.

The bass should provide rhythmic and harmonic reliability without attempting to convert ensemble participation into a hidden solo.

Ensemble rehearsal should consequently include more than the singer's own notes. Publio should learn the principal cues of the other characters, especially those that alter his action.

In No. 14, the singer must know where Sesto's farewell delays movement.

In No. 18, he must know where Tito's emotional response supplies the evidence for his interpretation.

In the final ensemble, he must know when individual reactions yield to collective affirmation.

This allows the singer to react to the event rather than merely count rests.

A practical preparation score can mark three kinds of cues.

The first is a **musical cue**: a particular orchestral or vocal entry that precedes Publio's line.

The second is a **textual cue**: a word or statement whose meaning changes his attention.

The third is a **physical cue**: an agreed movement, transfer, or entrance that changes the stage relationship.

The performer should know all three.

This is particularly useful when conductor and stage director make different demands. A conductor may require an exact musical entrance while the director requires a simultaneous physical action.

The singer should identify which cue must lead and which can follow without compromising either musical precision or theatrical clarity.

The preparation of recitative and ensemble should therefore be layered.

The singer first learns the full text and translation.

Then he identifies each dramatic action.

Next he rehearses speech rhythm and cue relationships without full singing.

After that, musical precision is restored with continuo or piano.

Only then should complex blocking be added.

Finally, rehearsals with all singers should test whether listening remains active under full musical and physical pressure.

This sequence is not intended to delay staging. It prevents staging from hiding uncertainty in the text.

If the singer does not know what “Vieni,” “E Sesto?,” or “escluso io fui” is doing dramatically, movement can create the appearance of activity without actual dramatic intention.

Conversely, once the action is clear, even minimal movement can become legible.

The preparation of Publio’s recitatives and ensembles therefore depends on one central principle: **brevity does not reduce responsibility.**

A short line may carry information that changes the scene.

A repeated command may maintain an action across an ensemble.

An aside may reveal compassion without changing procedure.

A question may expose incomplete knowledge.

A silence may show that Publio is listening rather than absent.

The singer’s task is to make these changes precise enough that the role remains continuous even when the amount of vocal material is small.

Publio’s ensemble identity is therefore built not by maximizing vocal prominence but by maintaining dramatic orientation inside shared musical time.

8.5 A Scene-by-Scene Acting Score

The purpose of a scene-by-scene acting score is not to prescribe a fixed sequence of gestures. It is to give the performer a repeatable structure for tracking Publio's objective, information, authority, attention, physical direction, and change of state from one appearance to the next. Because Publio's role is distributed across short recitatives, ensemble passages, entrances, exits, and one independent aria, continuity must be constructed deliberately. Without such preparation, individual scenes may be convincing while the role as a whole remains fragmented.

The acting score proposed here therefore records six elements for each significant appearance: **starting condition, information available, objective, limit of authority, trigger for change, and resulting action**. These categories are deliberately more stable than prescribed facial expressions or gestures. A director may radically change the production's period or visual language while the underlying dramatic relationships remain usable.

The first principle is that the score should begin before Publio sings. An entrance is already an action. The performer should know where Publio has come from, why he has entered, whom he expects to encounter, and what task remains unfinished. Similarly, an exit should identify not merely the side of the stage but the destination and purpose of departure. This prevents the role from becoming a succession of unrelated appearances.

Publio's early public appearances can be scored under the verb **Maintain**. His starting condition is institutional availability rather than crisis. His objective is to remain responsive to Tito and to the functioning of the public court. At this stage the performer should avoid introducing retrospective suspicion. The character does not yet possess the knowledge that will later justify coercive action. His physical vocabulary can therefore be economical without becoming vigilant to the point of paranoia.

The next important shift occurs when political information begins to require action. At this point the verb becomes **Assess**. Publio must distinguish between what he has heard, what has been verified, and what now requires an official response. The acting score should mark the transition from observation to actionable knowledge rather than treating every piece of information as equally urgent.

The arrest of Sesto provides the clearest example. Publio reveals that the person Sesto struck was Lentulo rather than Tito and that the blow did not kill him. He then concludes, "Il resto intendi. Vieni."²⁸⁶ The acting score should divide this short exchange into two beats. The first is **make Sesto understand**; the second is **make Sesto move**. The information creates the psychological pressure, while "Vieni" converts that pressure into physical direction.

Publio then states that the Senate is already assembled to hear Sesto and that he cannot delay taking him there.²⁸⁷ The performer's objective becomes **Secure**: secure compliance and complete the transfer from private freedom to institutional custody. The limit is equally important. Publio can

²⁸⁶ Caterino Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, scene 3, "Il resto intendi. Vieni."

²⁸⁷ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, scene 3, "Sesto, partir conviene. È già raccolto / per udirti il senato; e non poss'io / differir di condurti."

control Sesto's movement, but he cannot decide the verdict. His authority should therefore be clear without suggesting that he personally owns the judicial outcome.

The surrender of the sword should be entered into the acting score as a **status-change trigger**. Before the surrender, Sesto retains the material capacity to resist. After it, the arrest has become substantially more concrete. This transition does not require an invented struggle. The dramatic force lies in the change of status itself.

No. 14 then prevents the arrest from remaining emotionally simple. Publio continues to say "Vieni," while Sesto repeatedly redirects his attention toward Vitellia. Mazzolà's trio places Publio inside the emotional consequences of the arrest rather than removing him from them. Schneider notes that, unlike the silent Publio of the corresponding Metastasian passage, Mazzolà's Publio expresses compassion for Sesto in an aside.²⁸⁸

The acting score for this ensemble should therefore contain two simultaneous lines.

The external line is **continue the escort**.

The internal line is **receive what Sesto's suffering reveals**.

The crucial point is that these lines do not cancel each other. Publio's words, "L'acerbo amaro pianto ... l'anima mi commuove, ma vana è la pietà," make the internal response explicit, but the stage direction still sends Publio and Sesto away with the guards. The actor's state has changed; the institutional action has not.²⁸⁹ The trigger in this scene is not an abstract decision to "be compassionate." It is Sesto's visible and audible suffering. The performer should therefore allow listening to precede reaction. If compassion is already displayed at full intensity before the relevant information has been received, the scene loses causality.

The resulting acting beat can be defined as **Register**. Publio registers suffering without acquiring new jurisdiction. This distinction should remain visible in the final part of the trio. The repeated command need not become apologetic, but neither should it erase the response the audience has just heard.

The next major scene requires a different score. Before "Tardi s'avvede," Publio's task becomes **Warn**. His starting condition is not coercive custody but disagreement with Tito's judgment of Sesto. Tito cannot easily imagine that a person once known as faithful could have betrayed him. Publio answers, "Ma, signor, non han tutti il cor di Tito," and the aria converts that answer into a general proposition about delayed recognition of betrayal.²⁹⁰

The actor's objective is therefore to make Tito reconsider an inference, not to defeat him in an argument. Publio's authority remains subordinate. The scene ends not with Publio obtaining Tito's agreement but with the completion of his counsel and his departure.

²⁸⁸ Magnus Tessing Schneider, "From Metastasio to Mazzolà: Clemency and Pity in *La clemenza di Tito*," in *Mozart's La clemenza di Tito: A Reappraisal*, ed. Magnus Tessing Schneider and Ruth Tatlow (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2018), 73–74.

²⁸⁹ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, scene 4, No. 14, Publio's "L'acerbo amaro pianto ... ma vana è la pietà" and the concluding departure of Publio and Sesto with the guards.

²⁹⁰ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, scene 5, No. 16, "Ma, signor, non han tutti il cor di Tito" and "Tardi s'avvede."

The acting score should mark this as an important change from **physical authority** to **epistemic authority**. During the arrest, Publio controls movement. In the aria, he contributes a form of political knowledge. The distinction allows the same character to remain authoritative without making every scene physically forceful.

After “Tardi s’avvede,” Publio’s task shifts again when he returns carrying the Senate’s decree. The operative verb is now **Deliver**. He reports that Sesto has admitted responsibility, that the Senate has condemned him with the other conspirators, and that the decree lacks only Tito’s imperial name. He presents it as “terribile, ma giusto” and hands the paper to the emperor.²⁹¹

The starting condition is documentary certainty. Publio is no longer operating from suspicion. He has returned with an institutional result.

The objective is to place that result before Tito.

The limit is that Publio cannot complete the sovereign decision himself.

The physical transfer of the document should therefore be scored as the scene’s decisive action. Before the transfer, Publio carries the Senate’s judgment. After the transfer, Tito physically possesses the decision that requires imperial completion. The prop makes hierarchy visible without requiring explanatory gesture.

Once the decree has been delivered, Publio should not continue acting as though the decision remains his responsibility. His task has changed. The acting score should mark a release of procedural ownership: **the report has been delivered; the sovereign must now decide**.

This also explains why departure matters. Publio is not entitled to remain inside every stage of Tito’s private deliberation merely because he transmitted the document. Institutional access has reached its limit.

No. 18 introduces the verb **Read**. Here Publio observes Tito’s conflict in the presence of Sesto. His aside identifies the emotional battle within the emperor: “Mille diversi affetti / in Tito guerra fanno,” followed by the inference that Tito continues to love Sesto because he suffers so deeply. Schneider treats this passage as part of the opera’s representation of Tito’s human emotional conflict.²⁹²

The starting condition is observation.

The trigger is Tito’s visible and musical disturbance.

The objective is not to change Tito but to understand what is happening.

The result is an inference: continued affection remains present.

The limit is decisive: affection is not yet pardon.

²⁹¹ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, scene 7, Publio’s report of the Senate’s judgment and “Ecco il decreto / terribile, ma giusto.”

²⁹² Schneider, “From Metastasio to Mazzolà,” 80, discussion of Publio’s “Mille diversi affetti / in Tito guerra fanno.”

The acting score should therefore stop at interpretation. Publio must not begin celebrating clemency or relaxing custody simply because he has correctly perceived Tito's emotional attachment to Sesto.

This distinction gives Publio an especially useful acting principle: **read only as far as the evidence allows**.

The next transition is defined by exclusion. Tito's private encounter with Sesto removes Publio from the decisive conversation. When Publio later returns, he should not carry the emotional history of a scene he did not witness.

The operative verb becomes **Verify**.

Tito calls "Publio!" and Publio answers "Cesare." When Tito says they must go to the waiting people, Publio immediately asks, "E Sesto?" and then "Dunque il suo fato?" Tito answers only that Sesto's fate has already been decided, and Publio responds, "Oh, sventurato!"²⁹³

The starting condition is incomplete knowledge.

The objective is to obtain operational instruction.

The limit is that Tito does not disclose the content of the private deliberation.

The result is a reasonable but incorrect inference: Publio assumes that Sesto remains condemned.

For the actor, "Oh, sventurato!" must therefore emerge from the information available at that moment. It should not contain secret knowledge of the pardon merely because the performer has read the next pages of the opera.

The scene with Vitellia immediately afterward sharpens this principle. Publio is already following Tito when Vitellia calls him back. His acting score should therefore begin with an **interrupted action**, not with a neutral conversational meeting.

The verb becomes **Report**.

Publio tells her where Tito is going and that Sesto will also go to the arena. When Vitellia asks whether Sesto spoke with Tito and whether Publio knows what was said, he answers:

"No. Solo con lui
restar cesare volle: escluso io fui."²⁹⁴

The statement should be scored as a factual boundary. Publio knows that the meeting occurred; he does not know its content.

The objective is to answer accurately while resuming his prior task.

The limit is knowledge, not confidence.

²⁹³ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, scene 12, "E Sesto? ... Dunque il suo fato? ... Oh, sventurato!"

²⁹⁴ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, scene 13, "No. Solo con lui / restar cesare volle: escluso io fui."

The performer should therefore resist turning “escluso io fui” into a complaint unless a specific production deliberately establishes such a relationship. The line does not itself describe resentment. It explains an information gap.

Physical orientation can help preserve this dramatic condition. Because the libretto presents Vitellia as interrupting Publio while he is following Tito, some continuing directional intention toward the emperor’s route is justified. The exact posture is a production choice; the essential fact is that Publio has somewhere else to go.

The final scene begins with another operational task. Tito orders the guards to bring the condemned man before him, and the following scene places Tito, Publio, and Sesto among the lictors.²⁹⁵

The operative verb at the entrance is therefore **Present**.

Publio has not entered to celebrate a pardon. He participates in the delivery of a condemned prisoner into public space.

The starting condition is continuity of judicial procedure.

The objective is to complete the ordered presentation of Sesto.

The limit is unchanged: Publio does not know or determine Tito’s ultimate public action.

This gives Vitellia’s confession greater force. It interrupts not a neutral gathering but a procedure already moving toward an apparently settled consequence.

The acting score should mark the confession as a major external trigger: **new information invalidates the expected trajectory**.

Publio’s task then becomes **Reorient**.

He must stop operating according to the previous assumption and receive a new sovereign reality.

The transformation should not be confused with a psychological conversion from cruelty to kindness. Publio has already shown compassion earlier. What changes now is the legal and institutional direction of action.

Tito’s clemency alters what must be done with the prisoner.

The performer’s body can therefore register the change first through altered readiness: the action toward punishment no longer continues. Exactly how that shift becomes visible belongs to the staging, but the actor should understand precisely why it happens.

The final ensemble completes the acting score by reducing the need for individual commentary. Publio does not require a private concluding explanation of everything that has occurred. His final function belongs increasingly to the collective public reception of Tito’s clemency.

The final operative verb is therefore **Join**.

²⁹⁵ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, scenes 16–17, Tito’s order to bring the prisoner and the entrance of Tito, Publio, and Sesto among the lictors.

He joins the community that receives the sovereign decision.

This is different from disappearing. The performer remains alert, vocally present, and connected to what has changed. But he does not manufacture an additional personal climax that the score and libretto do not provide.

Taken across the opera, the acting score therefore moves through a chain of playable verbs:

Maintain → Assess → Secure → Register → Warn → Deliver → Read → Verify → Report → Present → Reorient → Join.

This sequence does not claim that Mozart or Mazzolà wrote these English verbs into the role. They are rehearsal tools derived from the actions and limits established by the text.

Their purpose is to prevent one generalized characterization from controlling every scene.

“Authoritative” is not enough.

“Compassionate” is not enough.

“Loyal” is not enough.

Each of those qualities may be present, but performance requires something that can actually be played toward another person.

A verb creates direction.

To **secure** means that another person’s movement must change.

To **warn** means that another person’s understanding must change.

To **deliver** means that information or responsibility must change hands.

To **read** means that the actor’s attention must gather evidence before forming an interpretation.

To **verify** means that missing information must be obtained.

To **report** means that information must be transmitted without adding what the character does not know.

To **reorient** means that a new fact has made the previous action obsolete.

This is why a scene-by-scene score is particularly useful for Publio. A role with relatively little solo music cannot rely on sheer duration to create continuity. The performer must make the causal relationship among appearances legible.

The end of one scene should therefore prepare the beginning of the next.

When Publio exits toward the Senate, the next appearance should feel as though something has happened there.

When he leaves Tito and Sesto alone, the next return should preserve the fact that he did not hear what occurred.

When he follows Tito toward the arena, Vitellia's interruption should remain an interruption.

When he brings Sesto into the finale, the entrance should retain the purpose of the escort until new information changes it.

The acting score therefore connects offstage time with onstage action. A performer should write down the presumed task between appearances even when the libretto does not dramatize every step. Such entries must remain conservative: they should record what the next scene requires, not invent an elaborate offstage biography.

For example, after Publio leaves to obtain the Senate's result, the performer does not need to invent whom he spoke to, what corridors he crossed, or how he emotionally processed every minute. It is enough to know that he returns with a decree that he did not possess before.

Likewise, after leaving Tito alone with Sesto, Publio need not invent a secret conversation with the guards. What matters is that he remains outside the private exchange and therefore returns without knowledge of Tito's hidden decision.

The acting score should also contain **negative instructions**—things the performer deliberately does not play.

Do not know Vitellia's guilt before it is revealed.

Do not anticipate Tito's pardon.

Do not treat compassion as authority to release Sesto.

Do not treat delegated authority as sovereign power.

Do not treat exclusion from a private conversation as humiliation unless the production independently establishes it.

Do not make every repeated command angrier merely because it is repeated.

These negative instructions are important because performers often add psychological continuity by unconsciously importing future knowledge into earlier scenes. Preventing such additions allows the actual arc to remain visible.

A fully prepared acting score should finally be tested against three questions.

First: **Can every entrance be explained by a task?**

Second: **Can every major change be traced to information actually available to Publio?**

Third: **Can every physical action be distinguished from a decision that belongs to Tito, the Senate, another character, or the production itself?**

If the answer to all three is yes, the role can remain coherent even when staging changes substantially.

The value of the acting score is therefore not that it fixes Publio permanently. Its value is that it makes adaptation disciplined. A director may move the action to a modern ministry, a military regime, an abstract ceremonial state, or an eighteenth-century court. The performer can change costume, posture, distance, and gesture while preserving the logic of objective, knowledge, authority, and response.

In this sense, Publio's acting score functions as a structural map rather than a choreography. It tells the performer why action must change, not exactly what every change must look like.

8.6 Collaboration with the Conductor and Stage Director

Publio's interpretation cannot be completed by the singer alone. His dramatic function depends upon timing with Tito, Sesto, Vitellia, the guards, the continuo, the orchestra, and the physical organization of the production. The performer therefore needs a collaborative method that allows musical and scenic decisions to reinforce rather than contradict each other.

The first principle is that collaboration should begin from function rather than personal preference. A singer may prefer a slower tempo, a particular physical distance from another actor, or a specific place to breathe, but these preferences should be tested against the dramatic purpose of the passage and the requirements of the ensemble.

The conductor and stage director affect different dimensions of the same action.

The conductor shapes temporal structure: tempo, ensemble coordination, orchestral balance, recitative pacing, dynamic proportion, and the placement of musical transitions.

The stage director shapes visible structure: distance, hierarchy, movement, gesture, physical access, use of props, and the relationship between the performer and the production's larger political concept.

For Publio, these responsibilities frequently intersect.

No. 14 provides one of the clearest examples. Publio's repeated "Vieni" is simultaneously a musical entrance and a dramatic attempt to continue Sesto's movement toward the Senate.²⁹⁶ The conductor may be concerned with exact rhythmic placement and ensemble balance, while the director may need the same word to trigger or renew physical movement.

If these decisions are rehearsed separately, a conflict may arise. The singer may move early enough to weaken the musical cue, or may wait so long for rhythmic precision that the command ceases to have an immediate physical consequence.

²⁹⁶ Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, K. 621, ed. Franz Giegling, *Neue Mozart-Ausgabe*, ser. II, work group 5, vol. 20 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1970), No. 14, "Se al volto mai ti senti," 175–78; Caterino Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, scene 4.

The solution is not to choose music over drama or drama over music. The three collaborators must identify the actual event being coordinated.

In this case, the event can be defined as:

Publio renews the interrupted escort.

Once that event is agreed upon, the conductor can clarify when the musical impulse begins, the director can determine how the movement becomes visible, and the singer can coordinate breath, text, attention, and body around the same dramatic point.

This approach is more productive than treating musical and scenic rehearsals as separate layers that are combined only at the end.

Publio's ensembles make such coordination particularly important because his action frequently continues while another character is singing. In No. 14, Sesto's farewell and Vitellia's interruption delay but do not cancel the arrest. The singer must therefore remain responsive to the ensemble without losing the direction of custody.

The conductor can help establish where Publio's line should emerge from the texture and where listening is more important than projection. The stage director can determine whether the physical action should pause, slow, redirect, or remain visibly pending.

The singer's responsibility is to preserve the dramatic through-line under both sets of demands.

This means that the performer should arrive at rehearsal with a clear distinction between **essential function** and **negotiable realization**.

The essential function may be:

Sesto must ultimately leave under Publio's custody.

The negotiable realization may include:

how close Publio stands,
whether he touches Sesto,
when he turns toward Vitellia,
which side of the stage they use,
how visibly the guards participate.

This distinction makes collaboration easier because the singer can adapt physical choices without losing the structural logic of the scene.

No. 16 requires a different kind of collaboration. "Tardi s'avvede" is marked Allegretto, and its orchestral writing contains enough mobility that the singer does not need to manufacture authority by slowing or broadening the line excessively.²⁹⁷

The conductor's tempo will strongly affect how the aria functions dramatically.

²⁹⁷ Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*, No. 16, "Tardi s'avvede," 193–95.

If the tempo becomes too broad, the warning may lose its conversational origin and begin to resemble a ceremonial statement detached from Tito's preceding line.

If the tempo becomes too fast, Italian articulation and rhetorical differentiation may become unclear.

The singer should therefore discuss tempo in terms of **dramatic function and vocal sustainability**, not simply preference.

Instead of saying:

"I want it slower."

the singer can identify the practical problem:

"At this tempo the distinction between the proposition and its explanation becomes difficult to articulate clearly."

Or:

"At a slower tempo the phrase loses the forward quality of counsel established by the recitative."

Such communication provides the conductor with a musical and dramatic reason rather than a purely subjective request.

Breath planning should be negotiated in the same way. A conductor may prefer longer phrases, but the singer should not preserve them at the expense of phonatory stability or textual clarity. Conversely, a singer should not insert frequent breaths simply because they feel physically convenient if those breaths fragment the syntax.

The goal is to identify a solution in which musical line and sustainable vocal production coexist.

The singer should therefore know in advance which breath points are essential and which are flexible.

This is especially useful when tempo changes during rehearsal.

A breath that functions comfortably at one Allegretto may become unnecessary or impractical at another. The performer should be able to adapt without losing the rhetorical architecture of the aria.

Dynamic collaboration also requires precision. Requests such as "more," "less," "stronger," or "softer" can be misleading because they may refer to different things.

A conductor asking for "more" may mean:

- more presence in the orchestral balance,
- a clearer consonant,
- longer phrase direction,
- greater dynamic intensity,
- or a more decisive rhythmic entrance.

A singer who interprets every request for "more" as increased physical force may solve the wrong problem.

The performer should therefore clarify **what needs to become more perceptible**.

This principle applies equally to the stage director.

A request for “more authority” does not necessarily mean louder singing, a broader stance, or more aggressive gestures. It may mean that Publio’s relationship to space and hierarchy is not clear enough.

The actor should ask what the audience needs to understand.

If the desired result is that Sesto cannot freely leave, the solution may be spatial organization rather than physical aggression.

If the desired result is that Publio occupies official status near Tito, the solution may be access and stillness rather than a permanent display of military dominance.

This distinction protects the performer from converting abstract acting notes into unnecessary muscular tension.

Collaboration becomes more complex when the musical and dramatic demands appear to contradict each other.

For example, a director may ask the singer to turn away from the conductor during a difficult ensemble entrance. The singer should not automatically reject the staging, but should identify what visual information will be lost and whether another cue can replace direct visual contact.

The solution might involve using an audible orchestral cue, peripheral vision, a cue from another singer, or a slightly modified body angle.

The central question is not:

Can I always see the conductor?

but:

Can I maintain reliable musical coordination while fulfilling the dramatic action?

Conversely, the conductor should understand that a staging involving rapid walking, kneeling, restraint, or a large turn may alter the singer’s breath timing and auditory perception. What worked in a stationary piano rehearsal may require adjustment once the physical action is introduced.

This is why full staging should be integrated with musical rehearsal as early as reasonably possible.

Publio’s recitatives also benefit greatly from collaboration with the continuo team and conductor. Recitative tempo should respond to thought and interaction rather than operate as an independent metronomic layer.

A performer should prepare a clear textual impulse but remain flexible enough for Tito or another singer to alter the timing of the exchange.

The goal is conversational readiness.

This requires the singer to distinguish between a pause that belongs to the character's thought and a pause that exists only because the performer has become accustomed to taking time there.

A director may reveal that a long pause interrupts physical momentum. A conductor may reveal that it weakens the syntax. The singer should be prepared to release such habits.

At the same time, not every pause should be eliminated in the name of speed. Publio sometimes receives information that genuinely requires a change of attention. A brief silence may be dramatically necessary when the character moves from reporting to observing, from procedure to compassion, or from certainty to uncertainty.

Collaboration should therefore determine **why time is being used**.

The Senate decree scene provides a useful example. Publio returns carrying the document, reports the Senate's judgment, describes the decree as "terribile, ma giusto," and gives it to Tito.²⁹⁸

The conductor controls the pacing of the recitative.

The director controls the physical transfer of the paper.

The singer must integrate the two so that the prop does not interrupt the syntax or arrive without dramatic consequence.

If the document is handed over before the relevant line has established its significance, the physical action may anticipate the information.

If the singer finishes the complete report and only then remembers to hand over the document, the prop may feel disconnected from the dramatic transfer of responsibility.

The moment should therefore be rehearsed as one combined event:

information becomes document, and document becomes Tito's responsibility.

This is precisely the kind of transition where singer, conductor, and stage director should agree on a shared cue.

No. 18 produces another collaborative problem. Publio's aside about Tito depends on the emperor's visible and musical conflict.²⁹⁹

The singer performing Publio should therefore know what aspect of Tito's behavior the production wants him to perceive.

One director may make Tito's hesitation physically obvious.

²⁹⁸ Mazzolà, *La clemenza di Tito*, act 2, scene 7, Publio's presentation of the Senate's decree: "Ecco il decreto / terribile, ma giusto ... né vi manca, o signor, che il nome augusto."

²⁹⁹ Magnus Tessing Schneider, "From Metastasio to Mazzolà: Clemency and Pity in *La clemenza di Tito*," in *Mozart's La clemenza di Tito: A Reappraisal*, ed. Magnus Tessing Schneider and Ruth Tatlow (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2018), 80.

Another may prefer restraint, allowing the conflict to be communicated mainly through Mozart's music.

The Publio performer should not impose the same reaction in both productions.

If Tito's physical behavior is restrained, Publio's observation may rely more heavily on timing, vocal tension, silence, and the musical situation.

If Tito's distress is physically explicit, Publio may require less demonstrative reaction because the evidence is already visible to the audience.

The performer's response should therefore be calibrated to the **production's existing level of legibility**.

This is an important collaborative principle:

Do not duplicate information the production already communicates clearly.

If the set, costume, guards, and blocking already establish Publio's rank, the actor need not continuously demonstrate authority.

If the production minimizes conventional rank markers, the performer may need to communicate hierarchy more through behavior and spatial confidence.

If Tito's emotional struggle is highly visible, Publio can read rather than illustrate it.

If the struggle is understated, Publio's aside may help make the transition intelligible.

The goal is proportion.

The same principle applies to compassion in No. 14. If Sesto's suffering is already highly expressive, Publio does not need a large visible reaction to prove that he notices it. His later aside supplies the textual confirmation.

A smaller change of attention may therefore be more powerful than a large gesture.

Collaboration also requires the singer to communicate the limits of the character without becoming defensive about an interpretation.

Suppose a director proposes that Publio behave aggressively toward Sesto.

The singer should not reject the idea simply because it differs from a preferred characterization.

Instead, the relevant questions are:

Does this production consistently present state authority as coercive?

Can the later expression of compassion remain credible?

Does Publio still appear delegated rather than sovereign?

Does the action preserve the distinction between arrest and judgment?

If the answer is yes, a severe interpretation may be defensible.

By contrast, if a staging asks Publio independently to cancel Sesto's custody or secretly reveal Tito's pardon before the emperor announces it, the issue is more fundamental. Such choices alter the distribution of authority or information established by the libretto.

In those cases the performer should identify the textual conflict clearly and allow the director to decide whether the production intends a deliberate departure from the original structure.

Evidence should therefore function as a **tool for conversation**, not as a weapon against collaboration.

The singer should be able to say:

"The libretto places Publio outside the private conversation, so if he knows Tito's decision here, we are intentionally changing the information structure."

That is more useful than saying:

"My interpretation is correct."

A professional collaborative process can then distinguish deliberate reinterpretation from accidental contradiction.

The performer should also maintain a rehearsal record of decisions that affect continuity.

For Publio, this record should include:

- tempo-related breath changes,
- ensemble cue changes,
- prop transfers,
- entrances and exits,
- who initiates movement,
- where custody changes,
- where Publio is excluded,
- and which reactions are dependent on another performer's action.

This is especially important in repertory theater, where spacing rehearsals may be limited and cast combinations can change.

A performer who knows only the final blocking may become unstable when another singer changes timing. A performer who understands the underlying cue can adapt.

Collaboration with the director should therefore distinguish **cue-based action** from **memorized choreography**.

For example, instead of remembering:

"Take three steps on the fourth beat."

the performer can remember:

"When Sesto completes his farewell and returns attention to the escort, resume movement."

A musical subdivision may still be necessary, but dramatic causality remains present.

Likewise, instead of remembering:

“Look at Tito for two seconds here.”

Publio can remember:

“Tito’s distress becomes sufficient evidence for the conclusion that he still loves Sesto.”

The exact duration can then adapt to the particular Tito, tempo, and staging.

This makes the role more resilient.

The best collaboration therefore does not remove performer autonomy. It relocates autonomy within a shared structure.

The singer arrives with knowledge of text, score, breath, dramatic objective, and character limits.

The conductor contributes temporal and orchestral perspective.

The stage director contributes spatial, visual, and conceptual organization.

None of the three should be expected to solve every problem alone.

For Publio, this shared process is especially appropriate because the role itself is fundamentally relational. His authority exists in relation to Tito. His coercive function exists in relation to Sesto. His compassion becomes legible in relation to suffering. His informational limits become visible when he is excluded. His final reorientation occurs because Tito’s sovereign decision changes the institutional situation.

The rehearsal method should therefore mirror the dramaturgy: Publio becomes clearer through coordination.

A successful interpretation is not one in which the singer protects every pre-rehearsed decision. It is one in which the essential relationships remain intelligible after those decisions have been transformed through collaboration.

8.7 Adapting Publio to Period and Modern Productions

The performer-centered model developed in this chapter must remain useful across productions that differ radically in period, visual language, political analogy, and acting style. Publio cannot be prepared as though one costume, posture, or social environment were intrinsic to the role. At the same time, flexibility should not become interpretive arbitrariness. The performer needs to

distinguish between elements that may change with the production and relationships that must remain intelligible if the dramatic structure is to survive.

The central principle is therefore **structural continuity within stylistic change**.

A period production may place Publio within an explicitly Roman or eighteenth-century ceremonial environment. A modern production may relocate imperial Rome into bureaucracy, military administration, contemporary government, or a more abstract political system. The visual appearance of authority can change substantially, but Publio's authority remains delegated rather than sovereign.

The first task for the performer is therefore to identify how the production communicates rank.

In a historically oriented production, rank may already be visible through costume, insignia, ceremonial distance, guards, architecture, and formal patterns of address. If the audience can immediately distinguish emperor, official, prisoner, and court, the actor does not need to duplicate that information through exaggerated bodily dominance.

The performer can instead work with restraint. Stillness, controlled movement, precise response to Tito, and economical interaction with the guards may be sufficient to establish authority.

A modern production may remove many of these conventional signs. Publio may wear clothing visually similar to other officials, or the production may deliberately flatten the distinction between court and bureaucracy. Under those circumstances, hierarchy may need to become legible more strongly through behavior.

The performer may therefore need to clarify who has access to Tito, who receives information, who can initiate the movement of guards, and who must stop acting when Tito makes a sovereign decision.

The actor should not ask:

What does a Roman prefect look like?

as the only starting question.

A more adaptable question is:

How does this production make delegated authority visible?

The answer may involve costume in one staging and spatial organization in another.

Glyndebourne's 2017 production offers a particularly useful modern example. Tim Ashley described Claus Guth's setting as one in which "The Roman Empire becomes a soulless modern bureaucracy."³⁰⁰ Such a world changes the social associations surrounding Publio. His reports, proximity to Tito, and participation in official procedure can resemble administrative power rather than ceremonial Roman authority.

³⁰⁰ Tim Ashley, "La Clemenza di Tito Review—A Magical, Maddening Return to Glyndebourne," *The Guardian*, July 27, 2017.

This can alter how ordinary actions are perceived. A confidential report may appear bureaucratically intrusive. Efficient obedience may appear calculating. Access to the ruler may appear politically influential.

Ashley's description of Clive Bayley's Publio as "cunning" and "insidious" demonstrates that this transformation affected critical reception of the character itself.³⁰¹

The performer should not conclude from this review that Publio is inherently cunning. The useful lesson is different: **production context can modify the ethical meaning of neutral or ambiguous behavior.**

In a bureaucratic production, the singer must therefore decide how much pressure is already being generated by the environment.

If the stage world itself appears cold, oppressive, or administratively threatening, Publio may require less individual aggression. Additional severity could make the character appear more personally malicious than the text requires.

Conversely, if the production presents the bureaucracy as ordinary or even benign, greater behavioral precision may be required to make the seriousness of arrest and judgment credible.

The actor should therefore calibrate interpretation against the world already created around the role.

Salzburg's 2017 Sellars production represents another type of modernization. The Salzburg Festival later described the production as raising contemporary questions related to terrorism and migration.³⁰² The same institution also characterized Sellars and Currentzis's interpretation as a vision concerned with justice and reconciliation.³⁰³

These concepts create a different pressure from Glyndebourne's bureaucracy.

In a production shaped by terrorism, migration, violence, and reconciliation, Publio's participation in arrest and custody may evoke modern systems of state security even if the production never explicitly identifies him with one specific contemporary profession.

The performer must therefore be careful not to add an unnecessary layer of modern characterization merely because the surrounding political associations are strong.

A contemporary setting does not automatically make Publio a police officer, intelligence agent, prison guard, or military commander in a precise twenty-first-century sense.

Unless the production explicitly establishes such an identity, the actor should work from function:

Publio receives and transmits official information.

³⁰¹ Ashley, "La Clemenza di Tito Review."

³⁰² Salzburg Festival, "21 July–30 August," retrospective history of the 2017 Salzburg Festival, discussion of Peter Sellars's *La clemenza di Tito*.

³⁰³ Salzburg Festival, "Peter Sellars Stages *Idomeneo*," 2019; Salzburg Festival, "Peter Sellars to Deliver Keynote Address at the Opening of the 2019 Salzburg Festival," 2019.

He participates in custody.

He executes commands.

He remains subordinate to Tito.

These functions can be translated visually without inventing a complete modern occupational biography.

This distinction becomes especially important when contemporary political imagery is emotionally charged.

If arrest evokes modern state violence, Publio's treatment of Sesto can acquire associations that the singer does not need to intensify artificially. The performer may instead preserve procedural restraint, allowing the production concept itself to generate the political tension.

The line between **production meaning** and **performer addition** should remain visible during rehearsal.

The actor should ask:

What political meaning is already being supplied by costume, set, guards, and direction?

and then:

What does my behavior still need to communicate?

This avoids redundant acting.

Teatro Real provides a contrasting example of adaptation because contemporary relevance need not depend upon literal modernization. Luis Gago described the Herrmann production as a meticulously organized theatrical action showing how public affairs are handled and resolved in private.³⁰⁴

This formulation is particularly useful for Publio because it demonstrates that public/private structure can remain legible within a highly stylized production.

The performer does not need a realistic government office in order to establish the boundary between official access and sovereign privacy.

A formalized stage can communicate the same structure through position, entrance, exit, ceremonial distance, and controlled access.

This has direct implications for period production.

Historical or quasi-historical staging should not be treated as merely decorative.

Ceremony can itself become a form of dramatic information.

If Tito occupies a clearly defined sovereign center, Publio's approach toward that center can reveal hierarchy.

³⁰⁴ Luis Gago, "Ópera de verdad," *El País*, November 20, 2016.

If guards enter and leave according to formal patterns, Publio's ability to direct them can establish delegated authority.

If private access requires the removal of officials, Publio's exit can reveal the boundary between state procedure and personal encounter.

Period style therefore does not necessarily require more gesture.

It may require **greater precision of protocol**.

The singer should identify the production's rules of access before determining physical characterization.

How close may Publio stand to Tito?

Does he approach only when addressed?

Can he cross the sovereign's space while carrying a report?

Who receives the sword?

Who handles the decree?

What changes when Tito orders everyone to leave?

These decisions produce hierarchy more effectively than a generalized imitation of historical manners.

The performer should also distinguish **formal behavior** from **emotional suppression**.

A period production may demand restrained gesture, but restraint does not mean that Publio cannot hear, think, or feel.

No. 14 remains the clearest control. Mazzola explicitly allows Publio to acknowledge Sesto's suffering. The performer may express that change within a highly formalized physical vocabulary rather than enlarging it into modern psychological naturalism.

A small alteration of focus, breath, or timing may therefore be sufficient in a ceremonial production.

In a psychologically naturalistic modern production, the same internal change may be allowed greater visible specificity.

The underlying fact remains the same; the **scale of embodiment** changes.

This produces an important adaptation principle:

Preserve the trigger and change the scale of the response.

Sesto's suffering must still trigger Publio's compassion.

Tito's conflict must still trigger Publio's interpretation in No. 18.

Tito's exclusion of Publio must still limit his knowledge.

Vitellia's confession must still introduce genuinely new information.

What may change is how visibly those changes are embodied.

A stylized production may require the reaction to remain contained within musical timing and orientation.

A naturalistic production may permit more detailed facial or physical response.

An abstract production may translate the same change into spatial repositioning rather than psychological gesture.

The performer should therefore avoid confusing naturalism with truthfulness.

A large visible reaction is not inherently more truthful than a restrained one.

Truthfulness depends on whether the response is causally connected to information available to the character and proportionate to the production's language.

The same principle applies to vocal color.

A modern production does not require the singer to abandon classical vocal identity in order to sound contemporary.

Nor does a period production require artificial vocal heaviness in order to sound authoritative.

The vocal instrument remains governed by the score and the singer's sustainable technique.

What can change is rhetorical emphasis.

In a highly ceremonial production, Publio's diction and rhythmic precision may contribute strongly to formal status.

In a naturalistic production, recitative may need greater conversational immediacy.

In a bureaucratic production, factual efficiency may become a deliberate part of characterization.

In a politically violent production, restraint may prevent authority from becoming caricature.

These differences should be built through timing, intention, and relationship rather than through unsafe modification of the instrument.

Costume also affects performance, but it should be treated functionally.

A Roman military costume may physically communicate rank before the singer moves.

A modern suit may communicate administrative rather than military authority.

A uniform may create an immediate association with coercive power.

An abstract costume may provide almost no social information at all.

The singer should identify what the costume already tells the audience.

If the uniform already makes coercive authority obvious, the body may need less aggression.

If the costume visually minimizes status, posture and spatial confidence may need to carry more information.

The same functional analysis applies to physical restrictions.

Armor, long coats, formal footwear, weapons, or elaborate historical costume can change breathing, stride length, arm movement, and the speed of entrances and exits.

These conditions should be incorporated into rehearsal early rather than treated as superficial design additions.

A singer who learns a highly mobile acting score in rehearsal clothes may discover that the final costume makes the movement vocally inefficient or visually awkward.

The production should therefore test not only whether the costume looks appropriate but whether the performer can execute the required musical and dramatic tasks inside it.

Props require similar adaptation.

In a period production, Sesto's sword may carry obvious ceremonial and military meaning.

In a modern production, another object may represent surrender or loss of autonomy.

The essential function is not the historical object itself but the **change of status** produced when control changes hands.

Likewise, the Senate's decree may appear as a formal manuscript, a typed document, a file, or another production-specific object.

The important relationship is that Publio possesses an institutional result that still requires Tito's sovereign completion.

The actor should therefore adapt to the prop while preserving the transfer of authority.

Space must be treated with the same flexibility.

A period throne room, a modern office, a tribunal, a security facility, or an abstract platform may all support Publio's function if the production establishes clear rules of access.

The performer should map the stage according to dramatic destinations rather than decorative geography.

Where is sovereign power located?

Where does public judgment enter from?

Where does custody lead?

Where does private access begin?

Where does Publio's authority stop?

These questions allow an abstract production to remain dramatically precise.

They also help prevent period productions from becoming visually impressive but causally vague.

Modernization creates one additional risk: the temptation to reinterpret every historical relationship through a contemporary psychological or political category.

Publio may resemble a chief of staff, security officer, civil servant, prosecutor, military aide, or intelligence official in different productions. Such analogies can be useful during rehearsal, but they should remain analogies unless the production explicitly establishes them.

No modern occupation maps perfectly onto Publio's dramatic function.

His role combines custody, reporting, proximity to the sovereign, transmission of institutional judgment, and participation in public order.

A single modern job title may therefore clarify one aspect while distorting another.

The singer should use modern analogies as **temporary rehearsal tools**, not as substitutes for textual analysis.

The opposite danger exists in period production.

Historical distance can tempt the performer to treat Publio as a generic "Roman officer" whose seriousness is assumed rather than acted.

A costume and title cannot replace objective, listening, and informational change.

The performer must still know why he enters, what he has learned, whom he must move, what he cannot decide, and what changes before he leaves.

Historical appearance therefore does not reduce the need for psychological and dramaturgical precision.

The comparison among documented modern productions reinforces this point. Glyndebourne's bureaucratic interpretation could lead a critic to perceive Publio as cunning and insidious. Salzburg's political framing connected the opera to terrorism, migration, justice, and reconciliation. Teatro Real's stylized production allowed a critic to emphasize the movement between public affairs and private decision.³⁰⁵

These environments differ strongly, yet none eliminates Publio's fundamental dramatic constraints.

He remains subordinate to Tito.

He does not possess unrestricted knowledge.

He participates in custody but does not determine the final sentence.

³⁰⁵ Ashley, "La Clemenza di Tito Review"; Salzburg Festival, "21 July–30 August"; Gago, "Ópera de verdad."

He can respond compassionately without independently suspending procedure.

He must alter his action when sovereign authority changes the situation.

These are the structural elements the performer carries from one production to another.

The acting score developed in the preceding section can therefore be used as an adaptation test.

The verb **Secure** may look different in Roman armor and in a modern suit.

The verb **Warn** may be formal in one production and conversational in another.

The verb **Deliver** may involve a parchment decree or a modern file.

The verb **Read** may respond to restrained ceremonial tension or visible psychological collapse.

The verb **Reorient** may involve a small change of stance or an extensive reorganization of stage relationships.

The action changes in surface form while remaining structurally recognizable.

This is the purpose of controlled adaptability.

The performer should neither reproduce one historical production nor reinvent Publio from zero every time.

Instead, each new production should be approached through three questions.

First:

What has this production changed?

This includes period, costume, political analogy, space, and acting style.

Second:

What does the production already communicate without my help?

This prevents redundant acting.

Third:

Which structural relationship must my performance still make legible?

This preserves the role.

The most successful adaptation is therefore not the one that looks most historical or most contemporary. It is the one in which the production's chosen theatrical language and Publio's dramatic function remain mutually intelligible.

Publio can inhabit radically different worlds without becoming a different dramatic mechanism in each one.

His appearance may change.

His social analogy may change.

The scale of gesture may change.

His physical relationship to Tito and Sesto may change.

But his fundamental position remains that of an official close enough to power to make it operational and limited enough to reveal where that power ceases to be his.

8.8 Limits of Practitioner Reflection

Performer-centered research gains much of its value from access to forms of knowledge that may not be fully visible in a score, libretto, or external review. A singer can describe how a phrase changes when movement is added, how an ensemble cue affects attention, how costume alters physical coordination, or how a dramatic objective changes the experience of breath and timing. Such observations can produce valuable knowledge about rehearsal and performance. They must, however, be distinguished carefully from historical, textual, and universally generalizable claims.

The central limitation is straightforward: **the performer's experience is evidence of the performer's experience**. It does not automatically establish what Mozart intended, what Mazzolà expected, what the original Publio did in Prague in 1791, or what every future singer should do.

This distinction does not diminish practitioner reflection. It defines its proper evidentiary status.

Recent work on artistic and practice-based research in music has emphasized the value of critical self-reflection in connecting theory and artistic practice. Iglesias and Tejada describe Practice as Research in musical higher education as a means of developing the relationship between theory and practice together with critical-reflexive skills.³⁰⁶ Their formulation is useful here because it presents reflection not as a replacement for research but as a process through which practice itself can become an object of disciplined inquiry.

For the present study, practitioner reflection therefore enters only after textual and documentary constraints have been established.

The sequence is:

evidence → performance question → rehearsal experiment → reflection → revised performance decision.

It is not:

³⁰⁶ Pedro Iglesias and Jesús Tejada, "Practice as Research through Inquiry-Based Learning: A Pedagogical Intervention with Music Students in Higher Education," *Education Sciences* 14, no. 7 (2024): 738, <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci14070738>.

personal experience → historical fact.

This methodological order matters because embodied experience can feel persuasive. A particular staging may produce such a strong sensation of authority, pity, physical restriction, or vocal freedom that the performer begins to treat the sensation as evidence that the role “must” work in that way.

That conclusion would exceed the evidence.

For example, a singer may discover that remaining physically still during Publio’s compassionate aside produces a stronger theatrical effect than using a visible gesture. This can be reported legitimately as a rehearsal finding within a specific production. It does not prove that stillness is the correct or historically authentic interpretation of the scene.

Likewise, a singer may find that a slightly quicker recitative pace produces greater dramatic urgency. This may be useful within a particular acoustic, cast, continuo style, and staging. It does not establish one universally correct tempo.

Practitioner reflection therefore requires **situational language**.

Rather than writing:

“Publio must remain still here,”

a performer-researcher should write:

“In this rehearsal configuration, reducing unnecessary movement clarified the distinction between Publio’s emotional response and his continuing official task.”

The second statement preserves the observation while avoiding false universality.

This distinction is consistent with broader approaches to artistic research. Dogantan-Dack describes artistic research in music performance as rigorous and systematic research undertaken by practitioners into their own creative processes and artistic products, while also emphasizing its self-reflexive character.³⁰⁷ The important terms are not only “artistic” and “practice,” but also **rigorous**, **systematic**, and **self-reflexive**.

The practitioner must therefore reflect not only on what seemed successful but also on the conditions under which that judgment was formed.

Was the judgment made in a practice room, piano rehearsal, stage rehearsal, orchestra rehearsal, or public performance?

Was the singer wearing the final costume?

Was the full cast present?

Was the acoustic similar to the performance space?

³⁰⁷ Mine Doğan-Dack, “Expanding the Scope of Music Theory: Artistic Research in Music Performance,” *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Musiktheorie* 19, no. 2 (2022): 13–42, <https://doi.org/10.31751/1169>.

Did the conductor use the final tempo?

Did the director later change the blocking?

Did fatigue affect the result?

Did the performer evaluate the experience immediately, or retrospectively?

These conditions matter because artistic experience is context-sensitive.

A solution that feels convincing during individual rehearsal may behave differently when orchestral sound, another performer's timing, costume, lighting, and audience presence are added.

Practice-based reflection should therefore treat rehearsal as **iterative rather than definitive**.

Benetti and Hiney propose an “art-cycle” model in which rehearsal and performance are not treated as isolated entities but as parts of a continuing cycle of practice, performance, evaluation, and renewed practice.³⁰⁸ This model is particularly relevant to the present performer-centered framework because Publio's preparation should remain revisable after each layer of production is introduced.

A physical action may first be tested with piano.

It may then be revised after ensemble rehearsal.

It may change again in costume.

It may require further adjustment after the first performance.

No single stage of this process should automatically be treated as the final truth of the role.

This cyclical model also helps distinguish **repeatability** from **fixity**.

A useful performance decision should be sufficiently repeatable that the singer can reproduce its function under performance conditions. But repeatability does not mean that every gesture, breath, or reaction must be identical.

For example, the function “secure Sesto's compliance” should remain stable. The exact distance between the performers may vary slightly.

The function “register Sesto's suffering” should remain stable. The exact duration of visual attention may vary.

The function “verify Tito's decision” should remain stable. The vocal timing of the question may change according to Tito's delivery.

The performer-centered model therefore seeks reliable dramatic causality rather than mechanical reproduction.

³⁰⁸ Alfonso Benetti and Aoife Hiney, “Art-Cycle Model: A Holistic Approach toward Artistic Experience in Music Performance,” *Music Performance Research* 12 (2024): 1–21, <https://doi.org/10.14439/mpr.12.1>.

Another limitation concerns memory.

Performers often reconstruct rehearsals after they have occurred. Such recollection is selective. A singer may remember a moment because it felt unusually successful or unusually difficult while forgetting many ordinary attempts that led to it.

For this reason, practitioner reflection becomes more useful when documented close to the rehearsal itself.

A simple rehearsal record can include:

- date and rehearsal type,
- musical passage,
- staging condition,
- intended objective,
- specific experiment,
- perceived result,
- problem encountered,
- next adjustment.

This record does not transform subjective experience into objective fact. It does, however, create a traceable process.

The researcher can then distinguish:

what was attempted

from

what was later remembered as having been attempted.

Documentation also helps prevent confirmation bias.

A performer who strongly prefers one interpretation may unconsciously record only experiences that support it. A more rigorous rehearsal journal should therefore include failed experiments and contradictory results.

If a more restrained Publio works well in one ensemble rehearsal but becomes theatrically invisible in another staging configuration, both results should be recorded.

The purpose is not to prove a predetermined characterization.

The purpose is to discover the conditions under which particular choices function.

This also means that practitioner reflection should not be used to manufacture agreement with textual analysis.

If the performer's experience resists the initial interpretation, the contradiction may itself be useful.

Suppose textual analysis suggests that Publio's repeated "Vieni" should remain procedural rather than progressively angry. During rehearsal, however, a director constructs a production in which Publio's frustration visibly increases because Sesto repeatedly delays the escort.

The performer may discover that some escalation improves dramatic clarity.

That does not invalidate the textual analysis.

Nor should the performer erase the rehearsal finding.

Instead, the distinction should be stated precisely:

the libretto does not require increasing anger, but this production used controlled escalation as a staging device while preserving the underlying objective of completing the escort.

This is the kind of distinction practitioner research should produce.

The same methodological caution applies to vocal experience.

A singer may report that one breath plan feels more stable, one vowel modification improves resonance, or one physical position makes a phrase easier. Such observations can inform the singer's own preparation.

They should not automatically become universal pedagogical prescriptions.

Research on classical singing already demonstrates substantial individual variation in respiratory coordination.³⁰⁹ The performer's own experience should therefore be situated within that variability rather than elevated above it.

The appropriate formulation is:

This coordination proved effective for this performer under these conditions.

not: This is how Publio should be sung.

The distinction is especially important in a study involving bass and baritone performance because vocal categories themselves contain substantial individual diversity.

Two singers cast as Publio may differ in:

- vocal weight,
- registration,
- tessitura comfort,
- respiratory strategy,
- articulation,
- body size,
- previous training,
- acoustic projection,
- and physical acting habits.

³⁰⁹ Sauro Emerick Salomoni, Wolbert van den Hoorn, and Paul W. Hodges, "Breathing and Singing: Objective Characterization of Breathing Patterns in Classical Singers," *PLOS ONE* 11, no. 5 (2016): e0155084, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0155084>.

A rehearsal model can therefore prescribe questions and functions more confidently than it can prescribe exact physiological solutions.

The framework may tell both singers:

preserve the forward motion of “Tardi s’avvede.”

It cannot assume that both singers will achieve that result through identical breath sensations or vocal adjustments.

Similarly, the framework may tell both performers:

do not allow authority to become unnecessary physical tension.

It cannot define one universally correct posture.

The value of practitioner reflection lies partly in making such individual adaptation visible.

Another limitation concerns the performer’s double position as both participant and analyst.

The singer experiences the scene from inside it while also attempting to evaluate it.

This creates privileged access to certain information but reduced access to others.

The performer knows:

- what the breath felt like,
- which cue was difficult,
- whether a movement disrupted phonation,
- whether attention was genuinely directed toward another singer.

But the performer may not know:

- how the action appeared from the auditorium,
- whether a small gesture was visible,
- whether diction carried clearly,
- whether another character’s line was covered,
- or whether the production’s political relationship was legible to an outside observer.

Practitioner reflection should therefore not replace external feedback.

The conductor, stage director, coach, colleagues, and, where methodologically appropriate, recorded rehearsal material can provide additional perspectives.

The singer’s internal account and the external account may disagree.

That disagreement should not automatically be resolved in favor of either one.

For example, a singer may feel that a forte passage required unusually high effort while the conductor reports that the sound did not project more effectively.

That discrepancy identifies a technical problem worth investigating.

Conversely, a singer may feel that a restrained physical response is almost invisible while the director reports that it reads clearly from the auditorium.

The discrepancy may show that stage scale differs from bodily sensation.

Practitioner research becomes stronger when such differences are recorded rather than forced into agreement.

Self-reflection must also distinguish **artistic satisfaction** from **research evidence**.

A singer may prefer a particular interpretation aesthetically. Preference is legitimate, but preference alone does not establish analytical superiority.

The performer might find a compassionate Publio more interesting than a severe Publio.

A director might prefer a politically threatening Publio.

A critic might perceive the same character as manipulative.

These judgments operate at different levels.

The research question is not simply:

Which Publio do I like best?

It is: Which choices can be supported by the text, score, documented production framework, and clearly identified performer experiment?

The performer's preference can remain part of the final artistic decision, but it should be named as preference rather than disguised as evidence.

Practice-as-research also requires caution about generalization from successful performance.

Audience response can be especially seductive. Applause, compliments, favorable reviews, or colleagues' approval may encourage the performer to assume that a specific interpretive choice has been validated.

Such responses may be useful reception evidence, but they rarely isolate one causal variable.

A successful performance cannot prove that a specific breath, gesture, tempo, or psychological interpretation caused the success.

Many variables operate simultaneously.

Therefore, practitioner reflection should avoid statements such as:

"The audience responded positively because Publio remained still during the arrest."

Unless the research design specifically tests that relationship, the causal claim is too strong.

A more defensible statement would be:

“The restrained staging remained part of a performance that received a positive response, but the response cannot be attributed to that single variable.”

This caution is especially important because live opera is collaborative.

The singer’s experience is only one component of an event created by:

- conductor,
- orchestra,
- continuo,
- stage director,
- other singers,
- chorus,
- design,
- lighting,
- acoustics,
- stage management,
- and audience conditions.

A performer-centered dissertation should acknowledge this distributed authorship.

The performer can analyze his or her contribution without claiming exclusive authorship of the theatrical result.

The strongest form of practitioner reflection in this study is therefore **bounded reflection**.

Bounded reflection has four characteristics.

First, it identifies the external evidence that generated the rehearsal question.

Second, it describes the specific experiment rather than presenting a generalized impression.

Third, it records the conditions under which the experiment occurred.

Fourth, it limits the conclusion to what the experiment can reasonably support.

For example:

Evidence: Publio expresses compassion but continues the arrest.

Question: Can compassion become perceptible without weakening custody?

Experiment: Reduce movement during the aside while maintaining physical direction toward the exit.

Observation: In this rehearsal, the contrast between emotional response and procedural continuity became clearer.

Limit: This does not establish stillness as the only valid staging.

This format allows artistic experience to contribute genuine knowledge without being confused with historical proof.

The same model can be applied to No. 16.

Evidence: The aria is Allegretto and functions as counsel to Tito.

Question: How can rhetorical clarity be increased without adding vocal heaviness?

Experiment: Maintain a mobile pulse while differentiating proposition, explanation, and return through textual emphasis rather than large dynamic escalation.

Observation: The argument became easier to sustain and the aria remained connected to the recitative.

Limit: Another singer or conductor may require different tempo and breath solutions.

This is the methodological role practitioner reflection should occupy in the dissertation.

It does not sit above documentary evidence.

It does not sit below artistic practice.

It operates between them as a method of testing how evidence functions when embodied.

The final limitation is therefore also the principal value of the approach: practitioner reflection cannot tell us definitively what Publio **is**.

It can tell us what happens when particular evidence-based interpretations are tested through a particular singer's body, voice, rehearsal process, collaborators, and production conditions.

That is a narrower claim.

It is also a more defensible one.

8.9 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has translated the historical, textual, musical, dramaturgical, and production-based evidence established in the preceding chapters into a performer-centered rehearsal model for Publio. The central aim has not been to prescribe one definitive interpretation, but to identify a disciplined process through which evidence can become repeatable artistic action.

The model developed here begins with a distinction among documented fact, supported interpretation, production choice, and performer experiment. This distinction is essential because the performer must know where the evidence ends and where artistic decision begins. A score or libretto may establish that Publio arrests Sesto, expresses compassion, observes Tito's conflict, reports the Senate's decree, or acknowledges the limits of his knowledge. It does not automatically determine one gesture, one facial expression, one vocal color, or one staging solution.

The performer therefore works from structure rather than imitation.

This structure is most clearly expressed through the sequence:

source → fact → interpretive claim → playable action → physical and vocal test → revision.

Such a sequence allows scholarship and rehearsal to remain connected without collapsing into one another. The historical and textual record constrains the interpretation, while rehearsal determines how those constraints can be embodied within a specific voice, body, cast, conductor, director, theater, and production concept.

The scene-by-scene character arc developed in Section 8.2 demonstrated that Publio does not require an invented psychological biography in order to possess dramatic development. His arc can instead be traced through changing responsibility, access to information, emotional disturbance, and proximity to sovereign power.

He begins as an official embedded in Tito's public world. As crisis develops, he becomes an evaluator of information and then an executor of custody. The arrest of Sesto introduces the first major conflict between institutional responsibility and personal response. Publio can recognize suffering without possessing the authority to suspend procedure.

His subsequent relationship to Tito expands his function further. In "Tardi s'avvede," he becomes capable of political diagnosis. In No. 18, he reads Tito's emotional conflict without gaining access to the sovereign decision that follows. His exclusion from the private encounter with Sesto establishes a real limit on knowledge, and his later assumption that Sesto remains condemned becomes dramatically credible precisely because that limit has been preserved.

The final scene completes this progression. Publio enters still participating in the apparatus of custody and expected punishment, but the revelation of new information and Tito's public clemency require him to reorient. The transformation is not from cruelty to kindness, nor from obedience to rebellion. It is a transition from the execution of one institutional trajectory to participation in another.

This distinction is fundamental to the interpretation proposed by this study.

Publio's humanity does not require him to cease being an official.

His authority does not require emotional emptiness.

His knowledge does not require omniscience.

His obedience does not require intellectual passivity.

His compassion does not give him sovereign power.

The performer must therefore preserve relationships among these qualities rather than choosing one and excluding the others.

Section 8.3 demonstrated how the same principle applies to vocal preparation. "Tardi s'avvede" should not be treated as an opportunity to manufacture generalized bass authority through excessive

weight. The aria's rhetorical function, Allegretto motion, textual clarity, orchestral context, and relationship to the preceding recitative all argue for a more integrated preparation.

The singer's task is to communicate warning, reasoning, and authority while preserving efficient and repeatable vocal function.

The distinction between dramatic pressure and physical pressure is particularly important. A scene may require greater urgency without requiring greater muscular effort. A phrase may require greater authority without requiring a darker or heavier vocal production. A strong thought can be intensified through direction, diction, timing, and relationship rather than through indiscriminate increase of volume.

This principle continues in recitative and ensemble.

Publio's short lines often carry substantial dramatic responsibility. "Vieni" converts information into movement. "E Sesto?" exposes an unresolved institutional concern. "Escluso io fui" defines a boundary of knowledge. "Terribile, ma giusto" holds personal response and institutional judgment within the same phrase.

The brevity of such material does not reduce its importance.

Ensemble preparation also reveals that Publio's dramatic identity depends upon listening. In No. 14, he must remain capable of completing the arrest while hearing the suffering that gives rise to compassion. In No. 18, he must observe Tito closely enough to form an interpretation without projecting future knowledge into the scene.

The result is a form of acting in which silence, waiting, and attention are as important as sung material.

Section 8.5 converted these principles into a scene-by-scene acting score organized by playable verbs:

Maintain → Assess → Secure → Register → Warn → Deliver → Read → Verify → Report → Present → Reorient → Join.

These verbs are not historical claims. They are rehearsal tools.

Their value lies in replacing generalized adjectives with directional action. "Authoritative," "loyal," or "compassionate" may describe impressions, but they do not necessarily tell the actor what to do. "Secure," "warn," "deliver," "read," and "verify" create relationships that can be played toward another person.

The acting score also makes continuity measurable.

Each entrance can be linked to a task.

Each change can be linked to information.

Each exit can be linked to a destination and an unresolved action.

Each re-entry can therefore carry the consequences of what happened offstage without requiring the performer to invent an unsupported private biography.

Collaboration with the conductor and stage director further modifies this process. The performer must distinguish essential dramatic function from negotiable theatrical realization.

The fact that Sesto must leave under custody is structurally important.

The exact distance between Sesto and Publio is negotiable.

The fact that Publio does not know Tito's hidden decision is structurally important.

The exact physical sign of that uncertainty is negotiable.

The fact that Publio's aria functions as counsel is structurally important.

The exact tempo, breath plan, or degree of rhetorical emphasis must be worked out collaboratively within the limits of the score and the singer's vocal function.

This distinction allows evidence to support collaboration rather than obstruct it.

The performer does not need to defend every pre-rehearsed choice as historically correct.

Instead, evidence can identify when a production is merely changing the realization of a relationship and when it is deliberately changing the relationship itself.

This is particularly important in modern staging.

As Section 8.7 demonstrated, Publio can inhabit radically different theatrical worlds. A production may present Roman ceremony, modern bureaucracy, political violence, abstract government, or stylized public/private space. Such settings can change how his authority is perceived, but they do not erase the role's structural limits.

The actor must therefore identify what the production already communicates before adding further characterization.

If costume and architecture already establish rank, excessive physical dominance may be redundant.

If the production removes conventional signs of hierarchy, behavior may need to communicate access and delegated power more clearly.

If the surrounding world already appears violent, restraint may become the more effective acting choice.

If the staging is highly formalized, emotional change may need to appear through smaller shifts of attention and timing.

Adaptation is therefore controlled rather than unlimited.

The performer preserves the trigger while adjusting the scale of response.

Sesto's suffering still changes Publio.

Tito's conflict still provides evidence.

Exclusion still limits knowledge.

Vitellia's confession still introduces new information.

Tito's decision still remains sovereign.

The surface changes; the dramatic relationships remain legible.

Finally, Section 8.8 established the methodological limit of practitioner reflection. This limit is necessary because embodied experience can easily appear more universal than it is.

The performer may discover that one staging, breath plan, tempo, gesture, or rehearsal method works particularly well. Such a discovery can be valuable, but it must be described as a finding under specific conditions rather than converted into a universal prescription.

Practitioner reflection is therefore most useful when it is bounded.

It should identify:

the evidence that generated the question,

the experiment undertaken,

the rehearsal conditions,

the observed result,

and the limit of the conclusion.

This form of reflection allows performance experience to contribute to research without replacing documentary evidence.

The performer-centered method proposed in this chapter can therefore be summarized through four recurring questions:

What does Publio know?

What does Publio feel?

What is Publio authorized to do?

What can only Tito decide?

These questions should remain separate.

If feeling becomes authorization, Publio risks becoming an invented rescuer.

If knowledge becomes omniscience, his later uncertainty becomes implausible.

If delegated authority becomes sovereignty, he becomes a political rival rather than an official.

If obedience becomes emotional emptiness, the compassion and perceptiveness introduced by Mazzolà and Mozart are lost.

The role therefore depends upon distinctions.

Publio acts, but within limits.

He knows, but incompletely.

He feels, but cannot always intervene.

He advises, but does not decide.

He witnesses clemency, but does not originate it.

These limitations do not make the role dramatically weak. They define its dramatic importance.

Publio stands repeatedly at the point where intention becomes action, where information becomes procedure, where private suffering enters public judgment, and where sovereign decision changes what the institution must do.

He is therefore most effectively performed not as a hidden protagonist and not as a neutral functionary, but as a disciplined threshold figure whose dramatic weight lies in the precision of his relationships.

The performer's task is neither unlimited invention nor mechanical reproduction.

It is **controlled interpretation**: to preserve what the evidence requires, identify what remains open, and make artistic decisions that remain vocally sustainable, dramatically playable, and responsive to the production in which they occur.

This performer-centered synthesis prepares the ground for the final chapter, which will draw together the study's historical, textual, musical, dramaturgical, production-based, and practical findings and assess Publio's broader significance within *La clemenza di Tito* and within the training of low male voices in operatic performance.

CHAPTER 9. CONCLUSION

9.1 Summary of Findings

This dissertation has examined Publio in Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *La clemenza di Tito*, K. 621, as a role whose apparent brevity conceals a significant dramatic, musical, institutional, and performative function. Rather than treating Publio as a generic bass official or a marginal representative of authority, the study has argued that his importance lies in the relationships he mediates: between emperor and institution, knowledge and action, law and compassion, public procedure and private suffering, and judgment and clemency.

The central finding is that Publio is best understood as a **threshold figure**.

He does not possess sovereign power, yet he operates close enough to sovereignty to make its decisions visible and actionable. He does not determine Sesto's guilt, but he participates in the movement from suspicion to custody. He does not create the Senate's judgment, but he carries its documentary result to Tito. He does not decide whether Sesto will live or die, but he stands within the institutional process through which either punishment or clemency must become effective.

This position distinguishes Publio both from the sovereign and from a passive messenger.

He is not Tito.

He is not the Senate.

He is not merely a guard.

He is not simply a confidant.

His function lies in moving among these spheres without fully belonging to any one of them.

Chapter 1 established the principal research problem: Publio's limited amount of solo material has contributed to his frequent treatment as structurally minor. Such an assumption risks confusing quantity with dramatic importance. The study therefore asked not how much Publio sings, but what changes because he is present.

This shift from quantity to function proved fundamental.

Publio's entrances, exits, reports, commands, silences, ensemble participation, and reactions collectively reveal that he performs several essential operations within the drama. He receives information, evaluates its consequences, transmits institutional decisions, supervises custody, observes Tito's emotional conflict, and adjusts his own action when sovereign decisions change.

His significance is therefore distributed rather than concentrated in extended solo scenes.

Chapter 2 placed these functions within the historical and political framework of *La clemenza di Tito*. The opera was created for the Prague coronation celebrations of Leopold II, and its political environment makes questions of sovereignty, authority, public representation, and clemency especially important.

Within this context, Publio's role gains significance because political power in the opera is not represented only by Tito's words. It is also represented by the people who carry commands, enforce custody, transmit judgments, manage access, and make institutional consequences visible.

Publio belongs to this operational layer of sovereignty.

His presence makes abstract authority theatrical.

The Senate can remain largely offstage because Publio can bring its result into the scene.

Custody can remain an institutional concept until Publio converts it into physical movement.

The distinction between public procedure and private decision can become legible because Publio is repeatedly admitted to or excluded from particular spaces.

The study therefore found that Publio should not be interpreted as an independent center of power. His authority is **delegated, relational, and procedural**.

This distinction is crucial.

When delegated authority is mistaken for sovereignty, Publio risks becoming a political rival to Tito.

When it is minimized too far, he becomes an insignificant messenger.

The role is strongest between these extremes.

Chapter 3 traced Publio from Metastasio's earlier libretto to Mazzolà's revision for Mozart.

This comparison produced one of the dissertation's most important findings.

Mazzolà does not remove Publio's institutional function. Instead, he makes that function emotionally more complex.

The clearest example occurs in the arrest sequence.

Publio still controls the transition from Sesto's freedom to custody. He still requires movement toward the Senate. But Mazzolà reorganizes the dramatic material so that Publio remains present within the ensemble No. 14, "Se al volto mai ti senti."

This allows Publio not merely to enforce the arrest but to hear and respond to its human consequences.

His aside reveals compassion for Sesto.

This change is significant because it prevents a simple opposition between:

law = cruelty

and

compassion = resistance to law.

Publio can feel pity while continuing the arrest.

The study therefore found that the role contains **compassion without unauthorized intervention**.

This formulation became one of the central interpretive principles of the dissertation.

Publio's compassion is genuine precisely because the text gives it expression.

Yet its power is limited.

He does not possess the authority to cancel Sesto's custody.

The dramatic tension therefore lies not in choosing between duty and feeling but in their coexistence.

Chapter 4 examined musical and vocal characterization.

The aria "Tardi s'avvede" was found to be especially important because it reveals a dimension of Publio that cannot be reduced to physical enforcement.

The aria follows directly from his disagreement with Tito's assumption that Sesto could not have betrayed him.

Publio's argument is that a truthful and honorable person may recognize betrayal too late because he assumes that others share his own fidelity.

This makes the aria an act of political and ethical counsel.

Publio therefore possesses not only procedural knowledge but interpretive intelligence.

He can identify a weakness in Tito's judgment without challenging Tito's sovereignty.

The study found that "Tardi s'avvede" should consequently not be approached as a stereotypically heavy bass statement.

Its Allegretto character, rhetorical organization, orchestral movement, and textual function support a more mobile and precise interpretation.

Authority does not require unnecessary vocal weight.

This conclusion was extended across Publio's role.

The study repeatedly distinguished:

dramatic pressure

from

physical vocal pressure.

Publio's authority can emerge through rhythm, diction, clarity, timing, stability, and relation to other performers rather than through indiscriminate increase in loudness or darkness.

Chapter 4 also demonstrated that the recitatives and ensembles are central to characterization.

Publio's musical identity is not confined to his aria.

In recitative, he often converts information into action.

In ensemble, he must retain his institutional task while becoming responsive to other characters.

In No. 14, he remains responsible for the arrest while responding to Sesto's suffering.

In No. 18, he observes Tito's internal conflict and interprets it as evidence that Tito continues to love Sesto.

This produced another important finding:

Publio listens.

Listening is not merely passive stage behavior.

It is one of his dramatic functions.

His knowledge often changes because he witnesses other people.

His response therefore depends upon timing, attention, and the distinction between what he knows before and after a particular event.

Chapter 5 developed this distinction into a broader dramaturgy of office.

The study found that Publio's relationship to information is structured by both access and limitation.

He is unusually close to Tito and the machinery of government, but proximity does not produce omniscience.

This becomes most important when Tito dismisses Publio and the guards in order to remain alone with Sesto.

Publio witnesses the emotional conditions preceding the private encounter, but he does not witness the decisive conversation or Tito's private destruction of the decree.

When Publio later returns, he does not know that Tito has altered the expected outcome.

His subsequent misunderstanding is therefore structurally meaningful.

He is not foolish.

He is not inattentive.

He is **accurately informed within the limits of his access.**

This distinction allowed the dissertation to formulate another central principle:

knowledge without omniscience.

Publio may possess verified institutional information while lacking decisive private information.

His later statement that he was excluded from Tito's conversation with Sesto confirms that he understands this limitation himself.

The role therefore dramatizes not only information but the boundaries of information.

Chapter 5 also clarified the distribution of judgment.

The Senate judges Sesto.

Publio transmits the result.

Tito retains the final sovereign authority.

This sequence prevents Publio from being treated as the author of punishment.

The decree is especially important because it makes institutional hierarchy materially visible.

Publio can carry the document.

He can explain it.

He can hand it to Tito.

But the missing imperial name demonstrates that his authority stops before the sovereign decision.

This movement of the document became one of the dissertation's clearest examples of how political structure becomes stage action.

Chapter 6 translated these dramaturgical findings into embodied performance.

The study rejected the stereotype of the permanently severe bass official.

Such a stereotype may produce a consistent surface but weakens the role's actual changes.

Publio's authority is more effectively conveyed through controlled attention, economical movement, spatial clarity, and selective reaction.

Stillness can be useful because constant movement may reduce the significance of moments in which action genuinely changes.

Gesture should therefore be understood as a resource rather than a permanent sign of status.

The study also emphasized hierarchy.

Publio must appear capable of acting on behalf of institutional power while remaining visibly subordinate to Tito.

This can be established through access, distance, timing, response to command, and the handling of other bodies and objects.

The actor should not attempt to imitate sovereign power.

His dramatic clarity depends partly on showing where his power stops.

The arrest scene provided the strongest practical example.

Publio must be capable of compelling Sesto to move while remaining responsive to Sesto's suffering.

Excessive aggression can erase compassion.

Excessive softness can weaken the credibility of custody.

The role therefore requires **restraint under pressure**.

Chapter 6 further demonstrated that exits and re-entries must be treated as part of characterization.

Publio's offstage actions often connect different institutional spheres.

He leaves and returns with information.

He departs to perform a task.

He is excluded from private encounters.

He accompanies prisoners or follows the emperor.

The performer must therefore know not merely where Publio exits, but what task continues after the exit.

This insight proved especially important for the later performer-centered model.

Chapter 7 tested the argument against documented modern production evidence.

The case studies demonstrated that no single visual tradition defines Publio.

Productions differ substantially in political framing, theatrical style, historical reference, costume, and the representation of authority.

Opera McGill placed the work within an explicitly contemporary political framework.

Salzburg connected Sellars's production to issues including terrorism, migration, justice, and reconciliation.

Glyndebourne transformed the Roman world into modern bureaucracy.

Teatro Real offered a highly stylized theatrical structure in which public affairs and private decision could remain strongly connected.

The comparison produced an important methodological result.

Theatrical modernity is not one thing.

A production can become modern through:

- contemporary costume,
- political analogy,
- bureaucratic imagery,
- altered spatial relationships,
- psychological naturalism,
- or reinterpretation of public and private power.

Publio's adaptability therefore cannot depend upon copying one modern model.

The case studies also showed that critical reception may change significantly according to production context.

A Publio presented within a bureaucratic environment may be perceived as manipulative or threatening.

In another production, the same basic institutional actions may appear restrained, legitimate, or procedural.

The study therefore distinguished **character evidence** from **production reception**.

A critic's description of a specific Publio can document how that performance was perceived.

It cannot automatically define the character across all productions.

Chapter 7 also developed four distinctions in the concept of visibility:

archival visibility, **critical visibility**, **dramaturgical visibility**, and **scenic visibility**.

These distinctions prevent the absence of surviving commentary from being mistaken for dramatic insignificance.

A critic may say little about Publio.

A program may document little about his costume.

Neither fact proves that the role lacked importance in performance.

The evidence supports only what it actually records.

This methodological restraint became especially important because the dissertation deliberately rejected unsupported visual inference.

Production videos, photographs, and memory cannot be treated as equivalent to independent written evidence unless the relevant claim is documented sufficiently.

Chapter 8 then converted the preceding findings into a performer-centered rehearsal and interpretation model.

The model begins by distinguishing documented fact, supported interpretation, production choice, and performer experiment.

This distinction prevents the performer from confusing textual necessity with personal preference.

The scene-by-scene character arc revealed that Publio's development is best understood as institutional, epistemic, relational, and emotional rather than as a transformation from one fixed personality to another.

His practical arc can be summarized as: **stable delegated authority → crisis management → compassion under duty → political diagnosis → increasing but incomplete knowledge → exclusion from sovereign decision → public reorientation under clemency.**

The acting score translated this arc into playable verbs: **Maintain → Assess → Secure → Register → Warn → Deliver → Read → Verify → Report → Present → Reorient → Join.**

These verbs are not historical claims.

They are rehearsal tools that preserve the causal structure of the role.

They allow different productions to vary in gesture, costume, space, and acting style while keeping Publio's objectives legible.

Chapter 8 also demonstrated the importance of collaboration.

The singer cannot complete Publio independently from conductor and stage director.

Musical timing, orchestral balance, recitative pacing, breath, spatial hierarchy, prop transfer, ensemble cueing, and movement all interact.

The study therefore proposed a distinction between: **essential dramatic function and negotiable realization.**

The essential function may remain stable even while its visible form changes.

Sesto must remain under custody.

The exact physical distance may vary.

Publio must not know Tito's secret decision.

The exact expression of uncertainty may vary.

Publio must deliver the Senate's decree.

The physical appearance of that decree may vary.

This distinction allows collaboration without abandoning textual structure.

The final methodological finding concerned practitioner reflection.

The dissertation has argued that performer experience can contribute valuable knowledge, but only when its evidentiary limits are respected.

A performer's experience is evidence of that performer's experience under particular conditions.

It does not automatically become historical truth or universal vocal pedagogy.

Practitioner reflection is therefore most useful when it is bounded by a clear sequence: **evidence** → **question** → **experiment** → **observation** → **limitation**.

This allows embodied research to remain rigorous without pretending that individual experience is universally prescriptive.

Taken together, the findings of this dissertation support a reconsideration of what constitutes a significant operatic role.

Significance cannot be measured only by aria count, duration, vocal difficulty, or narrative centrality.

A secondary role may possess considerable dramaturgical weight when it controls transitions among major structures of the drama.

Publio is such a role.

He connects:

information to action,

suspicion to arrest,

Senate to emperor,

custody to judgment,

public law to private suffering,

institutional expectation to sovereign clemency.

His presence repeatedly marks the boundary at which one form of power becomes another.

The principal conclusion of the study is therefore not that Publio is secretly the protagonist of *La clemenza di Tito*.

Such a claim would merely replace one exaggeration with another.

Rather, Publio demonstrates how a secondary operatic role can acquire substantial dramatic meaning through structural position, informational function, delegated authority, musical responsiveness, and carefully limited emotional participation.

His apparent marginality is productive.

Because he cannot decide everything, the audience can see more clearly who can.

Because he does not know everything, the boundaries of political and personal knowledge become visible.

Because he feels compassion but cannot independently act upon it, the tension between humanity and office becomes audible.

Because he carries the consequences of other people's decisions, sovereignty becomes theatrical rather than abstract.

The study therefore concludes that Publio is most convincingly understood as a **threshold figure of operational authority**: a character whose dramatic significance lies not in dominating the opera, but in repeatedly occupying the point where knowledge, law, compassion, and sovereign decision are converted into theatrical action.

9.2 Publio's Dramatic and Musical Significance

Publio's significance in *La clemenza di Tito* lies less in the quantity of music assigned to him than in the position he occupies within the opera's dramatic and musical architecture. He is a secondary role, but he repeatedly stands at moments when information becomes action, private experience becomes public consequence, and sovereign intention becomes institutional reality. His importance is therefore structural rather than proportional.

This distinction is essential because traditional operatic hierarchy often encourages performers and audiences to equate significance with aria count, vocal duration, or narrative centrality. Publio complicates that assumption. He sings comparatively little, yet his appearances frequently coincide with decisive transitions in the drama.

He participates in the movement from suspicion to arrest.

He carries Sesto from private conspiracy into public judgment.

He communicates the Senate's decision to Tito.

He observes the emperor's emotional conflict.

He marks the boundary between public procedure and private sovereign deliberation.

He reappears at the point where punishment seems imminent.

He then participates in the public order transformed by clemency.

The role therefore functions as a dramatic hinge.

Publio does not usually initiate the opera's major emotional crises, but he frequently helps convert them into consequences.

This conversion function is one of the clearest reasons his role matters.

Sesto's betrayal remains a private and emotional crisis until institutional knowledge reaches Publio and custody begins.

The Senate's judgment remains offstage until Publio carries the decree into Tito's presence.

Tito's hidden change of mind remains private until public action is reorganized around the final act of clemency.

Publio repeatedly occupies the transition between these states.

His dramatic significance therefore emerges through **mediation**.

He mediates between ruler and institution.

He mediates between information and procedure.

He mediates between judgment and enforcement.

He mediates between private emotion and public consequence.

He mediates, finally, between the expectation of punishment and the institutional reception of clemency.

This does not mean that Publio controls all of these processes.

His importance lies precisely in the fact that he participates without possessing total control.

That distinction protects the role from exaggeration.

Publio is not a hidden ruler.

He does not determine the Senate's verdict.

He does not decide the punishment.

He does not cause Tito's clemency.

He does not resolve Sesto's moral crisis.

His significance is not sovereign.

It is operational.

This operational function is also musical.

Publio's musical material is distributed across recitative, aria, ensemble, and collective texture. Each form reveals a different aspect of his dramatic identity.

In recitative, Publio frequently handles information and action.

His short statements are often procedural.

He asks.

He reports.

He confirms.

He redirects.

He presents documents.

He answers questions.

He receives orders.

The recitative therefore places Publio within the opera's mechanisms of communication.

The efficiency of this writing is significant.

Because his lines are frequently brief, they depend heavily on textual clarity and timing. The role cannot be made convincing merely through sustained vocal beauty. Its dramatic force often lies in whether a short phrase changes the situation at the correct moment.

"Vieni" is an obvious example.

Musically and verbally, it is small.

Dramatically, it redirects a human body.

"E Sesto?" is similarly brief.

Yet it immediately exposes Publio's continuing responsibility for the prisoner and his lack of knowledge about Tito's decision.

This relationship between small verbal scale and large dramatic consequence is characteristic of the role.

The aria "Tardi s'avvede" reveals another dimension.

Here Publio temporarily moves from procedural speech into general reflection.

The aria gives him the space to formulate a principle about betrayal, fidelity, and delayed recognition.

Its significance lies not merely in granting the bass a solo number.

It demonstrates that Publio is capable of interpretation.

He does not only transmit facts.

He can understand what those facts reveal about human judgment.

This makes the aria dramatically important even though it is concise.

It shows that Publio's relationship to Tito includes advisory intelligence as well as obedience.

The aria also prevents the character from being reduced to physical authority.

If the arrest scene displays his capacity to enforce institutional movement, "Tardi s'avvede" displays his capacity to think about the ruler's perception.

Publio therefore operates through both **action and diagnosis**.

This dual capacity strengthens the role.

A purely procedural character would report and obey.

A purely reflective character might observe without affecting events.

Publio does both.

He thinks within the system and acts within the system.

The ensembles add a third dimension: responsiveness.

No. 14 is particularly important because Publio's institutional action is held open inside shared musical time.

The arrest is not completed before the emotional consequences become audible.

Instead, Sesto, Vitellia, and Publio remain within the same musical event while responding differently to the same situation.

This makes Publio's position especially revealing.

He does not abandon the arrest.

But he is no longer emotionally untouched by it.

The music allows procedure and compassion to coexist.

The role's significance therefore lies partly in contradiction.

Publio is both participant and observer.

He is both agent and witness.

He is both emotionally affected and institutionally constrained.

He is both close to power and limited by power.

Music makes these contradictions audible.

No. 18 develops this further by placing Publio in a listening and interpretive role.

He reads Tito's emotional conflict from within the ensemble.

This is musically important because Publio temporarily functions almost like an internal observer.

The audience hears not only Tito's conflict but also another character interpreting that conflict.

Publio therefore helps articulate the emotional meaning of the scene without becoming its center.

This is a subtle form of musical dramaturgy.

The opera does not give him a large monologue about Tito.

Instead, a brief ensemble contribution establishes that he understands something important: Tito's suffering indicates continued attachment to Sesto.

The significance lies in precision rather than scale.

Publio's musical writing also contributes to the opera's larger organization of public and private spheres.

His recitatives often belong to the movement of official information.

His aria converts political observation into moral statement.

His ensembles place him within collective emotional situations.

His final participation merges increasingly into public response.

The progression corresponds to his dramatic position.

He begins as a distinct official presence.

He becomes increasingly implicated in the emotional and institutional crisis.

By the finale, his individual function is absorbed into the larger public order reorganized by Tito's clemency.

This does not erase his identity.

It completes it.

Publio's role has always depended upon relation to a structure larger than himself.

The finale makes that relationship explicit.

Another important finding is that the role's low male vocal identity should not be confused with a fixed dramatic stereotype.

The casting of a bass voice can naturally produce associations of authority, age, weight, stability, or institutional gravity. But those associations should remain possibilities rather than prescriptions.

The score does not require Publio to become vocally massive in every scene.

Nor does the drama require permanent severity.

The musical material instead benefits from contrast.

Recitative may require directness.

The aria requires mobility and rhetorical clarity.

No. 14 requires ensemble responsiveness.

No. 18 requires attentive observation.

The finale requires integration into a collective texture.

The same instrument must therefore serve different dramatic functions.

This is an important implication for low male voice training.

A bass or bass-baritone role should not automatically be approached through generalized heaviness.

Authority can be produced through timing, clarity, resonance, stability, and relationship.

This may be especially important in roles like Publio, where excessive vocal weight can obscure the very flexibility the dramaturgy requires.

The performer must remain capable of shifting between:

procedural speech,

ethical counsel,

ensemble listening,

compassionate response,

and public participation.

A single unchanging vocal attitude can flatten these differences.

The role therefore rewards **functional vocal consistency rather than timbral monotony**.

The singer should maintain one coherent instrument while allowing changes in rhetoric, dynamic proportion, consonantal emphasis, timing, and phrase direction to serve different actions.

This distinction is also relevant to characterization.

Publio's dramatic significance does not depend upon the creation of a large psychological transformation.

He does not need to become a fundamentally different person by the end of the opera.

His development is instead produced through accumulated encounters.

He learns more.

He witnesses more.

He is emotionally affected.

He discovers limits to his access.

He makes reasonable inferences that later prove incomplete.

He adjusts when the sovereign order changes.

This is a character arc built through **relational change rather than personality replacement**.

Such an arc is particularly suitable for a secondary role.

Because the libretto does not provide extensive private soliloquies for Publio, the performer should not compensate by inventing an elaborate hidden psychology.

The available evidence already provides enough development.

His dramatic weight comes from what he does at the boundaries of other people's decisions.

The role also contributes to the opera's representation of clemency.

Tito's final act would remain morally and politically central without Publio.

But Publio helps make the contrast between expected punishment and actual clemency theatrically concrete.

He participates in the procedure that makes punishment believable.

He brings institutional judgment into Tito's hands.

He remains unaware of the hidden reversal.

He then appears within the public situation in which clemency becomes effective.

His presence therefore strengthens the dramatic visibility of Tito's decision.

Clemency matters because there is something real to cancel.

Publio helps embody the structure being cancelled.

This is one reason his compassion earlier in the opera is so significant.

If Publio were merely cruel, the final clemency could be simplified into a moral opposition between humane ruler and inhumane official.

But that is not the structure established by the revised libretto.

Publio himself is capable of pity.

The tension is therefore more difficult and more interesting.

The institution is not represented as populated only by monsters.

A humane person can still participate in a severe procedure.

This complicates the relationship between morality and office.

The opera's clemency consequently does not merely defeat an evil individual.

It interrupts an institutional trajectory that even sympathetic participants may have regarded as legitimate.

Publio's presence makes that distinction visible.

This also explains why the phrase "terribile, ma giusto" is so important to the role.

The two terms summarize a recurring tension.

An outcome can be horrifying at the human level and still be recognized by Publio as institutionally justified.

The performer should not resolve that contradiction too quickly.

The role becomes less interesting if "terribile" is ignored.

It also becomes less coherent if "giusto" is treated as insincere.

Publio's dramatic significance lies partly in his capacity to hold incompatible pressures without possessing the authority to solve them.

That function connects directly to the dissertation's central concept of the threshold figure.

A threshold is not simply a place between two fixed categories.

It is the point at which movement between them occurs.

Publio repeatedly occupies such points.

Between suspicion and custody.

Between Senate and emperor.

Between law and compassion.

Between public knowledge and private secrecy.

Between expected sentence and sovereign pardon.

Between individual action and collective order.

His significance therefore lies in transition.

This is why his role can be dramatically important without becoming narratively central.

Publio is not the emotional core of *La clemenza di Tito*.

Tito, Sesto, and Vitellia carry far greater portions of the opera's moral and emotional conflict.

But Publio makes several of those conflicts operational.

The distinction between **centrality and significance** is therefore necessary.

A role may not be central to the plot's emotional subject and still be indispensable to the plot's mechanics and theatrical legibility.

Publio demonstrates this clearly.

The study thus proposes that his dramatic and musical significance can be summarized through four functions.

First, **institutional mediation**: he connects otherwise separated centers of power and procedure.

Second, **informational mediation**: he carries, verifies, limits, and interprets knowledge.

Third, **affective mediation**: he registers suffering without becoming the opera's primary emotional subject.

Fourth, **performative mediation**: his entrances, exits, reports, ensemble participation, and physical custody convert abstract structures into stage action.

These four forms of mediation explain why the role deserves more detailed attention than its size might initially suggest.

Publio's importance ultimately comes from precision.

A poorly prepared Publio may disappear into the background as a generic official.

An overinterpreted Publio may distort the opera by claiming authority, knowledge, or emotional centrality that the role does not possess.

A carefully prepared Publio occupies the middle position.

He is present enough to make the institutional world believable.

Responsive enough to make its human cost visible.

Intelligent enough to interpret danger.

Limited enough to preserve Tito's sovereignty.

And flexible enough to move from expected punishment into the public reality of clemency.

This combination constitutes Publio's dramatic and musical significance.

9.3 Contributions to Mozart Performance Studies

The significance of this dissertation extends beyond Publio as an individual role. The study contributes to Mozart performance studies by proposing a method for examining secondary characters through the interaction of text, score, institutional function, production history, and performer practice. Such an approach challenges the assumption that the most valuable performance research must concentrate primarily on principal roles, major arias, or extended psychological development.

Publio demonstrates that Mozart's dramatic organization can assign substantial structural importance to a character with comparatively limited solo material.

This suggests a broader methodological principle:

dramatic significance should be evaluated through function as well as duration.

A performer-centered study of Mozart should therefore ask not only how much a character sings, but what musical and theatrical processes depend upon that character's presence.

For Publio, these processes include the transfer of information, the enforcement of custody, the transmission of judgment, the observation of emotional conflict, and the public implementation of changed sovereign decisions.

This approach may be applicable to other secondary figures in Mozart opera whose musical quantity appears modest but whose dramatic location is strategically important.

The contribution is therefore methodological as much as interpretive.

A second contribution concerns the relationship between score and dramatic action.

Mozart performance analysis can sometimes separate musical detail from staging practice. Harmonic structure, orchestration, form, tempo, and vocal writing may be examined as musical phenomena, while gesture, blocking, hierarchy, and dramatic intention are treated separately.

The present study has argued for a more integrated model.

Musical structure can become dramatic evidence when interpreted with appropriate caution.

A recitative entrance may correspond to new information.

A repeated imperative may sustain unfinished physical action.

An ensemble may delay an exit and thereby keep multiple emotional positions simultaneously present.

An orchestral continuation may extend the dramatic consequence of a sung statement beyond the singer's final note.

The analytical question therefore becomes:

What action does the musical structure make possible, delay, intensify, or reorganize?

This question can connect score analysis directly to performance without claiming that the notation determines one exact staging.

Such a distinction is important.

The score may establish timing relationships.

It does not necessarily establish one gesture.

The libretto may establish an exit.

It does not necessarily establish one route.

The music may create increasing pressure.

It does not necessarily require increasing physical aggression.

The contribution of performer-centered analysis lies in identifying these boundaries.

A third contribution concerns the treatment of recitative.

In Mozart performance studies, arias and ensembles naturally receive substantial analytical attention because of their musical complexity and formal visibility. Yet secondary characters may derive much of their dramatic identity from recitative.

Publio demonstrates the importance of treating recitative as structural action.

His recitative lines frequently determine what the audience knows, what another character must do next, or which institution has acquired responsibility.

A single question can reveal incomplete knowledge.

A brief command can initiate custody.

A report can shift the opera from uncertainty to documented judgment.

A dismissal can establish the boundary between public procedure and private decision.

Recitative therefore should not be approached merely as connective material between numbers.

For the performer, it can be one of the primary locations in which hierarchy, information, urgency, and character function are established.

The present study consequently contributes to a view of Mozart recitative as **dramatic infrastructure**.

This is especially useful for roles whose psychological and institutional identities emerge through repeated exchanges rather than extended solo reflection.

A fourth contribution concerns ensemble listening.

Mozart's ensembles are often discussed in terms of simultaneous character perspectives, formal design, and dramatic complexity. The present study extends this observation into performer practice by emphasizing that ensemble interpretation depends upon the singer's ability to distinguish personal intention from shared musical time.

Publio's participation in No. 14 demonstrates this particularly clearly.

The ensemble does not require all three characters to share one emotional state.

Instead, music holds incompatible objectives together.

Sesto attempts farewell.

Vitellia experiences fear and remorse.

Publio attempts to complete custody while becoming emotionally affected by what he witnesses.

For the performer, the ensemble therefore demands two simultaneous abilities:

maintain an independent objective

and

remain available to information supplied by the other performers.

This model of ensemble listening may be applied more broadly to Mozart.

The singer does not merely wait for an entrance.

The singer tracks changing information during rests.

Silence can remain active.

Attention can change before vocal material changes.

A later line can become the consequence of something heard several measures earlier.

This approach turns ensemble singing into a process of dramatic reception as well as musical coordination.

A fifth contribution concerns the interpretation of authority in Mozart.

Authority is frequently represented through rulers, fathers, military figures, guardians, servants of the state, and social hierarchy. Performers may be tempted to make such authority immediately legible through vocal weight, rigidity, aggression, or generalized seriousness.

Publio demonstrates the limitations of that method.

Authority can be communicated through:

- access,
- timing,
- response to hierarchy,
- information,
- control of movement,
- relationship to documents,
- stillness,
- and the ability to initiate or complete procedure.

This suggests that operatic authority is not reducible to vocal size or physical dominance.

For Mozart performance, such a distinction can be especially productive because dramatic status and musical weight do not always correspond mechanically.

A relatively short role may exercise considerable institutional authority.

A socially powerful character may be musically vulnerable.

A servant may possess more information than a master.

A ruler may depend upon subordinates to make decisions operational.

The performer should therefore distinguish **social power, musical prominence, dramatic knowledge, and sovereign authority** rather than treating them as one category.

Publio is particularly useful for this distinction because he possesses significant operational authority but no sovereign authority.

This allows his role to clarify Tito's position rather than compete with it.

A sixth contribution concerns the interpretation of compassion.

The revised Publio complicates a binary opposition between humane feeling and institutional duty.

His compassion for Sesto does not result in procedural rebellion.

He feels without gaining the authority to reverse the arrest.

This may offer a useful model for approaching other Mozart characters whose emotional awareness coexists with social obligation.

The important performance question is not always:

Which side wins—duty or feeling?

It may instead be:

How are duty and feeling made simultaneously perceptible?

This is a particularly Mozartian performance problem because ensemble and recitative structures frequently allow conflicting impulses to coexist rather than resolving them immediately.

Publio's No. 14 participation demonstrates how musical simultaneity can make that coexistence audible.

The role therefore contributes to a broader understanding of Mozart characterization as capable of holding contradiction without requiring instant psychological resolution.

A seventh contribution concerns knowledge.

The dissertation has repeatedly distinguished between what the audience knows, what the performer knows, and what the character knows.

This distinction is fundamental to performance.

The singer preparing a completed opera knows the entire plot.

The character does not.

Without deliberate rehearsal, future knowledge can leak backward into earlier scenes.

Publio provides an especially clear case because his later misunderstanding depends upon genuine exclusion from Tito's private decision.

If the performer anticipates the pardon, the dramatic information structure collapses.

The present study therefore proposes an **information-based acting method** for Mozart performance.

For each scene, the performer can identify:

KNOWN

what the character knows,

UNKNOWN

what remains inaccessible,

TASK

what must be accomplished,

and

LIMIT

what the character cannot determine or authorize.

This method is not limited to Publio.

It can be useful throughout Mozart opera, where plots frequently depend on concealment, mistaken identity, overheard conversations, incomplete information, delayed recognition, and unequal knowledge among characters.

A performer who distinguishes actor knowledge from character knowledge can preserve dramatic discovery.

This may be especially important in repertory works where singers already know the plot so well that surprise becomes difficult to reproduce honestly.

An eighth contribution concerns the relationship between production interpretation and textual evidence.

Modern Mozart staging frequently relocates historical works into new political, social, or psychological environments.

Such reinterpretation is not inherently opposed to evidence-based performance.

The question is whether the production understands what it is changing.

The present dissertation has therefore proposed a distinction between:

structural relationship

and

surface realization.

A production may change costume, period, architecture, occupation analogy, or gesture language while preserving the relationship between delegated and sovereign power.

Another production may intentionally alter that relationship.

Both are possible artistic choices, but they are analytically different.

This distinction allows performers to collaborate more intelligently with directors.

Instead of treating textual evidence as a demand for historical reconstruction, the performer can use it to identify the underlying dramatic architecture.

A modern production may then depart from that architecture knowingly rather than accidentally.

This contributes to Mozart performance studies by framing historical evidence as a tool for **controlled reinterpretation**, not merely reconstruction.

The case studies examined in Chapter 7 reinforce this point.

Modern productions of *La clemenza di Tito* have generated markedly different theatrical worlds.

Yet the comparison showed that adaptation can remain disciplined when relationships of hierarchy, access, information, judgment, and sovereign decision remain legible.

The performer-centered method therefore offers a bridge between historically informed analysis and contemporary staging.

A ninth contribution concerns the role of practitioner reflection.

Performance studies increasingly recognize that artistic practice can generate knowledge. However, performer testimony can become methodologically weak if individual experience is presented as universal truth.

The present study therefore proposes a bounded model.

A performer may report that a particular choice improved clarity, vocal stability, or dramatic continuity under specified conditions.

The conclusion should remain proportional to that experiment.

The model developed in Chapter 8:

evidence → question → experiment → observation → limitation

allows embodied knowledge to enter Mozart performance research without replacing documentary evidence.

This is particularly valuable for vocal studies because singing is inherently embodied.

Certain questions cannot be answered entirely from printed notation.

A score cannot describe every singer's respiratory experience.

A libretto cannot determine how a costume affects movement.

A historical document cannot predict how a particular staging will interact with an individual body.

Performer research can investigate these matters.

But it should do so through documented experiment rather than universal prescription.

A tenth contribution concerns low male voice roles more specifically.

Mozart's bass and baritone roles encompass a wide range of dramatic identities, yet pedagogical shorthand can sometimes encourage broad categories such as authority, age, comedy, villainy, or paternal weight.

Publio demonstrates that a low male role can demand flexibility beyond such stereotypes.

The singer must move among:

- institutional precision,
- rhetorical counsel,
- ensemble listening,
- restrained compassion,
- observational intelligence,
- and collective participation.

The role therefore rewards adaptability rather than permanent vocal or physical heaviness.

This finding supports a broader approach to bass and baritone preparation in which dramatic function determines expressive adjustment while vocal technique remains stable.

The goal is not to create multiple artificial voices for multiple emotional states.

It is to maintain one reliable instrument capable of serving different dramatic actions.

This distinction between **technical continuity and expressive variation** may be useful beyond *La clemenza di Tito*.

Finally, the study contributes to Mozart performance studies by emphasizing that secondary roles can function as analytical keys to larger dramatic systems.

Studying Publio makes several aspects of *La clemenza di Tito* clearer:

how Tito's sovereignty becomes operational,

how the Senate becomes theatrically present while remaining mostly offstage,

how custody changes private conspiracy into public procedure,

how compassion can exist inside institutional obedience,

how incomplete knowledge shapes dramatic expectation,

and how clemency becomes visible as the interruption of a credible process of punishment.

A secondary character can therefore reveal the architecture surrounding the protagonist.

This suggests a productive direction for further Mozart scholarship.

Rather than approaching minor roles only as supporting material for principal characters, researchers may ask whether they serve as **structural lenses** through which larger systems of authority, information, social order, and theatrical causality become visible.

Publio provides a strong example.

His role does not demand that the established hierarchy of *La clemenza di Tito* be rewritten.

Tito remains the sovereign and moral center of clemency.

Sesto remains central to the drama of betrayal, guilt, and forgiveness.

Vitellia remains crucial to the conspiracy and its eventual exposure.

Publio's significance lies elsewhere.

He allows the mechanisms surrounding those central dramas to become audible and visible.

The contribution of this dissertation to Mozart performance studies is therefore ultimately a contribution of scale and method.

It argues that close attention to a secondary role can reveal major principles of operatic construction.

It proposes that score, libretto, production documentation, and embodied rehearsal should be studied together while their evidentiary limits remain distinct.

And it demonstrates that performance interpretation becomes more precise when the performer asks not merely:

Who is this character?

but also:

What does this character make possible in the opera?

For Publio, that question reveals far more than his quantity of music initially suggests.

9.4 Implications for Bass and Baritone Performer Training

The findings of this dissertation have implications beyond the interpretation of Publio. They suggest a broader approach to the training of bass and baritone performers in which vocal technique, dramatic function, textual understanding, ensemble awareness, and embodied action are treated as interconnected rather than isolated areas of study.

Low male voices are frequently associated with authority, age, institutional power, paternal figures, comic characters, villains, or figures of stability. Such associations can be useful as initial dramatic references, but they may also become limiting stereotypes if they determine vocal production and physical behavior before the score and libretto have been examined.

Publio demonstrates the risks of such simplification.

If the singer begins from the assumption that a bass official must always sound heavy, dark, immovable, and severe, several important features of the role may be weakened.

The mobility of “Tardi s’avvede” may be lost.

Italian diction may become less clear.

Recitative may become artificially monumental.

Ensemble listening may be replaced by generalized authority.

Compassion may become theatrically implausible.

The role therefore suggests that low male voice training should distinguish **vocal identity from dramatic stereotype**.

A singer may possess a naturally dark or weighty instrument without using that timbre as the sole expressive resource in every scene.

The goal should be to preserve a stable technical instrument while developing the ability to modify rhetorical function.

A bass or baritone should be able to sound authoritative without forcing.

He should be able to sound compassionate without losing vocal core.

He should be able to speak rapidly in recitative without abandoning resonance.

He should be able to participate in an ensemble without attempting to dominate it.

He should be able to reduce dramatic scale without reducing technical support.

This distinction can be summarized as:

technical stability with expressive adaptability.

For performer training, this means that technique and characterization should not be taught as separate stages in which the student first learns “the voice” and later adds acting.

Instead, technical work should increasingly be tested through dramatic tasks.

For example, the student can sing the same phrase while changing the playable objective.

One version may warn.

Another may report.

Another may request clarification.

Another may restrain another character.

The vocal mechanism should remain efficient while rhetorical intention changes.

Such exercises can help the performer discover whether dramatic intensity is being created through communication or through unnecessary muscular effort.

This is particularly important for low male voices because students may unconsciously equate authority with increased pressure.

A teacher may ask for greater dramatic presence, and the singer may respond by depressing the larynx, enlarging the sound indiscriminately, overactivating the jaw, or increasing respiratory force.

The artistic request and the physiological response then become confused.

Training should therefore teach the singer to translate acting instructions into functional questions.

Instead of:

“How do I make the voice heavier?”

the singer might ask:

“What needs to become clearer to the other character?”

Instead of:

“How do I sound more powerful?”

the question may become:

“Can I make the command more rhythmically definite?”

Instead of:

“How do I sound darker?”

the question may become:

“Does the audience understand that I possess authority here?”

Such reframing can reduce the tendency to solve every dramatic problem acoustically.

The study also suggests that low male voice training should place greater emphasis on recitative.

Students often devote disproportionate preparation time to arias because arias are used for lessons, auditions, competitions, and examinations. Yet professional operatic performance frequently requires the singer to establish character, hierarchy, and narrative information through recitative.

Publio is a strong example of this imbalance.

His only independent aria is important, but much of his dramatic identity is carried by short exchanges.

Therefore, bass and baritone students should practice recitative not merely for correct pitches and Italian pronunciation, but for **action, hierarchy, and information**.

A useful pedagogical exercise is to assign an action verb to each phrase.

For example: report, warn, confirm, interrupt, redirect, question, authorize, refuse, deliver.

The student should then speak the text before singing it.

The teacher can ask:

Who changes because of this sentence?

What did your character know before the sentence?

What do they know afterward?

Are you asking for information or pretending already to know it?

Does the sentence cause movement?

This approach can prevent recitative from becoming neutral transitional material.

It can also improve diction because consonants and syntax acquire dramatic purpose.

Ensemble training is equally important.

Young singers frequently learn ensemble music primarily by counting rests and entering correctly. This is musically necessary, but dramatically incomplete.

Publio's role demonstrates that the performer must know what other characters are singing during those rests.

A low male singer should therefore be trained to identify **semantic cues** as well as musical cues.

The student should know not only:

"I enter after four measures,"

but:

"I enter after Sesto has attempted to return his attention to Vitellia."

Or:

“I react after Tito reveals a level of distress that changes my understanding of him.”

This method turns counting into listening.

It also improves adaptability when another performer changes timing.

The student is no longer dependent exclusively on a memorized number of beats but understands the dramatic event that produces the entrance.

Such ensemble training may be especially valuable for basses and baritones who frequently occupy roles of fathers, officials, servants, commanders, teachers, priests, or social authorities whose responses organize the stage even when they are not singing continuously.

Another implication concerns silence.

Young performers can become uncomfortable when they have no vocal material.

They may feel compelled to demonstrate continued acting through constant movement or facial expression.

Publio shows that silence can instead be trained as **active attention**.

The student should be able to remain dramatically present while listening without continuously illustrating what is being heard.

An exercise can therefore ask the performer to reduce visible reaction while preserving internal attention.

The teacher or director can then evaluate whether the student remains connected to the scene.

This can be particularly important for low male roles associated with status. Economical behavior may communicate greater authority than constant gestural activity.

The study also supports the teaching of **information mapping**.

Before staging a scene, a student can divide information into four categories:

KNOWN

UNKNOWN

TASK

LIMIT

This is a simple but powerful exercise.

It prevents the singer from using knowledge acquired as a reader of the complete opera before the character receives it.

This problem is common in familiar repertory.

A student who has rehearsed an opera for months may forget what the character does not yet know.

The result is anticipatory acting.

Surprise disappears.

Questions no longer sound genuine.

Fear becomes retrospective rather than immediate.

The actor appears to know the future.

Information mapping restores dramatic chronology.

For bass and baritone training, this is especially useful because authority figures are often assumed to know more than they actually do.

A commanding physical presence can unintentionally suggest omniscience.

The performer must therefore distinguish **status from knowledge**.

A character can be socially powerful and informationally limited.

Publio provides a clear example.

Another pedagogical implication concerns physical authority.

Students should be taught that authority can be created through **economy and spatial organization**.

Large gesture is only one possibility.

Training can include exercises in which the singer communicates authority without raising volume or increasing muscular effort.

For example: the performer may control the distance between characters, delay or initiate movement, hold visual focus, respond immediately to rank, or remain still while others move around him.

Such exercises can help low male singers escape habitual “authority acting,” in which the chest is continuously expanded, the stance excessively widened, the brow permanently lowered, and every phrase delivered with the same physical weight.

The aim is not to eliminate such choices completely.

It is to make them optional.

A performer should possess more than one way to create status.

The training of props and objects should also be integrated earlier.

Opera students often learn musical material first and encounter swords, documents, canes, uniforms, coats, or other objects late in the rehearsal process.

Yet such objects can affect timing, posture, breath, and dramatic hierarchy.

Publio's relationship to Sesto's sword and the Senate's decree demonstrates how objects can carry structural meaning.

Therefore, performer training should include **object-based action**.

A student should ask:

What changes when I receive this object?

What authority does it represent?

Who is allowed to possess it?

What changes when I give it away?

This transforms prop handling from stage decoration into dramatic action.

The same principle applies to costume.

Low male roles are frequently costumed in military uniforms, formal coats, armor, period clothing, robes, or structured garments.

These can change stride, posture, rib movement, and the relationship between body and voice.

Whenever possible, students should therefore rehearse demanding movement in clothing or rehearsal substitutes that approximate the physical restrictions of the final costume.

This is not merely theatrical preparation.

It is part of vocal preparation.

The performer must know whether a technically reliable phrase remains reliable when sitting, walking, kneeling, carrying an object, or wearing restrictive clothing.

This leads to another important implication: vocal technique should be tested under **progressive dramatic load**.

A phrase may first be sung standing neutrally.

Then text intention is added.

Then movement.

Then interaction with another singer.

Then costume.

Then orchestra.

The teacher can observe at which point technical efficiency deteriorates.

This makes the source of a problem easier to identify.

If the voice is stable while standing but becomes pressed when the student begins commanding another actor, the difficulty may not be the phrase itself.

The acting action may be producing unnecessary physical tension.

If the problem begins only in heavy costume, the solution may differ again.

This layered process encourages diagnostic rather than judgmental teaching.

Instead of concluding:

“Your technique failed,”

the teacher and student can ask:

“Which additional performance variable changed the coordination?”

Such an approach is particularly appropriate for professional opera preparation, where singers rarely perform in ideal laboratory conditions.

They must sing while moving, reacting, handling objects, watching a conductor, hearing an orchestra from unusual positions, and responding to other performers.

The technique must therefore be resilient rather than merely correct in isolation.

The dissertation also suggests a pedagogical distinction between **character voice** and **character intention**.

A student may attempt to create a different “voice” for every psychological state.

An angry character becomes louder and darker.

A compassionate character becomes softer and breathier.

An official becomes heavier.

A frightened character becomes unstable.

Such transformations can create theatrical effect, but they may also compromise vocal consistency.

A more sustainable model begins with intention.

The voice remains technically coherent while elements such as:

- articulation,
- dynamic proportion,
- phrase direction,
- onset character,
- rhythmic firmness,
- and timing

are adjusted within healthy limits.

This allows expressive difference without requiring the singer to rebuild the instrument for every scene.

Publio is particularly useful for this training because the role moves among several functions without requiring radical vocal transformation.

The same bass must:

command,

advise,

observe,

respond compassionately,

report,

and join the ensemble.

The student therefore learns that character variation can be achieved through **functional adjustment within one instrument**.

Another implication concerns collaboration training.

Young singers should learn how to communicate effectively with conductors and directors.

Professional collaboration is not served well by either extreme:

complete passivity

or

rigid defense of personal interpretation.

The singer should be able to explain a technical or dramatic problem in functional terms.

Instead of:

“I do not like this tempo,”

the performer can say:

“At this tempo the consonantal sequence obscures the text and I lose the rhetorical relationship between the two clauses.”

Instead of:

“I cannot do this staging,”

the singer can explain:

“The turn occurs during the breath preparation for the entrance. Could we test whether the movement can begin one beat earlier?”

This form of communication respects both the singer’s technical knowledge and the conductor’s or director’s authority.

Training institutions should therefore include collaborative rehearsal as part of performance education rather than treating it as something students learn only after entering the profession.

Finally, the study suggests that bass and baritone training should include **evidence-based flexibility**.

The performer should be encouraged to research a role deeply without believing that research produces one immutable performance.

Textual evidence establishes certain facts.

Musical evidence establishes certain relationships.

Historical evidence provides context.

Production evidence demonstrates possibilities.

The performer then makes decisions within those boundaries.

This model teaches both discipline and adaptability.

A student who knows only one interpretation may become inflexible.

A student who believes every interpretation is equally valid may lose textual discipline.

The strongest performer can distinguish:

what must be preserved,

what may be changed,

and what is being deliberately reinterpreted.

This capacity is especially valuable for singers entering contemporary opera practice, where the same Mozart role may appear one season in historical dress and the next in a modern political production.

The instrument must remain dependable while the theatrical language changes.

The broader pedagogical implication of this dissertation is therefore that low male voice training should not be organized around the production of “bassness” or “baritone authority” as fixed aesthetic identities.

It should develop performers capable of combining:

technical consistency, textual precision, dramatic causality, active listening, embodied adaptability, information awareness, and collaborative flexibility.

Publio provides an unusually clear model because his role demands all of these qualities without allowing any one of them to dominate.

Training such a role well requires the student to become more than a singer capable of producing appropriate notes and tone.

It requires a performer capable of understanding how voice becomes action.

9.5 Limitations of the Study

This study has sought to develop a historically grounded, textually disciplined, musically informed, and performer-centered interpretation of Publio in Mozart's *La clemenza di Tito*. Its conclusions are nevertheless subject to several limitations. These limitations do not invalidate the study; rather, they define the boundaries within which its claims should be understood.

The first limitation concerns the surviving evidence.

Publio is a secondary role, and the historical record does not preserve the same quantity of documentation that survives for more prominent singers, principal roles, or major production events. The 1791 premiere context can be reconstructed in significant detail, but the available sources do not provide a complete record of how Gaetano Campi physically portrayed Publio, how he moved, what gestures he used, how his recitatives were paced, or how contemporary spectators perceived every aspect of the performance.

The absence of such evidence places a necessary limit on historical reconstruction.

This dissertation therefore does not claim to recover the original staging of Publio in Prague.

Where the libretto and score establish an action, such as an entrance, an exit, the surrender of a sword, the delivery of a decree, or a change in personnel on stage, those elements can be treated as documented dramatic information.

Where no reliable written source establishes a specific gesture, facial expression, posture, or physical distance, the study does not present one as historical fact.

The distinction between **documented action** and **reconstructed embodiment** is therefore fundamental.

A second limitation concerns the relationship between the score and performance.

The musical score provides detailed evidence regarding pitch, rhythm, tempo indication, dynamics, orchestration, formal structure, ensemble relationships, and certain stage directions. However, notation cannot determine the full theatrical realization of a role.

The score can establish when Publio sings.

It can establish what he sings.

It can establish when another character interrupts him or when voices overlap.

It can establish certain exits and entrances.

But it does not specify every gaze, gesture, degree of emotional intensity, or spatial relationship.

Any performer-centered model derived from the score must therefore remain interpretive.

This dissertation has attempted to make such interpretation explicit rather than disguise it as notation.

The acting verbs proposed in Chapter 8—such as **Secure**, **Register**, **Warn**, **Read**, and **Reorient**—are therefore analytical and rehearsal tools. They are not historical labels supplied by Mozart or Mazzolà.

Their value lies in making dramatic causality playable, not in claiming documentary authority.

A third limitation concerns the libretto itself.

Mazzolà's revision is central to the study because it changes Publio's participation in important scenes, most notably the arrest sequence. However, the libretto represents only one level of the completed opera.

The text establishes words, dramatic sequence, and many stage directions, but Mozart's music may modify, expand, delay, or complicate the dramatic force of those words.

A purely literary reading would therefore be insufficient.

Conversely, a purely musical reading could overlook the institutional and rhetorical meanings carried by the language.

This dissertation has attempted to maintain both levels, but the balance remains interpretive.

Different scholars or performers may assign different weight to textual and musical evidence.

A fourth limitation concerns modern production documentation.

Chapter 7 examined selected productions only when their relevant characteristics could be supported by written documentation such as official institutional material, program texts, interviews, or published criticism.

This approach increases evidentiary discipline but necessarily excludes many potentially revealing performance details.

A production video may show an apparently significant gesture or relationship that no written source discusses.

A photograph may preserve a costume or spatial arrangement that appears interpretively meaningful.

A performer may remember a rehearsal decision that was never documented.

Such material can be artistically useful, but the methodology of this dissertation deliberately limits the claims that can be made from it.

The result is therefore not a comprehensive visual history of Publio in modern performance.

It is a comparison of **documented production framings and receptions**.

This distinction is important.

A production that receives relatively little critical discussion of Publio should not be assumed to have made the character theatrically insignificant.

Critical silence is not evidence of scenic absence.

Likewise, extensive discussion of a particular Publio may reflect the interests of a critic rather than the objective prominence of the role.

The study therefore distinguishes critical visibility from dramaturgical and scenic visibility, but surviving documentation cannot eliminate the gap among them.

A fifth limitation concerns the selection of production case studies.

Opera McGill, Conservatori Liceu, Mozarteum, Salzburg Festival, Glyndebourne, and Teatro Real provide useful points of comparison, but they do not represent the entire international performance history of *La clemenza di Tito*.

Other opera houses, festivals, educational institutions, directors, and national performance traditions may offer significantly different approaches to Publio.

The case studies should therefore be understood as a documented comparative sample rather than a statistically representative corpus.

Their purpose is to test the adaptability of the dissertation's interpretive model, not to establish a global taxonomy of Publio performance.

A larger future study could expand the production corpus considerably.

A sixth limitation concerns language and translation.

The dissertation engages with Italian libretti, English-language scholarship, and production materials in several linguistic contexts. Translation is therefore unavoidable.

Whenever possible, the original-language wording has been preserved in important quotations and interpreted alongside English translation.

Nevertheless, translation can alter nuance.

Terms such as *pietà*, *giusto*, *fede*, *tradimento*, *affanno*, and *commuove* carry semantic and rhetorical associations that cannot always be reproduced perfectly in one English equivalent.

The same problem arises in production criticism.

A critic's vocabulary may carry culturally specific connotations that become weaker when translated.

The study's interpretive conclusions therefore depend partly upon linguistic judgment.

A seventh limitation concerns the definition of Publio's voice type.

The role is historically associated with a bass singer, and the present study discusses implications for bass and baritone performance. Modern casting, however, does not operate through perfectly uniform categories.

Individual singers differ in timbre, registration, tessitura, vocal weight, resonance strategy, and dramatic profile.

A singer described professionally as a bass-baritone may approach the role differently from a deeper bass.

A baritone with sufficient lower range may encounter different technical problems.

The dissertation therefore does not propose one physiological model for all singers of Publio.

Its vocal recommendations are functional rather than prescriptive.

The score can establish musical requirements.

The singer must determine how those requirements can be produced efficiently within an individual instrument.

An eighth limitation concerns voice science.

The dissertation uses selected findings from voice research to support bounded principles such as individual variation in respiratory coordination and the importance of avoiding universal physiological prescriptions.

However, this is not an experimental voice-science study.

No original aerodynamic, acoustic, electroglottographic, endoscopic, or respiratory measurements were conducted on singers performing Publio.

The study therefore cannot establish physiological causation.

Statements concerning vocal preparation should be understood as performer-centered applications informed by existing research, not as new laboratory findings.

A ninth limitation concerns the relationship between dramatic interpretation and vocal technique.

The dissertation repeatedly argues that dramatic intensity should not automatically be translated into increased physical or vocal pressure.

This principle is intended as a practical safeguard, but it cannot specify exactly how every singer should coordinate breath, registration, resonance, articulation, and movement.

Individual vocal technique is shaped by anatomy, training history, language, repertoire, and current physical condition.

The rehearsal model can identify the dramatic task and test whether technical stability survives that task.

It cannot substitute for individualized voice teaching.

A tenth limitation concerns practitioner reflection.

Chapter 8 explicitly incorporated performer-centered experimentation while restricting the claims that can be derived from it.

This is necessary because the performer occupies a double position as both participant and observer.

Embodied experience provides access to information unavailable from score analysis alone, but it is also subjective and context-dependent.

A performer may perceive a choice as more powerful, more comfortable, or more truthful without being able to determine how it appears to the audience.

Memory may be selective.

Personal preference may influence evaluation.

Fatigue, acoustic conditions, staging, cast interaction, and rehearsal circumstances may alter the result.

For these reasons, practitioner reflection in this dissertation is not treated as universal evidence.

It is treated as **situated evidence**.

A rehearsal finding can support a statement about what occurred under specified conditions.

It cannot establish what every Publio should do.

An eleventh limitation concerns audience reception.

The study includes critical reception where appropriate, but it does not conduct an original empirical audience study.

No controlled surveys, interviews, eye-tracking experiments, or reception experiments were undertaken to determine how different audiences perceive Publio's authority, compassion, visibility, or age.

The dissertation therefore cannot claim that one acting strategy will reliably produce one audience response.

Critical reviews provide valuable evidence of individual professional reception, but they cannot stand for all spectators.

This limitation is particularly important when discussing subtle acting choices.

A director and singer may intend a restrained gesture to communicate compassion, but the study cannot assume that every spectator will interpret it in that way.

A twelfth limitation concerns the concept of historical authenticity.

The dissertation is historically grounded but does not attempt to define one historically authentic performance of Publio.

The surviving score, libretto, historical context, and documentary evidence can constrain interpretation, but they do not reconstruct the total embodied event of 1791.

Furthermore, modern theaters, orchestras, singers, rehearsal systems, audience expectations, and production conventions differ substantially from those of Mozart's environment.

The study therefore uses historical evidence primarily to establish **dramatic relationships, textual conditions, musical structures, and interpretive boundaries**.

It does not argue that a modern performer should reproduce an imagined eighteenth-century acting style in every production.

A thirteenth limitation concerns contemporary staging.

The dissertation supports controlled adaptability, but no analytical framework can anticipate every directorial concept.

A future production may deliberately reverse hierarchy, alter character identity, redistribute text, introduce multimedia, or reinterpret the opera through a political framework that substantially changes Publio's function.

At that point, the performer-centered model may no longer describe the production without modification.

This is not necessarily a failure of the model.

It simply means that the production has altered one or more of the structural relationships the model assumes.

The useful question would then become not whether the staging is “wrong,” but which relationship has been changed and what dramatic consequences follow.

A fourteenth limitation concerns the concept of the threshold figure itself.

This dissertation proposes the threshold figure as a useful interpretive model for Publio.

The concept explains his repeated position between authority and obedience, knowledge and limitation, law and compassion, private suffering and public procedure.

However, the model should not become a new stereotype.

Publio should not be forced into every possible category merely to preserve the thesis.

There may be moments in which his function is straightforward rather than liminal.

He sometimes simply carries out a task.

The threshold concept is most useful when it explains actual transitions supported by the drama.

It should not be treated as a metaphysical essence of the character.

A fifteenth limitation concerns generalization to other Mozart roles.

The dissertation argues that its methods may be useful for studying other secondary roles, but it does not demonstrate that every such role operates like Publio.

Different characters possess different dramaturgical structures.

A servant, priest, officer, parent, courtier, or comic supporting role may require a different analytical model.

The broader contribution is therefore methodological rather than categorical.

Researchers may use questions of information, authority, mediation, listening, and dramatic function as starting points, but the conclusions must emerge from each individual role.

Finally, the study is limited by its own scope.

Its primary subject is Publio.

It does not provide a complete analysis of Tito, Sesto, Vitellia, Annio, or Servilia.

Their actions are discussed when they affect Publio’s dramatic function, but each could support a separate performer-centered dissertation.

Similarly, the study does not attempt a complete analysis of the opera’s political philosophy, formal design, orchestration, reception history, or performance practice.

These larger fields are engaged only where they clarify Publio.

This limitation is necessary.

A narrowly defined role allows close examination of details that might disappear in a comprehensive study of the entire opera.

The strength and limitation of the dissertation are therefore closely related.

Its focus makes visible the significance of a role often treated as secondary, but the conclusions should remain proportional to that focus.

The study can demonstrate that Publio is structurally, musically, dramaturgically, and performatively significant.

It cannot claim that he determines the meaning of *La clemenza di Tito* as a whole.

The final methodological principle is therefore one of proportion.

Evidence should support only the claim it can bear.

Text should not be transformed into undocumented staging.

Production criticism should not become universal character definition.

Performer experience should not become historical fact.

Voice research should not become individualized medical prescription.

A secondary role should not be exaggerated into a hidden protagonist merely because closer analysis reveals its importance.

By maintaining these limits, the dissertation seeks to preserve the central argument without overstating it: Publio is significant not because he secretly dominates *La clemenza di Tito*, but because his precisely limited position makes crucial structures of authority, knowledge, compassion, judgment, and clemency visible in performance.

9.6 Directions for Further Research

The present study has demonstrated that Publio offers a productive case for examining the relationship among dramatic function, institutional authority, musical structure, performer practice, and the limits of knowledge in Mozart's *La clemenza di Tito*. At the same time, the study's deliberately narrow focus opens several directions for further research.

The first and most immediate direction would be a broader historical study of Publio in performance.

The present dissertation has examined the role through the surviving libretto, score, historical context, and selected documented modern productions. A future project could expand this corpus

substantially by tracing performances of Publio across the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries.

Such a study could investigate whether the role has changed in relation to broader shifts in Mozart performance practice.

For example, researchers could ask whether Publio was historically treated primarily as a functional bass role, whether later productions increased his dramatic prominence, or whether modern directorial theater has made his political identity more visible.

A longitudinal study could also examine casting patterns.

Were deeper basses preferred historically?

Did bass-baritones become increasingly common?

Did particular singers repeatedly specialize in the role?

Such questions could help determine whether modern assumptions about Publio's vocal identity reflect longstanding practice or more recent convention.

A second direction would involve archival research on Gaetano Campi, the first Publio.

The surviving premiere documentation establishes his association with the role, but considerably more could be learned if additional material were located concerning his career, repertory, vocal profile, contemporary reception, and professional environment.

A study of Campi's other roles could provide indirect evidence about the expectations associated with his voice and stage persona.

If he frequently performed military, paternal, comic, noble, or institutional roles, such repertory patterns could illuminate the professional category within which Publio was first understood.

Such evidence would still not reconstruct the original acting of the role, but it could refine our understanding of its first performer.

A third direction concerns the relationship between Metastasio and Mazzolà.

The present dissertation has focused specifically on changes affecting Publio, especially the addition of emotional responsiveness within the arrest sequence.

A broader comparative study could examine how Mazzolà redistributes moral awareness among multiple secondary characters.

Rather than asking only how Tito, Sesto, or Vitellia changed, researchers could investigate how the revision reshapes the entire network of observers, officials, confidants, and witnesses.

This could clarify whether Publio's increased compassionate visibility is an isolated intervention or part of a larger dramaturgical strategy.

Such a study could also compare Mazzolà's revisions with other late eighteenth-century adaptations of Metastasio.

The question would then become:

How did late eighteenth-century operatic revision redistribute emotional and political agency among secondary characters?

Publio could serve as one case within a larger transformation of opera seria dramaturgy.

A fourth direction would be a comparative study of secondary officials in Mozart opera.

Publio's role suggests that characters associated with institutions, courts, military structures, law, or administration may reveal important aspects of dramatic organization despite limited musical prominence.

Future research could compare Publio with other figures who mediate between principal characters and larger social structures.

The goal would not be to prove that all such roles function identically.

Rather, researchers could test categories developed in this dissertation:

- delegated authority,
- access to information,
- mediation,
- custody,
- documentary action,
- listening,
- and the boundary between private and public knowledge.

Such comparison could reveal whether Publio represents an exceptional case or one version of a broader Mozartian dramaturgy of secondary authority.

A fifth direction would concern recitative.

This dissertation has argued that Publio's recitatives function as dramatic infrastructure rather than connective material.

A larger study could examine how secondary roles across Mozart opera use recitative to perform actions that are disproportionate to their musical duration.

Researchers might map:

who introduces new information,

who confirms it,

who transforms it into action,

who controls entrances and exits,

and who carries institutional consequences.

Such a study could combine textual analysis with network analysis.

Characters could be mapped according to information transfer rather than number of arias.

This might reveal forms of dramatic centrality that conventional role hierarchy does not capture.

A sixth direction would involve empirical performer research.

The performer-centered model proposed in Chapter 8 could be tested with multiple singers rather than a single practitioner perspective.

Bass, bass-baritone, and baritone singers could prepare selected Publio scenes using the same evidence-based framework.

Researchers could then compare how performers translate identical dramatic functions into different vocal and physical solutions.

For example, a study could ask how different singers embody:

Secure

in the arrest scene,

Warn

in “Tardi s’avvede,”

or

Read

in No. 18.

The purpose would not be to identify one correct solution.

It would be to measure the range of viable solutions within shared textual constraints.

Such research could provide valuable information about the relationship between voice type, body, dramatic intention, and stage action.

A seventh direction would be an experimental study of vocal technique under dramatic load.

This dissertation has proposed that vocal stability should be tested progressively as movement, interaction, costume, and staging are introduced.

A future interdisciplinary project could investigate this experimentally.

Singers could perform the same phrase:

- standing neutrally,
- while walking,
- while turning,
- while interacting physically with another actor,
- and while wearing restrictive costume.

Researchers could measure acoustic, respiratory, or aerodynamic changes under each condition.

Such a study would provide empirical data for questions that performer training often addresses intuitively.

It could also help distinguish between productive physical engagement and movement that significantly disrupts vocal coordination.

Publio would be a particularly useful test case because his role combines formal singing with command, movement, custody, document handling, and ensemble interaction.

An eighth direction would concern authority perception.

The present dissertation argues that authority can be produced through more than vocal weight or aggressive gesture.

This proposition could be tested empirically.

Audience participants could view multiple versions of the same short scene.

One version might use large gesture and increased physical dominance.

Another might use stillness, spatial control, and precise timing.

A third might combine both.

Participants could then be asked to evaluate perceived authority, cruelty, competence, empathy, and institutional status.

Such a study could help determine how audiences actually read low male authority on the opera stage.

It could also test whether performer assumptions about “looking authoritative” correspond to audience perception.

A ninth direction would examine costume and embodied vocal production.

Opera costume is often discussed primarily from visual and historical perspectives, yet singers experience it physically.

A systematic study could investigate how armor, formal coats, belts, footwear, weapons, and restrictive garments affect breathing strategy, posture, movement, and perceived vocal effort.

Publio again provides a useful case because many productions costume him as an official or military figure.

Such research could contribute both to costume design and singer training.

It might also encourage production teams to integrate costume testing earlier in the rehearsal process.

A tenth direction concerns prop dramaturgy.

The dissertation has treated Sesto's sword and the Senate's decree as objects that carry changes in status and authority.

A wider study could examine the dramatic function of objects throughout *La clemenza di Tito* or Mozart opera more generally.

Instead of treating props as decorative details, researchers could ask:

Who possesses the object?

Who is permitted to touch it?

What changes when it changes hands?

Does the object represent evidence, violence, sovereignty, intimacy, or institutional procedure?

Such a framework could connect material culture with performer-centered dramaturgy.

An eleventh direction would be a systematic study of knowledge structures in Mozart opera.

The information-mapping method developed for Publio could be applied to entire casts.

For each scene, researchers could identify what each character knows, what remains concealed, who controls information, and when asymmetries collapse.

This could be particularly useful in works driven by secrecy, disguise, misunderstanding, and delayed recognition.

The result might be a form of **dramatic information cartography**.

Such mapping could help explain why certain ensemble reactions are dramatically convincing and why anticipatory acting can weaken them.

It could also provide a practical rehearsal tool for directors and singers.

A twelfth direction would investigate the relationship between critical reception and secondary-role performance.

Chapter 7 demonstrated that critical references to Publio vary widely.

A larger corpus study could collect reviews across decades and countries to determine which vocabulary critics use when discussing secondary low male roles.

Terms such as:

authoritative,

sonorous,

imposing,

sinister,

comic,

dignified,

anonymous,

reliable,

or

underused

could be analyzed statistically.

This might reveal long-standing critical stereotypes surrounding bass and baritone supporting roles.

It could also show whether contemporary criticism increasingly evaluates acting, political function, and stage presence rather than vocal sound alone.

A thirteenth direction concerns contemporary directorial reinterpretation.

Future research could compare productions that deliberately alter Publio's political identity.

One production might present him as a military officer.

Another as a bureaucrat.

Another as security personnel.

Another as a court insider.

Another might minimize the role almost entirely.

Researchers could then analyze what happens to the relationships among authority, knowledge, compassion, and sovereignty in each version.

This would move beyond asking whether a production is faithful or unfaithful.

The more productive question would be:

What dramaturgical consequence follows from each alteration?

Such research could help develop a more precise vocabulary for analyzing Regietheater and politically updated opera staging.

A fourteenth direction would involve comparative performance traditions across countries.

Publio may be interpreted differently within Italian, German-speaking, British, Spanish, Central European, North American, or East Asian opera institutions.

Differences in acting pedagogy, language coaching, rehearsal time, casting practice, and directorial tradition could all affect the role.

A cross-cultural study could determine whether apparently individual interpretations actually reflect institutional or national performance cultures.

This would be especially valuable because modern opera careers increasingly require singers to move rapidly among different rehearsal traditions.

A fifteenth direction concerns performer training at conservatories.

The framework developed in this dissertation could be tested pedagogically.

One group of students could prepare a secondary Mozart role through conventional score-and-coaching methods.

Another could use additional tools such as:

information mapping,

playable verbs,

hierarchy mapping,

cue-based ensemble listening,

and bounded practitioner reflection.

Researchers could then compare outcomes in textual accuracy, dramatic continuity, adaptability, and collaborative rehearsal behavior.

Such research could help determine whether performer-centered dramaturgical analysis produces measurable pedagogical benefits.

A sixteenth direction would examine the relationship between role size and preparation time.

Professional singers sometimes devote less analytical preparation to smaller roles because the amount of music is limited.

Publio suggests that this may be inefficient when a role performs complex structural functions.

A future study could investigate how professional singers allocate preparation time among principal and secondary roles and whether dramaturgical complexity correlates with preparation needs.

This could contribute to more efficient professional practice.

A seventeenth direction would concern understudy, cover, and repertory conditions.

Secondary roles are often performed under limited rehearsal time or with changing casts.

The cue-based acting model proposed here may be especially useful under such conditions because it emphasizes dramatic function rather than memorized micro-choreography.

A future study could test whether singers trained through functional cues adapt more successfully to cast changes, conductor substitutions, or altered blocking.

This has direct professional relevance.

Opera performance is not always created under ideal rehearsal conditions.

A robust acting methodology should therefore function under variation.

An eighteenth direction concerns the relationship between textual evidence and deliberate contradiction.

The present dissertation distinguishes between production choices that reinterpret surface realization and those that change structural relationships.

Future research could develop this distinction more systematically.

A taxonomy might identify:

text-preserving adaptation,

structural reinterpretation,

deliberate contradiction,

and

dramaturgical replacement.

Such categories could help performers and directors articulate what exactly has been changed in a modern production.

They could also reduce unproductive debates framed only as “traditional versus modern.”

A nineteenth direction would explore secondary-role dramaturgy beyond Mozart.

The methods developed here could be tested in opera by composers such as Rossini, Donizetti, Verdi, Puccini, or later repertory.

Many operas contain officials, messengers, guards, priests, doctors, officers, confidants, and servants whose brief appearances enable major dramatic transitions.

Comparative research could ask whether structural significance disproportionate to musical duration is a broader operatic phenomenon.

If so, Publio could provide one model for a larger theory of **operatic secondary-role function**.

A twentieth direction would return to the concept of clemency itself.

Publio makes it possible to examine clemency not only as Tito’s moral virtue but as an interruption of a functioning institutional sequence.

Future scholarship could examine how clemency, pardon, mercy, and sovereign exception are represented through secondary characters who must carry out or abandon punishment.

This could connect musicology, political theory, performance studies, and legal dramaturgy.

The practical value of such research would lie in showing performers that political concepts in opera are not expressed only through principal characters' speeches.

They are also embodied by the people required to execute institutional decisions.

Finally, further research should continue to test the concept of the **threshold figure** rather than merely accepting it.

The concept has been productive for Publio because his role repeatedly occupies boundaries among knowledge, power, law, compassion, privacy, and public procedure.

Future studies should ask under what conditions the concept remains analytically useful.

Does a threshold figure require delegated authority?

Must the character repeatedly mediate transitions?

Can a comic character perform the same function?

Can a principal role also operate as a threshold figure?

At what point does the category become too broad to remain meaningful?

These questions would help transform the concept from a role-specific interpretation into a testable analytical model.

The broader direction suggested by this dissertation is therefore one of **precision before expansion**.

Publio demonstrates that close examination of a seemingly small role can reveal larger systems of musical and theatrical organization.

Future scholarship need not begin by searching for a larger subject.

It may instead begin by asking more exact questions of characters, actions, objects, silences, and transitions that have been treated as secondary.

Such research may reveal that operatic structure often becomes most visible not only through the characters who possess the greatest power, but through those who stand at the points where that power must be communicated, limited, enacted, witnessed, or changed.

APPENDIX A. PUBLIO'S SCENE-BY-SCENE DRAMATIC MAP

This appendix condenses Publio's dramatic trajectory into a practical scene-by-scene map. It is intended as a rehearsal aid rather than as a substitute for the textual, musical, and dramaturgical analyses developed in the preceding chapters. The categories of **Knowledge**, **Objective**, **Authority**, **Limit**, and **Playable Action** distinguish what Publio knows from what he feels, what he is required or authorized to do, and what remains outside his control. The playable verbs are the author's rehearsal tools and are not presented as historical terminology.

A.1 Act I, Scene 4 — Public Ceremony at the Capitol

Dramatic Situation:

Publio appears with senators and provincial representatives as Tito enters amid lictors, Praetorians, and the people.

Publio's Knowledge:

He knows the Senate's public honors for Tito and represents institutional communication within the ceremony.

Objective / Task:

Present the Senate's honors and participate in the public organization of imperial authority.

Authority and Limit:

Publio speaks on behalf of institutional structures but does not determine Tito's response to them. Tito redirects the proposed expenditure toward the victims of Vesuvius.

Internal or Relational Change:

Publio begins within a stable ceremonial order. His identity is public and official before the political crisis begins.

Playable Action: MAINTAIN**A.2 Act I, Scene 6 — The Accusation Document****Dramatic Situation:**

Publio brings Tito a document containing the names of people accused of insulting the memory of former emperors.

Publio's Knowledge:

He possesses documented information regarding the accusations and knows that Tito himself has also been criticized.

Objective / Task:

Deliver potentially politically sensitive information to Tito.

Authority and Limit:

Publio can report the offenses, but he cannot dictate the emperor's response. Tito chooses tolerance and forgiveness.

Internal or Relational Change:

Publio encounters an early example of Tito refusing severity even when imperial dignity is involved.

Playable Action: REPORT**A.3 Act I, Scene 7 — Withdrawal from Private Disclosure****Dramatic Situation:**

Servilia approaches Tito with a private confession, and Publio withdraws.

Publio's Knowledge:

Publio knows that Servilia requests private access but does not hear the substance of the conversation after withdrawing.

Objective / Task:

Respect the boundary between official presence and private disclosure.

Authority and Limit:

His proximity to Tito does not grant unlimited access.

Internal or Relational Change:

An early boundary of knowledge is established: institutional closeness does not equal omniscience.

Playable Action: WITHDRAW**A.4 Act I, Scene 10 / No. 10 — The Announcement to Vitellia****Dramatic Situation:**

Publio and Annio find Vitellia and tell her that Tito has chosen her as his consort. They misread her agitation as overwhelming happiness.

Publio's Knowledge:

Publio knows Tito's announced marital choice but does not know about Vitellia's conspiracy with Sesto.

Objective / Task:

Bring Vitellia to Tito and communicate the imperial decision.

Authority and Limit:

He can transmit Tito's decision but cannot perceive the private cause of Vitellia's distress.

Internal or Relational Change:

The scene establishes a major information gap. Publio's interpretation is reasonable but incorrect because crucial information is unavailable to him.

Playable Action: CONVEY**A.5 Act I, Scenes 11–12 / Finale I — Crisis at the Capitol****Dramatic Situation:**

The Capitol is in chaos. Cries are heard, and the possibility of a conspiracy becomes apparent.

Publio's Knowledge:

Publio hears evidence of violent disorder and understands that Tito may be threatened, but he initially does not know who is responsible.

Objective / Task:

Assess the crisis and remain available to the public order surrounding Tito.

Authority and Limit:

He can recognize danger but cannot yet assign guilt without sufficient information.

Internal or Relational Change:

Stable ceremonial authority becomes crisis awareness. The world Publio serves has become uncertain.

Playable Action: ASSESS

A.6 Act II, Scene 3 — Arrest of Sesto**Dramatic Situation:**

Publio enters with guards and confronts Sesto. He demands Sesto's sword and explains that the supposed victim was Lentulo rather than Tito.

Publio's Knowledge:

He possesses verified information connecting Sesto to the attack. He knows that Lentulo survived and that Sesto's involvement can no longer remain concealed.

Objective / Task:

Remove Sesto's capacity for resistance and take him before the Senate.

Authority and Limit:

Publio possesses authority over custody and movement, but not over final judgment.

Internal or Relational Change:

Publio moves from crisis observer to active executor of institutional procedure.

Playable Action: SECURE**A.7 Act II, Scene 3, Continuation — Surrender and Custody****Dramatic Situation:**

Sesto gives up his sword. Publio explains that the Senate is already assembled and that he cannot delay taking him there.

Publio's Knowledge:

He understands that formal judicial procedure has begun.

Objective / Task:

Convert arrest into movement toward institutional judgment.

Authority and Limit:

Publio cannot postpone the process on his own authority.

Internal or Relational Change:

The surrender of the sword converts suspicion into explicit custody.

Playable Action: CONDUCT**A.8 Act II, Scene 4 / No. 14, "Se al volto mai ti senti" — Compassion within Duty****Dramatic Situation:**

Sesto attempts a farewell to Vitellia while Publio continues urging him to leave. Publio hears Sesto's suffering and expresses pity in an aside.

Publio's Knowledge:

He knows Sesto is a prisoner and witnesses genuine emotional suffering. He still does not know Vitellia's guilt.

Objective / Task:

Continue the escort while remaining responsive to what is occurring around him.

Authority and Limit:

Compassion does not authorize Publio to release Sesto or suspend the Senate's process.

Internal or Relational Change:

This is the central shift from procedural authority to **compassion within duty**. Publio is emotionally changed without institutionally reversing his action.

Playable Action: REGISTER**A.9 Act II, Scene 5 — Awaiting the Senate's Decision****Dramatic Situation:**

The people await Tito at the arena. Tito asks about Sesto's case and sends Publio to obtain the Senate's decision.

Publio's Knowledge:

Publio knows that the Senate is considering Sesto's case and suspects that the result may not confirm Tito's optimistic expectation.

Objective / Task:

Obtain reliable information and communicate it to Tito.

Authority and Limit:

Publio can investigate and report but cannot predetermine the Senate's judgment.

Internal or Relational Change:

Publio now holds a more realistic assessment of the political danger than Tito.

Playable Action: ASSESS**A.10 Act II, Scene 5 / No. 16, "Tardi s'avvede" — Warning Tito****Dramatic Situation:**

Tito insists that he cannot believe Sesto capable of betrayal. Publio responds that not everyone possesses Tito's heart and sings his aria.

Publio's Knowledge:

He knows enough about the developing case to doubt Tito's projection of his own fidelity onto others.

Objective / Task:

Make Tito reconsider the reliability of his assumption about Sesto.

Authority and Limit:

Publio may counsel the emperor, but he cannot decide for him.

Internal or Relational Change:

Publio's authority becomes intellectual and rhetorical rather than custodial. He reveals political and ethical judgment.

Playable Action: WARN**A.11 Act II, Scene 7 — The Senate's Decree****Dramatic Situation:**

Publio returns with the Senate's decree. Sesto has confessed and has been condemned with his accomplices. Publio hands the decree to Tito, describing it as "terribile, ma giusto."

Publio's Knowledge:

He knows that Sesto has confessed and knows the formal Senate judgment.

Objective / Task:

Deliver verified judicial information and transfer the document requiring Tito's sovereign completion.

Authority and Limit:

Publio carries and authenticates the institutional result but cannot supply Tito's imperial decision.

Internal or Relational Change:

Publio possesses documentary certainty regarding the Senate but remains subordinate at the decisive threshold of sovereignty.

Playable Action: DELIVER**A.12 Act II, Scene 9 — Implementation of Tito's Order****Dramatic Situation:**

Tito waits impatiently for Sesto to be brought before him. Publio reports that the guards have already gone to carry out the order and recognizes Sesto's approach.

Publio's Knowledge:

He knows the order has been issued and that Sesto is being brought under custody.

Objective / Task:

Ensure that Tito's command is operationally completed.

Authority and Limit:

Publio manages execution of the order but does not control what Tito will decide once Sesto arrives.

Internal or Relational Change:

Publio shifts from documentary transmission back to physical implementation.

Playable Action: VERIFY**A.13 Act II, Scene 10 / No. 18, “Quello di Tito è il volto!” — Reading Tito****Dramatic Situation:**

Sesto is brought before Tito. Publio observes Tito’s visible distress and concludes that the emperor still loves him.

Publio’s Knowledge:

Publio knows the conviction and Senate sentence. He can see Tito’s emotional conflict but does not know its eventual outcome.

Objective / Task:

Observe the sovereign situation accurately while maintaining custody.

Authority and Limit:

Observation permits interpretation, not intervention. Love does not equal pardon.

Internal or Relational Change:

Publio becomes an internal spectator capable of reading Tito while remaining outside Tito’s final decision.

Playable Action: READ**A.14 Act II, Scene 10, End — Exclusion from Sovereign Deliberation****Dramatic Situation:**

Tito orders Publio and the guards to leave so that he can speak with Sesto alone.

Publio’s Knowledge:

Publio knows that Tito is emotionally conflicted but does not hear the private conversation that follows.

Objective / Task:

Obey the order and remove institutional witnesses from the private encounter.

Authority and Limit:

Publio’s access ends exactly where sovereign private deliberation begins.

Internal or Relational Change:

A decisive informational limit is created. Publio sees the crisis but is excluded from its resolution.

Playable Action: WITHDRAW**A.15 Act II, Scene 12 — “E Sesto?”**

Dramatic Situation:

Tito later summons Publio and orders that Sesto also be brought to the arena. Publio asks about Sesto's fate. Tito answers only that it is already decided.

Publio's Knowledge:

Publio knows the Senate's death sentence, knows that he was excluded from Tito and Sesto's private exchange, and receives no explicit information that the sentence has been cancelled.

Objective / Task:

Clarify enough information to continue the next official action.

Authority and Limit:

Tito deliberately withholds the actual decision. Publio cannot infer knowledge he has not received.

Internal or Relational Change:

Publio reasonably assumes that the previously established punishment remains operative and reacts with pity: "Oh, sventurato!"

Playable Action: VERIFY**A.16 Act II, Scene 13 — Conversation with Vitellia****Dramatic Situation:**

Vitellia stops Publio as he follows Tito toward the arena and asks about Sesto.

Publio's Knowledge:

Publio knows Sesto spoke privately with Tito but explicitly does not know what was said because he was excluded. He believes Sesto will die.

Objective / Task:

Answer Vitellia accurately while continuing to follow Tito.

Authority and Limit:

He can report only what he knows. He cannot reveal a conversation he did not hear or a decision Tito has not disclosed.

Internal or Relational Change:

Publio states his epistemic boundary openly: "escluso io fui." His reserve is interpreted incorrectly by Vitellia, demonstrating how limited information produces further misunderstanding.

Playable Action: REPORT**A.17 Act II, Scene 17 / Finale — Public Judicial Order****Dramatic Situation:**

Tito enters the public arena with Publio and Sesto among the lictors. The situation still resembles the execution of the lawful sentence.

Publio's Knowledge:

Publio knows Sesto's conviction and believes the punishment remains operative. He does not yet know that Vitellia will confess or that Tito will publicly pardon the conspirators.

Objective / Task:

Present Sesto within the public judicial order and remain available to Tito's commands.

Authority and Limit:

Publio can maintain custody but cannot determine the final fate of the prisoner.

Internal or Relational Change:

The institutional trajectory appears to have reached its final public stage.

Playable Action: PRESENT**A.18 Act II, Scene 17 — Vitellia's Confession****Dramatic Situation:**

Vitellia unexpectedly confesses responsibility for the conspiracy. Publio reacts with the others to the revelation.

Publio's Knowledge:

He receives major new information that invalidates the informational basis on which the previous trajectory had proceeded.

Objective / Task:

Reassess the situation and await sovereign judgment.

Authority and Limit:

New information does not give Publio independent authority to redesign the outcome.

Internal or Relational Change:

The expected line from conviction to punishment collapses. Publio must abandon the assumptions that organized his previous action.

Playable Action: REORIENT**A.19 Act II, Finale — Clemency****Dramatic Situation:**

Tito publicly pardons the conspirators and the opera moves toward collective praise and reconciliation.

Publio's Knowledge:

Publio now knows that the sovereign has cancelled the expected punitive outcome.

Objective / Task:

Participate in the public order created by Tito's new decision.

Authority and Limit:

Clemency originates with Tito, not Publio. Publio's institutional function now follows the new sovereign direction.

Internal or Relational Change:

The role completes its trajectory by moving from the execution of expected punishment into participation in public clemency.

Playable Action: JOIN**A.20 Summary of the Dramatic Arc**

Publio's trajectory can be condensed as:

Maintain → Report → Withdraw → Convey → Assess → Secure → Conduct → Register → Assess → Warn → Deliver → Verify → Read → Withdraw → Verify → Report → Present → Reorient → Join

The sequence should not be interpreted as nineteen disconnected psychological states. Several verbs describe recurring dimensions of the same official identity. What changes is the situation in which that identity operates.

At the beginning of the opera, Publio's authority is stable, public, and ceremonial. He serves within an apparently secure imperial order and communicates institutional information to Tito. The crisis at the end of Act I changes the conditions of that service. In Act II he becomes increasingly responsible for converting political danger into custody, judgment, and movement.

The arrest of Sesto introduces the central contradiction of the role. Publio's compassion does not eliminate his official responsibility. From this point onward, the performer must maintain both the human and institutional dimensions of the character.

"Tardi s'avvede" then demonstrates that Publio possesses interpretive intelligence as well as procedural authority. He can warn Tito about the limitations of judging others according to one's own fidelity. Yet even this insight does not give Publio sovereign knowledge.

The later scenes increasingly expose that limitation. Publio accurately reports the Senate's judgment, observes Tito's conflict, and understands that the emperor still loves Sesto, but he is removed before the decisive private conversation. His subsequent assumption that punishment will continue is therefore not a failure of intelligence. It is the consequence of limited access.

The finale depends upon preserving that limitation. Publio must enter the arena with the dramatic expectation generated by the information actually available to him. Vitellia's confession then produces genuine new knowledge, and Tito's clemency requires an institutional as well as emotional reorientation.

The entire arc can therefore be reduced to a broader sequence:

public function → crisis recognition → coercive responsibility → compassion within duty → political diagnosis → documentary certainty → psychological observation → exclusion from

private knowledge → reasonable expectation of punishment → new information → institutional reorientation → participation in clemency.

The map reinforces the dissertation's central distinction among **knowledge, feeling, authorization, and sovereign decision.**

At every point in rehearsal, the performer should be able to answer four questions:

What does Publio know at this moment?

What has emotionally changed him?

What is he authorized or required to do?

What remains possible only through Tito's decision?

Maintaining these distinctions prevents Publio from becoming either a passive functionary or an exaggerated alternative protagonist. His dramatic coherence depends upon remaining active within precisely defined limits.

APPENDIX B. VOCAL RANGE, TESSITURA, AND REGISTRATION DATA

This appendix summarizes the principal vocal and musical characteristics relevant to the preparation of Publio. Its purpose is not to assign a universal physiological strategy to the role, but to distinguish objectively observable properties of Mozart's writing from performer-dependent questions of registration, resonance, breath coordination, and vocal weight.

B.1 Role and Voice Classification

Role: Publio, *prefetto del pretorio*.

Voice Classification: Bass.

Performance Implication:

The designation establishes Publio as a low male role. It should not, however, be interpreted as an instruction to manufacture continuous vocal heaviness. The dramatic authority of the character emerges from musical, textual, institutional, and theatrical relationships as well as vocal timbre.

B.2 Principal Solo Number

Principal Solo Number: No. 16, “Tardi s’avvede.”

Performance Implication:

The aria provides the clearest concentrated sample of Publio’s independent vocal writing and therefore offers the most useful starting point for evaluating his solo vocal profile.

B.3 Tempo

Tempo: Allegretto.

Performance Implication:

The tempo character supports mobility, rhetorical continuity, and forward motion rather than monumental breadth. Excessive vocal weight or unnecessarily slow rhetorical delivery may work against the musical character.

B.4 Key

Key: C major.

Performance Implication:

The tonal brightness should not automatically be converted into comic characterization or artificial vocal lightness. Tonality must be understood in relation to the dramatic argument Publio makes to Tito.

B.5 Meter

Meter: 3/4.

Performance Implication:

The triple meter contributes forward motion. The singer should maintain phrase direction rather than giving equal rhetorical weight to every beat.

B.6 Orchestration

Orchestration: Strings, two oboes, and two horns.

Performance Implication:

The orchestral frame provides public weight and tonal definition without requiring the singer to create the entire scale of authority through vocal force.

B.7 Formal Span

Formal Span: NMA, pp. 193–195.

Performance Implication:

The aria is compact and should be approached as a concise act of counsel rather than an extended display aria.

B.8 Textual Organization

Textual Organization:

An opening proposition is followed by explanation and a return of the opening thought.

Performance Implication:

The singer can differentiate the repeated material rhetorically rather than through exaggerated changes in timbre, volume, or registration.

B.9 Declamation**Declamation:**

Predominantly syllabic and text-centered.

Performance Implication:

Clear consonants, vowel continuity, rhythmic definition, and intelligibility are central to successful performance.

B.10 Exact Aria Lowest Pitch**Status:**

To be confirmed by final note-by-note NMA census.

Performance Implication:

The lowest pitch should not be stated numerically until it has been checked directly against the critical score.

B.11 Exact Aria Highest Pitch**Status:**

To be confirmed by final note-by-note NMA census.

Performance Implication:

The same evidentiary restriction applies to the highest written pitch.

B.12 Exact Full-Role Range**Status:**

To be confirmed across all Publio ensemble and numbered passages.

Performance Implication:

The aria alone should not be used to define the total role range.

B.13 Statistical Tessitura**Status:**

No fixed numerical band is asserted without a complete pitch census.

Performance Implication:

Tessitura should be derived from actual note distribution rather than inferred from the highest and lowest pitches alone.

B.14 Registration Strategy

Status:

Performer-dependent.

Performance Implication:

The score establishes pitch but does not prescribe one universal modern physiological registration strategy.

B.15 Breathing Strategy**Status:**

Performer-dependent and phrase-dependent.

Performance Implication:

Breath planning should preserve syntax and sustainable phonation rather than follow one universal template.

B.16 Vocal Weight**Status:**

Not specified as a constant dramatic property.

Performance Implication:

Authority should not automatically be equated with increased vocal mass.

B.17 No. 16, “Tardi s’avvede”: Formal and Vocal Profile

“Tardi s’avvede” is Publio’s only independent aria in Mozart’s opera. It follows directly from Tito’s insistence that he cannot imagine Sesto capable of betrayal. Publio replies that not everyone possesses Tito’s heart, and the aria develops this point into a general observation about fidelity and delayed recognition.

The aria’s musical design is compact. Its written character does not justify transforming Publio into a uniformly massive bass figure. The vocal line must remain sufficiently mobile for the argument to unfold within the Allegretto pulse.

The text can be understood in three rhetorical stages.

Opening Proposition:

Tardi s’avvede / d’un tradimento / chi mai di fede / mancar non sa.

Explanation:

Un cor verace, / pieno d’onore, / non è portento, / se ogn’altro core / crede incapace / d’infedeltà.

Return:

The opening proposition returns after its cause has been explained.

The vocal challenge is therefore less one of extreme range than of **clarity across repetition**. The singer must prevent the second statement from sounding like an automatic repetition of the first.

Greater specificity of address, rhythmic focus, consonantal precision, and a clearer relationship to Tito can create the necessary differentiation without artificially changing registers or adding disproportionate vocal weight.

B.18 Range and Tessitura: Methodological Distinction

Range refers to the lowest and highest written pitches required by the role or a particular number.

Tessitura refers to the region in which the voice spends a substantial proportion of the musical material.

These concepts should not be treated as interchangeable.

A role may contain an isolated high or low pitch without being centered in that region.

For the final archival version of this appendix, the pitch census should therefore be performed at three levels:

No. 16 alone → numbered ensembles containing Publio → total notated role.

The resulting record should identify the lowest and highest notated pitches, frequency of pitches by register, sustained notes near the upper and lower limits, and the range occupied by the greatest proportion of Publio's melodic writing.

Until that census has been verified directly against the NMA score, this dissertation should not substitute a conventional online casting range or an estimated bass range for actual score data.

A casting label such as **bass** is not itself a measured tessitura.

B.19 Registration

Registration requires even greater caution than range.

The notation establishes the required pitches, but terms such as chest register, modal register, upper register, *passaggio*, *cover*, or registration strategy belong partly to later pedagogical systems and individual vocal technique.

The appendix therefore does not state that a particular written pitch must be produced through one universally correct register adjustment.

For performance purposes, registration should instead be assessed by function.

The singer should maintain intelligible Italian and stable tone through Publio's central range without converting every ascent into an increase of dramatic weight.

The upper portion of the line should remain integrated with the rhetorical movement of the phrase. Descending material should retain presence rather than becoming artificially hollow or excessively dark.

B.20 Tessitura and Dramatic Function

Publio's music does not need to remain at a registral extreme in order to communicate authority.

In recitative, authority may be created by the fact that Publio possesses information.

In the arrest scene, authority emerges through custody.

In the decree scene, it emerges through possession and transfer of an institutional document.

In "Tardi s'avvede," it emerges through the confidence to correct Tito's assumption.

The singer should therefore resist the temptation to compensate for a relatively compact vocal part by exaggerating bass sonority.

B.21 Practical Registration Check

For rehearsal, the following diagnostic sequence can be used without prescribing one particular vocal school.

Stage One — Speech:

Speak the complete Italian phrase in rhythm.

Stage Two — Neutral Singing:

Sing the phrase at a moderate dynamic without deliberate dramatic darkening.

Stage Three — Technical Observation:

Identify any point at which vowel modification, consonantal pressure, jaw tension, or increased breath force interferes with textual continuity.

Stage Four — Dramatic Objective:

Add the dramatic objective.

Stage Five — Staging:

Repeat the phrase within the actual movement and theatrical context.

If the phrase remains stable until the dramatic objective is introduced, the difficulty should not automatically be classified as a range problem.

If stability changes only during movement, the staging variable should be examined.

If the difficulty occurs consistently at the same pitches regardless of acting conditions, registration or tessitura may require more specific technical attention.

B.22 Data to Be Preserved in the Final Source Register

For **No. 16**, the final archival record should preserve:

Lowest Written Pitch: To be verified.

Highest Written Pitch: To be verified.

Modal or Central Pitch Region: To be verified.

Approximate Note-Distribution Center: To be verified.

Longest Sustained Pitches near Registral Limits: To be verified.

Significant Leaps: To be verified.

Repeated Upper-Register Attacks: To be verified.

Cadential Pitch Patterns: To be verified.

Total Sung Measures: To be verified.

For **No. 14**, the final record should preserve Publio's lowest and highest pitches, the registral position of the compassion aside, and the relationship of his range to Sesto and Vitellia within the ensemble.

For **No. 18**, the final record should preserve Publio's lowest and highest pitches, the registral placement of "Mille diversi affetti," and the relationship of Publio's line to Tito and Sesto.

For the **Finale and Act I ensembles**, the record should identify any pitch extending beyond the aria's range, passages requiring sustained ensemble projection, and passages where orchestral density materially changes the singer's task.

B.23 Summary

Publio is explicitly designated as a bass role, and his principal aria is a compact C-major Allegretto situated within an active dramatic exchange rather than isolated from it.

The role should therefore not be categorized simply as "easy because it is short," nor should its limited solo material be compensated for by artificial vocal weight.

The appropriate technical objective is **efficient low-male vocal continuity across changing dramatic functions**.

Range establishes the limits of the written part.

Tessitura identifies where the part actually lives.

Registration describes how an individual singer negotiates those demands.

None of these categories, taken alone, defines Publio's personality. Their importance lies in ensuring that the instrument remains sufficiently stable and flexible for the character's institutional, rhetorical, compassionate, and ensemble functions to remain audible.

APPENDIX C. WRITTEN PRODUCTION DOCUMENTATION CORPUS

This appendix records the written production documentation used in the comparative analysis developed in Chapter 7.

The corpus was constructed according to a deliberately restrictive evidentiary rule: a production characteristic was included in the dissertation only when it could be supported by accessible written documentation.

The central methodological principle is:

A document may support only the kind of claim that the document actually records.

C.1 Official Institutional Record

What It Can Establish:

Date, venue, production personnel, cast, conductor, director, and institutional description.

What It Cannot Establish by Itself:

Exact audience reception or undocumented acting detail.

Institutional documentation therefore provides the strongest basis for basic factual information about a production, but it should not be transformed into evidence of audience response or specific acting choices that the document does not describe.

C.2 Program or Production Booklet

What It Can Establish:

Production concept, essays, credited personnel, and institutional framing.

What It Cannot Establish by Itself:

Whether every announced intention was actually perceptible in performance.

A program can establish what an institution, director, or production team wished to communicate. It cannot automatically establish how successfully that intention was realized.

C.3 Director or Artist Interview

What It Can Establish:

Attributed artistic intention and interpretive rationale.

What It Cannot Establish by Itself:

A neutral or universally accepted description of the completed production.

The dissertation therefore attributes such claims directly to the artist or director rather than presenting them as objective theatrical facts.

C.4 Published Critical Review

What It Can Establish:

A critic's documented reception of staging, acting, vocal performance, and political framing.

What It Cannot Establish by Itself:

Universal audience response or the objective meaning of the production.

A review records reception rather than definitive meaning.

C.5 Archival Cast or Performance Database

What It Can Establish:

Performer-role relationships, dates, venues, and production continuity.

What It Cannot Establish by Itself:

Gesture, blocking, characterization, or theatrical interpretation.

C.6 Opera McGill

Institution: Opera McGill, McGill University.

Work: Mozart, *La clemenza di Tito*.

Primary Documentary Strength:

Institutional documentation and contemporary reception.

Principal Analytical Use:

Political reception and educational performance context.

Main Evidentiary Limitation:

Limited Publio-specific scenic documentation.

The Opera McGill case was included because written documentation permits the production to be considered simultaneously as a public performance and as part of a conservatory-level performer-training environment.

The documentation can support claims concerning production identity, principal artistic personnel, performance context, and political or ideological framing explicitly identified in contemporary writing.

It cannot, without further documentation, establish Publio's exact gestures, facial expressions, physical distance from Tito, or detailed blocking.

C.7 Conservatori Liceu

Institution: Conservatori Superior de Música del Liceu, Barcelona.

Primary Documentary Strength:

Institutional and educational documentation.

Principal Analytical Use:

Performer training and ensemble practice.

Main Evidentiary Limitation:

One educational production cannot establish a universal training tradition.

The case demonstrates how Mozart roles may be prepared within an institutional training structure, but it should not be used to claim that all Liceu productions or all conservatories approach Mozart in the same manner.

C.8 Mozarteum

Institutional Context: Internationale Stiftung Mozarteum Salzburg and the Digital Mozart Edition.

Primary Documentary Strength:

Critical textual and institutional documentation.

Principal Analytical Use:

Source control and Mozart performance framework.

Main Evidentiary Limitation:

Documentation of the work is not automatically documentation of a particular staging.

The Digital Mozart Edition can establish what the score and critical libretto contain. It cannot independently establish how a modern production physically realized that material.

C.9 Salzburg Festival

Institution: Salzburg Festival.

Primary Documentary Strength:

Official production framing.

Principal Analytical Use:

Contemporary political reinterpretation.

Main Evidentiary Limitation:

A general production concept cannot automatically define Publio individually.

If a production invokes contemporary political violence, migration, terrorism, reconciliation, or justice, this does not automatically mean that Publio represents one fixed contemporary political institution.

Character-specific claims require character-specific evidence.

C.10 Glyndebourne

Institution: Glyndebourne.

Production: *La clemenza di Tito*, 2017.

Primary Documentary Strength:

Official archive and substantial published criticism.

Principal Analytical Use:

Modern bureaucracy and Publio-specific reception.

Main Evidentiary Limitation:

Critical description remains production-specific.

Institutional documentation establishes the production and identifies Clive Bayley as Publio.

Contemporary criticism describes a theatrical world in which ancient Roman splendor was transformed into a modern bureaucratic environment.

A reviewer's description of Publio may therefore be cited as evidence of how that specific performance was received. It cannot be transformed into a universal definition of Mozart's character.

C.11 Teatro Real

Institution: Teatro Real, Madrid.

Primary Documentary Strength:

Production documentation and contemporary critical reception.

Principal Analytical Use:

Public/private political framing.

Main Evidentiary Limitation:

Final use depends upon open-access verification.

If a critical article used during an earlier research stage is no longer freely accessible without payment or login, it should not remain in the final formal corpus merely because it was previously consulted.

The source must either remain lawfully open or be replaced with an independently accessible source supporting the same limited claim.

C.12 Archival Visibility**Definition:**

Whether a production leaves discoverable documentary traces.

These may include cast records, programs, production pages, institutional archives, and credited personnel.

A role may possess high archival visibility even when reviewers barely discuss it.

C.13 Critical Visibility**Definition:**

The degree to which published reviewers discuss Publio or the performer singing him.

Critical visibility depends partly upon editorial priorities.

A critic may devote substantial attention to Tito, Sesto, Vitellia, the conductor, or the director while mentioning Publio only briefly.

Critical silence therefore does not establish theatrical insignificance.

C.14 Dramaturgical Visibility

Definition:

The role's function within the written dramatic and musical structure.

This category is established primarily through the score, libretto, and dramaturgical analysis rather than reviews.

Publio's involvement in arrest, custody, documentary judgment, sovereign access, and public clemency belongs principally to this category.

C.15 Scenic Visibility

Definition:

What a particular staging makes theatrically prominent.

This is the most difficult visibility category to reconstruct from written evidence alone.

A review may describe it. A director may discuss it. An institutional production essay may explain it.

Where the written corpus remains silent, however, the dissertation does not convert an unverified visual impression into a factual claim.

Thus:

absence of documentation is not evidence of absence in performance.

C.16 Evidentiary Hierarchy

Institutional Record:

Used for factual production data.

Official Production Statement:

Used for announced framing.

Artist or Director Interview:

Used for attributed intention.

Published Review:

Used for documented reception.

Score and Libretto:

Used for textual and musical structure.

Performer Reflection:

Used for situated experiential evidence.

No category automatically replaces another.

A director may state that a production concerns reconciliation.

A critic may perceive authoritarianism.

A performer may experience a scene primarily as personal tension.

The score may establish only that Publio enters with guards.

These statements may coexist because they answer different questions.

C.17 Excluded or Restricted Evidence

Performance video may be useful for performer orientation or contextual viewing, but it should not serve as the sole documentary foundation for factual claims such as:

Publio deliberately avoids eye contact with Tito.

Publio physically threatens Sesto at a particular moment.

Publio remains motionless during another character's aria.

Publio is dressed to signify a particular contemporary profession.

A particular facial reaction establishes Publio's political ideology.

Such propositions require appropriate documentary support if they are presented as comparative factual claims.

Photographs are similarly limited. An image may document a performer, costume, or scenic environment, but an isolated photograph does not necessarily establish the dramatic sequence or meaning of an entire scene.

Memory and performer testimony are treated separately as practitioner evidence rather than independent historical documentation.

C.18 Corpus Conclusion

The written production corpus confirms that *La clemenza di Tito* has supported substantially different theatrical and political framings in modern performance.

These differences do not produce one universal modern Publio.

Costume may change.

The visual language of government may change.

Ancient ceremony may become bureaucracy.

Political reconciliation may acquire contemporary associations.

The physical scale of authority may expand or contract.

Yet the performer still requires a clear understanding of the underlying relationships among delegated authority, access, custody, information, judgment, and sovereign decision.

The production corpus therefore supports neither strict scenic reconstruction nor unrestricted invention.

It supports:

documented variation within identifiable dramatic structures.

For Publio, the most useful comparative question is consequently not:

Which production showed the correct Publio?

It is:

Which elements of Publio's function remained structurally recognizable, which elements were altered by the production, and which claims about those alterations can actually be demonstrated from the surviving documentation?

That question preserves both theatrical freedom and scholarly accountability.

APPENDIX D. OPEN-ACCESS SOURCE REGISTER AND STABLE LINKS

This appendix records the principal openly accessible sources used in the dissertation and identifies their evidentiary function. Its purpose is transparency and reproducibility. A reader should, wherever possible, be able to access the same source without institutional login or subscription and inspect the material on which the dissertation's claims depend.

The register distinguishes between primary musical and textual sources, historical and musicological scholarship, voice and performance research, and production documentation.

A source is included as a verified open-access source only when the relevant material can be accessed without payment or institutional authentication.

D.1 Primary Musical and Textual Sources

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart,

La clemenza di Tito

, K. 621

Source type: Critical musical edition

Edition: *Neue Mozart-Ausgabe*, Series II, Work Group 5, Vol. 20

Editor: Franz Giegling

Institution: Internationale Stiftung Mozarteum Salzburg

Open platform: Digital Mozart Edition / Neue Mozart-Ausgabe Online

Stable access points:

Digital Mozart Edition, NMA table of contents:

https://dme.mozarteum.at/DME/nma/nma_toc.php?l=5&vsep=75

No. 16, “Tardi s’avvede,” p. 193:

https://dme.mozarteum.at/DME/nma/nma_cont.php?p1=193&vsep=75

p. 194:

https://dme.mozarteum.at/DME/nma/nma_cont.php?p1=194&vsep=75

p. 195:

https://dme.mozarteum.at/DME/nma/nma_cont.php?p1=195&vsep=75

Principal use in this dissertation:

musical form, tempo indication, orchestration, ensemble structure, entrances and exits where represented in the critical score, Publio’s musical participation in Nos. 14, 16, 18, and the finale.

Evidentiary limit:

The score does not independently establish every gesture, facial expression, spatial distance, or modern staging choice.

Caterino Mazzolà, after Pietro Metastasio,

La clemenza di Tito

Source type: Critical libretto / textual primary source

Platform: Digital Mozart Edition

Institution: Internationale Stiftung Mozarteum Salzburg

Open critical libretto PDF:

https://dme.mozarteum.at/DME/libredition/pdf/LV_138.pdf

Digital text edition:

<https://dme.mozarteum.at/libretti-edition/single.php?idwnma=7241&v=138>

Principal use in this dissertation:

scene sequence, dialogue, stage directions, Publio's official actions, information boundaries, arrest, Senate procedure, compassion, Tito's private exclusion of Publio, and the final public sequence.

Particularly important passages include:

“Colui, che cinto ... era Lentulo ... il resto intendi. Vieni.”

“Sesto, partir conviene.”

“L'acerbo amaro pianto ... l'anima mi commuove, ma vana è la pietà.”

“Ma, signor, non han tutti il cor di Tito.”

“terribile, ma giusto”

“Mille diversi affetti / in Tito guerra fanno”

“No. Solo con lui / restar Cesare volle: escluso io fui.”

Principal evidentiary limit:

Textual action does not automatically prescribe one physical realization.

Caterino Mazzolà,

La clemenza di Tito

, transcription by Dario Zanotti

Source type: Open textual transcription

Platform: Libretti d'Opera Italiani

Open access:

<https://www.librettidopera.it/zpdf/tito.pdf>

Principal use:

Convenient verification of scene divisions, text, characters, and stage directions.

Formal-use preference:

Where both are available, the Digital Mozart Edition should be preferred in the final dissertation citation because it provides the stronger critical scholarly basis.

Pietro Metastasio,

La clemenza di Tito**Source type:** Earlier libretto / primary comparative source**Historical text:** 1734 version**Principal use:**

comparison of Publio before Mazzolà's adaptation, especially the transformation of the arrest sequence and the addition of Publio's compassionate response.

Final register status:

Open source verified previously; bibliographic URL and exact edition should be standardized during final bibliography audit.

The dissertation should retain only the independently accessible edition actually checked against the cited passages.

D.2 Historical and Musicological Scholarship

Magnus Tessing Schneider, "From Metastasio to Mazzolà: Clemency and Pity in

La clemenza di Tito

”

In Magnus Tessing Schneider and Ruth Tatlow, eds., *Mozart's La clemenza di Tito: A Reappraisal*. Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2018.

Open DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.16993/ban.c>

Open-access book context:

<https://doi.org/10.16993/ban>

Principal use in this dissertation:

Mazzolà's revision of Metastasio; the concept of pity; Publio's newly articulated compassion; dramaturgical significance of the arrest ensemble.

Key verified discussion:

Schneider explicitly observes that Publio, silent at the corresponding point in Metastasio, expresses compassion for Sesto in Mazzolà's revision.

Principal dissertation application:

The source establishes that Publio's compassionate intervention represents an identifiable textual transformation rather than an acting invention.

Ruth Tatlow and Magnus Tessing Schneider, “La clemenza di Tito: Chronology and Documents”

In *Mozart’s La clemenza di Tito: A Reappraisal*.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.16993/ban.a>

Access status: Open access.

Principal use:

chronology of the opera’s commission and premiere; original documents concerning the Prague coronation production; contemporary political and theatrical context.

The chapter explicitly assembles original documentation and parallel translations concerning the genesis and first production of *La clemenza di Tito*.

tito_reappraisal.pdf

John A. Rice, “Operatic Culture at the Court of Leopold II and Mozart’s

La clemenza di Tito

”

In *Mozart’s La clemenza di Tito: A Reappraisal*.

Source type: Peer-reviewed open-access scholarly chapter.

Principal use:

Leopold II, coronation culture, court theatrical practice, political ceremony, and the environment in which Mozart’s opera was commissioned.

Access:

Stockholm University Press open-access volume.

Felicity Baker, “Tito’s Burden”

In *Mozart’s La clemenza di Tito: A Reappraisal*.

Source type: Peer-reviewed open-access scholarly chapter.

Principal use:

Tito’s position within absolute monarchy, problems of truth and communication around the ruler, and the limits of his relationships with those surrounding him.

The chapter discusses Tito’s lack of a reliable interlocutor and the consequences of hierarchy for truth-telling.

Jette Barnholdt Hansen, “Mozart as Epideictic Rhetorician: The Representation of Vice and Virtue in

La clemenza di Tito

”

In *Mozart’s La clemenza di Tito: A Reappraisal*, pp. 120–133.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.16993/ban.e>

Access status: Open access.

Principal use:

ceremonial rhetoric, virtue, vice, political representation, and clemency.

The published chapter explicitly situates the premiere on 6 September 1791 within Leopold II’s Bohemian coronation and relates the opera to epideictic representation.

mozarts-la-clemenza-di-tito-a-reappraisal 3.pdf

Sergio Durante, “Stage Directions and Set Design in Mozart’s

La clemenza di Tito”

In *Mozart’s La clemenza di Tito: A Reappraisal*.

Source type: Peer-reviewed open-access scholarly chapter.

Principal use:

historical stage directions, scenic organization, public and private spaces, visual structure of the Prague production, and methodological caution regarding reconstruction.

Important limitation:

Durante himself distinguishes hypothesis from definitive proof when reconstructing elements of the original staging. This distinction supports the dissertation’s refusal to convert plausible reconstruction into certain fact.

D.3 Voice and Physiological Research

Sauro Salomoni, Wolbert van den Hoorn, and Paul W. Hodges, “Breathing and Singing: Objective Characterization of Breathing Patterns in Classical Singers”

PLOS ONE 11, no. 5 (2016): e0155084.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0155084>

Access status: Fully open access.

Principal use:

respiratory behavior in trained classical singers; individual variability; caution against reducing singing technique to one universal breathing pattern.

The article explicitly identifies itself as open access and documents substantial inter-subject variability in respiratory kinematics.

salomoni_breathing_printable.pdf

Application limit in this dissertation:

The article informs physiological caution. It does not prescribe one correct breathing technique for Publio.

Adrián Castillo-Allendes et al., “Muscle Activity and Aerodynamic Voice Changes at Different Body Postures: A Pilot Study”

Journal of Voice 39, no. 2 (2025): 439–447.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvoice.2022.09.024>

Open-access identifier: PMCID PMC10924224

Principal use:

relationship among body position, muscular activity, and voice-related aerodynamic variables.

Application limit:

The study supports the general relevance of body posture to phonatory conditions; it does not establish a role-specific posture for Publio.

D.4 Practitioner and Artistic Research Sources

The following open-access sources support the dissertation’s treatment of performer-centered research, reflective practice, and artistic knowledge.

Mine Doğantan-Dack

Doğantan-Dack’s scholarship on artistic research and the performer’s role as a producer of knowledge provides an important methodological foundation for the practitioner-oriented dimensions of this dissertation.

Relevant open-access scholarship includes:

“The Art of Research in Live Music Performance,” *Music Performance Research* 5 (2012): 34–48.

“Artistic Research in Classical Music Performance: Truth and Politics,” *PARSE Journal* 1 (2015): 27–40.

“Expanding the Scope of Music Theory: Artistic Research in Music Performance,” *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Musiktheorie* 19, no. 2 (2022): 13–42.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.31751/1169>

Access Status: Open access.

Principal Use:

performer-centered artistic research; reflective practice; the relationship between performance, research, and knowledge production; methodological justification for critically examining the performer’s own artistic processes.

Application Limit:

Artistic practice is not treated as self-validating evidence. Performer reflection becomes academically useful when it is critically examined, documented, contextualized, and distinguished from independently verifiable historical or textual claims.

Pedro Iglesias and Jesús Tejada

“Practice as Research through Inquiry-Based Learning: A Pedagogical Intervention with Music Students in Higher Education.”

Education Sciences 14, no. 7 (2024): 738.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci14070738>

Access Status: Open access.

Principal Use:

Practice as Research in higher music education; integration of theory and practice; critical and reflective skills; practitioner participation in the construction of knowledge.

Application Limit:

The study concerns pedagogical intervention in higher music education and is therefore used to support methodological principles rather than direct claims about Mozart, Publio, or eighteenth-century performance practice.

Mine Doğantan-Dack

“Expanding the Scope of Music Theory: Artistic Research in Music Performance.”

Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Musiktheorie 19, no. 2 (2022): 13–42.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.31751/1169>

Access Status: Open access under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

Principal Use:

artistic research as rigorous and systematic inquiry undertaken by practitioners; self-reflexive research methods; the relationship between music performance and knowledge production.

Application Limit:

The article provides a methodological framework for performer-centered research. It does not independently validate specific historical, dramaturgical, or physiological claims concerning Publio.

Alfonso Benetti and Aoife Hiney

“Art-Cycle Model: A Holistic Approach toward Artistic Experience in Music Performance.”

Music Performance Research 12 (2024): 1–21.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.14439/mpr.12.1>

Access Status: Open access; full article PDF publicly available through *Music Performance Research*.

Principal Use:

performer agency; autoethnographic practice; critical self-reflection; documentation and evaluation of rehearsal and performance experience; interaction between artistic practice and knowledge production.

Application Limit:

The model supports structured reflection on performer experience but does not transform subjective experience into independent historical evidence.

D.5 Production Documentation

Glyndebourne,

La clemenza di Tito

, 2017

Source Categories:

official performance archive, cast documentation, and published criticism.

Access Status: Openly accessible documentation retained in the dissertation.

Documented Information:

The institutional record establishes the production context and identifies Clive Bayley as Publio. Contemporary criticism documents the reception of the production's modern bureaucratic theatrical environment.

Principal Use:

modern bureaucracy as a production-specific interpretive framework; documented reception of contemporary staging; Publio-specific casting and reception where explicitly recorded.

Application Limit:

A critic's description of the production or of a particular performer establishes documented reception of that production. It does not define Publio universally.

Salzburg Festival**Source Categories:**

official festival documentation and production-related institutional material.

Principal Use:

contemporary political framing and the relationship of *La clemenza di Tito* to concepts including justice, reconciliation, political violence, and contemporary humanitarian concerns where explicitly documented by the retained source.

Application Limit:

General production framing is not automatically attributed to Publio individually. Character-specific interpretations require character-specific evidence.

Opera McGill**Source Categories:**

institutional production documentation and contemporary written reception.

Principal Use:

educational performance context, production identity, artistic personnel, and documented political reception.

Application Limit:

Institutional and critical documentation does not independently establish undocumented gestures, blocking, facial expressions, or other detailed scenic actions performed by Publio.

Conservatori Liceu

Source Categories:

institutional documentation and educational-performance records.

Principal Use:

performer training, institutional context, and ensemble practice.

Application Limit:

Evidence from one conservatory environment cannot support universal conclusions about Mozart pedagogy or operatic performer training.

Teatro Real**Source Categories:**

production documentation and contemporary critical reception.

Principal Use:

the relationship between public and private political authority in contemporary production and reception where supported by accessible documentation.

Application Limit:

Only openly accessible documentation is treated as formal evidence in this dissertation. Material requiring payment, subscription, or institutional authentication is not relied upon as an independent evidentiary source.

D.6 Access-Verification Policy

The sources retained in this dissertation are governed by an open-access evidentiary policy intended to make the principal documentary basis of the research independently inspectable.

For the purposes of this study, an open-access source is one whose relevant content can be accessed without payment, subscription, institutional authentication, or private credentials.

The source corpus includes several different forms of openly accessible evidence:

Critical musical and textual editions provide evidence concerning the score, libretto, musical organization, textual structure, and documented stage directions.

Peer-reviewed open-access scholarship supports historical, dramaturgical, musicological, physiological, pedagogical, and methodological arguments.

Institutional documentation establishes production dates, venues, casts, artistic personnel, and officially stated production information.

Published criticism available without restricted access provides evidence of documented contemporary reception.

Open practitioner and artistic-research scholarship provides methodological support for reflective and performer-centered research.

These categories are not interchangeable.

Open accessibility does not itself determine the evidentiary strength of a source. A freely accessible review remains a review; an institutional production page remains an institutional record; a critical edition remains a textual or musical source.

The dissertation therefore evaluates each source according to both **accessibility and evidentiary function**.

A source is used only for claims proportionate to the kind of information it can reasonably establish.

Where an interpretation depends upon practitioner experience, that experience is identified as situated reflective evidence rather than presented as an independently verified historical fact.

Where production documentation does not record a specific gesture, movement, costume meaning, or acting choice, the dissertation does not present such details as documented facts.

This policy supports the broader methodological principles of **accessibility, verifiability, traceability, and evidentiary proportionality** that govern the source corpus of this study.

D.7 Link Preservation Policy

The final dissertation should preserve clean, direct URLs whenever a DOI or stable institutional page is available.

Tracking parameters should be removed.

For example:

Correct:

<https://doi.org/10.16993/ban.c>

Incorrect:

https://doi.org/10.16993/ban.c?utm_source=...

Institutional and DOI links should be preferred over temporary search-result URLs.

When a document has both an institutional landing page and a downloadable PDF, the bibliography may cite the formal publication while the source register records the stable open-access location.

D.8 Source Hierarchy

The dissertation's source hierarchy may be summarized as follows:

Critical score and critical libretto

→ establish musical and textual evidence.

Historical primary documents

→ establish contemporary circumstances and recorded facts.

Peer-reviewed scholarship

→ supports historical, dramaturgical, political, musical, and theoretical interpretation.

Voice-science research

→ supports bounded physiological propositions.

Institutional production records

→ establish production facts.

Published criticism

→ establishes documented reception.

Practitioner reflection

→ establishes situated performer experience.

No lower category replaces a stronger source when the stronger source is available.

For example, a review should not replace the critical score for musical facts, and practitioner memory should not replace a written institutional record for production dates.

D.9 Final Audit Requirement

This source register should be considered complete only after a final concordance among:

**the dissertation footnotes,
the bibliography,
the open-access source register,
and the retained evidentiary files.**

The final audit should confirm that every source appearing in the footnotes also appears in the bibliography, that every bibliography entry is actually used, that duplicate editions are consolidated where appropriate, and that each source categorized as open access remains accessible without credentials.

The audit should also check personal names, titles, dates, page ranges, DOI syntax, capitalization, and stable URLs.

This is particularly important for sources introduced during later drafting stages.

The purpose of the final audit is not to increase the number of sources.

It is to ensure that every retained source is **real, retrievable, correctly cited, and proportionate to the claim it supports.**

D.10 Conclusion

The open-access requirement is an integral part of this dissertation's methodology rather than an administrative convenience.

A reader should be able to inspect the principal evidence behind the study without depending upon institutional privilege.

The policy also imposes a useful discipline on interpretation.

If the evidentiary passage cannot be recovered, verified, or attributed accurately, the claim should be revised rather than protected through inaccessible citation.

The resulting source corpus therefore aims to satisfy four standards:

accessibility, verifiability, traceability, and evidentiary proportionality.

These standards apply equally to historical documents, musicological scholarship, production criticism, scientific research, and practitioner-oriented materials.

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