

*Le Nozze di Figaro*  
*The Marriage of Figaro*

music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
words by Lorenzo da Ponte

premiered in May, 1786 at the Burgtheater in Vienna  
based on Pierre Beaumarchais' 1784 play *La folle journée, ou le mariage de Figaro*

The action takes place in and around Count Almaviva's castle near Seville.

**Act I**  
**A half-furnished room.**

**Overture**

**scene i**

**No. 1**

**Duetto**                    **Figaro, Susanna**

Enter Figaro (Count Almaviva's valet) and Susanna (Countess Almaviva's maid), who are engaged.  
Figaro is measuring the floor, Susanna is trying on her wedding hat.

**Recitative**                **Susanna, Figaro**

Susanna discovers that Figaro is measuring the floor to determine whether their new bed will fit.  
This is the room that the Count has allocated them.

**No. 2**

**Duetto**                    **Figaro, Susanna**

Figaro is delighted by the convenience of their new quarters.

If the Countess needs anything, Susanna is right at hand.

If the Count needs anything, Figaro is right at hand.

Susanna points out that if the Count needs anything from *her*, he can send Figaro away and she will be right at hand.

**Recitative**                **Susanna, Figaro**

Susanna informs Figaro that the Count, who had outlawed *droit du seigneur*, regrets having done so  
and wishes to have the first go, as it were, with Susanna.

This is why he has been so generous with the young couple. Susanna exits.

**scene ii**

**Recitative**                **Figaro**

Figaro begins to see the Count's plans to go to London and to take Figaro and Susanna with him in a new light.

**No. 3**

**Cavatina**                **Figaro**

If the Count wishes to dance, so be it. But Figaro will set the tempo and choreograph the moves! Figaro exits.

**scene iii**

**Recitative                    Bartolo, Marcellina**

Enter Bartolo (doctor and lawyer of Seville) and Marcellina (Bartolo's housekeeper).

Bartolo holds a tremendous grudge against Figaro.

Figaro arranged for the sneaky courting and resulting marriage of Rosina, Bartolo's ward, to the Count.

Bartolo supports Marcellina in her efforts to break up the engagement of Figaro and Susanna.

Marcellina plans to marry Figaro herself.

**No. 4**

**Aria                                Bartolo**

Bartolo will delight in having revenge! Bartolo exits.

**scene iv**

**Recitative                    Marcellina, Susanna**

Susanna enters with some of the Countess' garments.

Each woman talks, to herself, about the other, rather unpleasantly.

As both approach the door they realize that one has to precede the other as the door is too narrow for both to go through at once. This is the first moment of scripted physical comedy in the show - much more to come!

**No. 5**

**Duettino                        Marcellina, Susanna**

Each insists that the other go first. The women shower each other with false compliments.

Finally Marcellina goes off.

**scene v**

**Recitative                    Susanna, Cherubino**

As Susanna arranges the Countess' dress on the chair, Cherubino (the Count's page) enters.

Cherubino is in love with every woman and with love itself.

The Count is sending Cherubino away because he caught Cherubino with Barbarina.

Cherubino needs his godmother, the Countess, to intervene on his behalf.

Cherubino is in love with the Countess and fusses over a ribbon of hers.

**No. 6**

**Aria                                Cherubino**

Cherubino is overcome with hormones, but is able to express this in a most courtly and flowery fashion.

**scene vi**

**Recitative                    Cherubino, Susanna, Count, Basilio**

The Count is heard approaching.

Cherubino hides behind the chair.

The Count enters and speaks with Susanna.

When Basilio is heard approaching, the Count moves to hide behind the chair.

Cherubino slips out from behind the chair and hides under the Countess' dress.

Basilio (music teacher) enters and speaks with Susanna.

Among other things Basilio mentions Cherubino's devotion to the Countess.

The jealous Count cannot contain himself and jumps out from his hiding place.

**No. 7**

**Terzetto**                    **Count, Basilio, Susanna**

All heck breaks loose.

Just as the Count is describing the way he found Cherubino with Barbarina, hiding under a cloth, he demonstrates by lifting the Countess' dress and there is Cherubino.

**Recitative**                    **Count, Susanna, Cherubino, Basilio**

Cherubino is so busted!

The Count discovers that Cherubino overheard everything he was saying to Susanna.

The Count is pretty busted as well.

**scene vii**

**No. 8**

**Chorus**                    **Chorus of Peasants**

Peasants enter, scattering flowers and singing praises of their master's noble heart.

**Recitative**                    **Count, Figaro, Susanna**

Figaro carries a white veil.

Figaro praises the Count for banning the *droit du seigneur*, and, expressing the happiness and gratitude of the peasants, urges the Count to give Susanna the white veil as a symbol of his commitment to the change in the law of the land.

The Count is irritated by the display and by Figaro's cunning.

**No. 9**

**Chorus**                    **Peasants**

The peasants reprise their song. And exit.

**Recitative**                    **Figaro, Susanna, Basilio, Cherubino, Count**

Everyone cheers except Cherubino, who is feeling low and asks the Count for forgiveness.

The Count forgives him by giving him a military post.

Cherubino must report for duty immediately.

The Count and Basilio exit.

**No. 10**

**Aria**                    **Figaro**

Figaro informs Cherubino that his days of fun and frolic are over, and describes the life of a soldier.

Figaro, Susanna and Cherubino exit.

## Act II

### The Countess' dressing room.

#### scene i

#### No. 11

#### **Cavatina**                      **Countess**

The Countess addresses herself to Love, asking that Love either return her husband to her, or end her life.

#### **Recitative**                      **Countess, Susanna, Figaro**

As Susanna enters, the Countess requests more information about the Count's intentions and recent actions. Figaro joins the ladies.

Figaro has a plan to distract the Count and so prevent him from interfering with (and becoming involved in) Figaro and Susanna's marriage.

Figaro will take advantage of the Count's jealous streak, and will arrange for the Count to believe that the Countess is planning an assignation in the garden that evening.

Cherubino, dressed as a girl, will go in the Countess' place. Figaro exits.

#### scene ii

#### **Recitative**                      **Countess, Susanna, Cherubino**

Susanna gives the Countess the song that Cherubino has written for her.

Cherubino appears and, with trepidation, agrees to sing the song.

Susanna will accompany Cherubino on the Countess' guitar.

#### No. 12

#### **Arietta**                      **Cherubino**

Cherubino performs his song. The song is about all of the physical and emotional stirrings Cherubino is feeling.

#### **Recitative**                      **Countess, Susanna, Cherubino**

The Countess and Susanna prepare to dress Cherubino in Susanna's clothes.

The Countess discovers Cherubino's commission (regimental papers) which, in their haste, the preparers didn't mark with the necessary seal.

#### No. 13

#### **Aria**                      **Susanna**

Susanna shows Cherubino how to move and act like a woman.

#### **Recitative**                      **Countess, Susanna, Cherubino, Count**

As The Countess and Susanna continue to tend to Cherubino, Susanna exits and enters through a back door, fetching things.

The Countess finds her ribbon on Cherubino's person and teases him for his devotion to her.

The Count knocks on the Countess' main bedroom door at a moment when Susanna is out of the room.

The Countess hides Cherubino in her closet and locks the door, pocketing the key.

#### scene iii

#### **Recitative**                      **Count, Countess**

In a state of agitation, the Countess opens the door for her husband.

She mentions that Susanna has just left.

A noise is heard in the closet and the Countess' statement that it might be Susanna is undercut.

The Countess is further distracted by the fact that the Count already carries the note about the assignation.

**No. 14**

**Terzetto                    Susanna, Countess, Count**

The Count believes that the Countess' lover is in the closet.

The Countess claims that it is Susanna, trying on her wedding dress, and refuses to unlock the door.

Susanna enters, quickly assesses the situation and hides.

**Recitative                    Count, Countess**

The Count locks the door Susanna has just come through and takes the Countess with him to fetch tools to break into the closet.

**scene iv**

**No. 15**

**Duetto                        Susanna, Cherubino**

Susanna unlocks the closet door and Cherubino, in a panic, jumps out the window.

**Recitative                    Susanna**

Susanna watches Cherubino through the window, then takes his place in the closet.

**scene v**

**Recitative                    Count, Countess**

The Count and Countess return, and the Countess admits to the Count that it is Cherubino in the closet.

**scene vi**

**No. 16**

**Finale                        Count, Countess**

The Count is in a rage.

**scene vii**

**Finale continued            Count, Countess, Susanna**

When Susanna steps out of the closet, both the Count and Countess are shocked.

**scene viii**

**Finale continued            Countess, Susanna, Count**

The Count is quite repentant.

He is also confused about the note.

The Countess and Susanna explain the note's provenance.

**scene ix**

**Finale continued            Figaro, Count, Susanna, Countess**

Figaro enters.

The women try to get Figaro to admit to the plot, but he steadfastly refuses.

**scene x**

**Finale continued            Antonio, Count, Susanna, Countess, Figaro**

Antonio the gardener enters with a broken flower pot.

Antonio witnessed Cherubino jumping out the window and running away.

Figaro plays up Antonio's tendency to drink when he claims that he was the one who jumped out the window.

There are some shenanigans with papers, and Cherubino's commission is discovered, putting him at the scene.

But no! Figaro had the papers because.....the Countess and Susanna signal to him that it needed a seal.

Meanwhile, Antonio has exited.

**scene xi**

**Finale concluded    Marcellina, Basilio, Bartolo, Count, Susanna, Countess, Figaro**

Marcellina, Basilio and Bartolo enter.

Marcellina has a contract promising Figaro to her as husband.

Mayhem ensues, and the act ends.

## Act III

### A hall in the castle, decorated for the wedding.

#### scene i

##### Recitative                      Count

The Count recalls the confusion of the previous act.  
He wonders what everyone is up to, and also what motivates them.

#### scene ii

##### Recitative                      Countess, Count, Susanna

The Count continues to address himself.  
The Countess and Susanna appear to the audience but not to the Count.  
The Countess urges Susanna to agree to a meeting with the Count in the garden in the evening.  
The Countess intends to be there in Susanna's place. The Countess exits.

##### Recitative                      Count, Susanna

Susanna agrees to give herself to the Count if he provides her with a dowry, which will go straight to paying off Marcellina.

#### No. 17

##### Duettino                      Count, Susanna

The Count and Susanna arrange to meet in the garden in the evening.  
The Count is a bit surprised by Susanna's change of heart, but delighted.  
Susanna feels badly for lying.

#### scene iii

##### Recitative                      Count, Susanna, Figaro

The Count questions Susanna's attitude to him earlier in the day, Susanna blames the presence of other people for her behavior.  
Figaro appears and as he and Susanna exit, the Count overhears Susanna say to Figaro  
*"hai gia vinta la causa"* / "you have already won the case."

#### scene iv

#### No. 18

##### Recitative & Aria      Count

The Count agonizes over what this means and what everyone is up to.  
The Count is determined to come out on top and to punish anyone who tries to get the best of him.  
The Count is incredibly jealous of Figaro.

#### scene v

##### Recitative                      Don Curzio, Marcellina, Figaro, Count, Bartolo

Don Curzio (judge) enters with Marcellina, Figaro and Bartolo.  
Don Curzio has decided that since Figaro has not repaid Marcellina the money she lent him, he must marry her.  
Figaro protests. Since he does not have the consent of his parents, he cannot marry her. Who are his parents?  
Figaro does not know, but shows a birthmark which identifies him as.....the son of Marcellina and Bartolo!

**No. 19**

**Sestetto                    Marcellina, Figaro, Bartolo, Don Curzio, Count, Susanna**

Marcellina, Figaro and Bartolo are delighted to be reunited as a family.

Don Curzio and the Count are confused.

Susanna enters with the money and is aghast to see her love in the arms of her elderly rival.

When she discovers the truth she too is delighted.

Don Curzio and the Count exit.

**scene vi**

**Recitative                    Marcellina, Bartolo, Susanna, Figaro**

Marcellina gives the "IUO" to Figaro.

Susanna and Figaro get to keep the dowry!

Marcellina and Bartolo will get married alongside Susanna and Figaro. The quartet exits.

**scene vii**

**Recitative                    Barbarina, Cherubino**

Barbarina and Cherubino flit through.

Cherubino, who is meant to be well on his way to Seville, is disguised as a girl and potentially in a whole lot of trouble.

**scene viii**

**No. 20**

**Recitative & Aria        Countess**

The Countess enters. She longs for the early days of her marriage.

She *will* win her husband back through her faith and constancy! The Countess exits.

**scene ix**

**Recitative                    Antonio, Count**

Antonio and the Count walk through.

Antonio tells the Count that Cherubino has not left for Seville, that he is on the grounds dressed as a girl.

As evidence Antonio has Cherubino's hat.

**scene x**

**Recitative                    Countess, Susanna**

The Countess questions Susanna and insists that Susanna write to the Count.

**No. 21**

**Duetto                        Susanna, Countess**

The Countess dictates a letter to the Count.

Susanna writes the letter; ostensibly it will be from her.

**Recitative                    Susanna, Countess**

The Countess gives Susanna a pin to seal the letter, and instructs her to write that the pin is to be returned.

**scene xi**

**No. 22**

**Chorus                        Chorus of Female Peasants**

Barbarina, Cherubino and a group of young peasant women enter; all are dressed alike.

Individuals present flowers to the Countess.



**Recitative**                    **Barbarina, Countess, Susanna**

Barbarina presents the young women of the village and her cousin (Cherubino in disguise).

**scene xii**

**Recitative**                    **Antonio, Countess, Susanna, Count, Cherubino, Barbarina**

Antonio and the Count enter stealthily and Antonio replaces Cherubino's bonnet with Cherubino's hat.

Barbarina saves the day.

Barbarina reminds the Count that when he hugs her and kisses her (ahem) he promises her that if she loves him she can have anything she wants.

Barbarina promises to love the Count if he lets her marry Cherubino.

**scene xiii**

**Recitative**                    **Figaro, Count, Countess, Susanna, Antonio**

Figaro is ready for the wedding to take place.

There is still some confusion about who jumped out of the window earlier in the day.

This issue is not entirely resolved.

**No. 23**

**Finale**                         **Figaro, Susanna, Countess, Count**

The wedding march is heard.

Susanna takes Figaro's arm and they lead everyone offstage.

The Count and Countess are left alone.

They will resolve their issues anon; for now they have a double wedding to perform.

**scene xiv**

**Finale concluded**        **Two Girls, Chorus of Peasants, Count, Figaro,**

Peasants enter.

Two girls praise the man who rescinded the *droit du seigneur*, then the rest of the peasants join them.

Meanwhile, Figaro enters with Marcellina and presents her to the Countess.

Bartolo enters with Susanna and presents her to the Count.

The Count has received Susanna's letter, and pricked his finger in the process.

The Count announces that the celebrations will be lavish. All exit.

## Act IV

### The gardens surrounding the castle.

#### scene i

##### No. 24

##### Cavatina                      Barbarina

Barbarina is looking for something that she has lost, presumably something small.

#### scene ii

##### Recitative                      Figaro, Barbarina, Marcellina

Figaro and Marcellina enter.

Barbarina tells Figaro that she has lost a pin the Count gave her to give (secretly) to Susanna.

Figaro takes a pin from Marcellina and gives it to Barbarina, claiming it's the pin she was searching for.

Barbarina exits.

#### scene iii

##### Recitative                      Figaro, Marcellina

Figaro is distressed.

Marcellina urges caution, as Figaro's evidence of Susanna's possible betrayal is entirely circumstantial.

Figaro exits, his purpose to avenge all husbands!

#### scene iv

##### Recitative                      Marcellina

Marcellina will warn Susanna, believing her to be innocent.

##### No. 25

##### Aria                              Marcellina

Marcellina philosophizes.

Beasts of opposing genders seem to get along fine.

Only females of the human species are mistreated by males. Marcellina exits.

#### scene v

##### Recitative                      Barbarina

Barbarina enters. In exchange for a kiss, was able to obtain some fruits from the Count.

These fruits are to sweeten her meeting with Cherubino. But where is Cherubino?

Barbarina is at the appointed place. She hides.

#### scene vi

##### Recitative                      Figaro, Basilio, Bartolo

Figaro has brought Basilio and Bartolo to witness the encounter between the Count and Susanna, the now illegal *droit du seigneur* ritual that Figaro believes Susanna to have agreed to. Figaro exits.

#### scene vii

##### Recitative                      Basilio, Bartolo

Basilio and Bartolo reflect on the situation. Neither finds it to be particularly despicable.

Basilio believes that challenging the wealthy and powerful only leads to trouble.

##### No. 26

##### Aria                              Basilio

Basilio philosophizes. By playing the fool, one can evade shame, danger, disgrace and death.

Basilio and Bartolo exit.

**scene viii**

**No. 27**

**Recitative & Aria Figaro**

Figaro agonizes over Susanna's supposed betrayal. He hides.

**scene ix**

**Recitative Susanna, Marcellina, Countess**

Susanna, Marcellina and the Countess enter.

Susanna and the Countess have exchanged clothing.

Susanna knows from Marcellina what Figaro suspects and that he will be present soon. Marcellina hides.

**scene x**

**Recitative Susanna, Countess, Figaro**

The Countess withdraws into hiding, giving Susanna permission to stay outside.

Figaro observes and listens.

**No. 28**

**Recitative & Aria Susanna**

Knowing full well that Figaro is listening, Susanna details how the elements of the earth enhance her love.

Figaro, fuming, thinks she is singing of her love for the Count but really she is singing of her love for Figaro.

Susanna hides.

**scene xi**

**Recitative Figaro, Cherubino, Countess**

Cherubino enters and goes to where he expects Barbarina. But it is Susanna he discovers!

(Truly, the Countess in Susanna's clothing.)

**No. 29**

**Finale Cherubino, Countess**

Cherubino tries his hand at seducing the Countess, whom he thinks to be Susanna.

**scene xii**

**Finale continued Count, Susanna, Figaro, Cherubino, Countess**

The Count approaches. The Count, Susanna and Figaro observe the action.

When Cherubino goes in for a kiss, the Count steps in and receives it instead.

Cherubino runs off and Figaro steps in; when the Count goes to smack Cherubino, he smacks Figaro instead.

The Count begins to woo the Countess, whom he thinks to be Susanna. The Count gives the Countess a ring.

When they hear Figaro, the Count and Countess hide in separate places.

**scene xiii**

**Finale continued Figaro, Susanna**

Susanna approaches Figaro as the Countess, but Figaro realizes that it is Susanna.

Figaro pretends to woo her as the Countess and enrages her.

Once Susanna starts to beat Figaro they've had enough of trickery and make peace.

**scene xiv**

**Finale continued Figaro, Susanna, Count**

The Count appears, seeking Susanna. Figaro and Susanna play one final trick of their own, and show the Count

Figaro seducing the Countess (actually Susanna dressed as the Countess).

**scene xv**

**Finale concluded**      **Count, Figaro, Basilio, Curzio, Antonio, Bartolo, Susanna, Barbarina, Cherubino, Marcellina, Countess**

Susanna hides as the Count calls for armed persons.

Basilio, Curzio, Antonio and Bartolo arrive on the scene.

The Count goes to reveal the Countess but instead finds Cherubino, Barbarina, Marcellina and Susanna.

All ask for forgiveness but the Count steadfastly refuses everyone.

The Countess reveals herself, to great surprise.

The Count asks the Countess for forgiveness.

Being more gracious than her husband, the Countess forgives him.

After a very complicated and trying day, all is resolved and the time has come for celebration.