

## Così fan tutte and Naples: lyric beauty as couleur locale

This paper considers Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's enigmatic opera buffa, *Così fan tutte*, as a product of his Italian journey of 1769-1770. I argue that *Così* is unique among Mozart's operas in responding musically to its geographical setting, which the composer himself specified as Naples. Drawing attention to the reputation of Neapolitan opera for lyric beauty and sensuousness, I suggest that the score's pervasive use of self-consciously sensuous music, which has stubbornly resisted elucidation by a long line of critics, can be seen as a type of local colour, or *tinta* (a concept more properly associated with opera of the nineteenth century). Noting the tendency in *Così fan tutte* for moments of sensual beauty to occur coupled to a strong evocation of place and rootedness in landscape, I develop the idea, already partially articulated by Daniel Hertz, that Mozart's striking musical setting functions in some sense as a witness to his physical presence in Naples during his 1770 sojourn. This presence-based reading offers an idea of how the experiences that one musician collected on the Grand Tour resonated musically, and also serves as a counterpoint to other modes of collecting practised by Mozart on his travels.