

10

Music, Melancholia, and Mania

We now turn from sonic modes of physical diagnosis (using percussion and mediate auscultation) to ways in which sound opened new approaches to mental illness. This chapter recounts how a symphony described a new form of “mania” and tried to cure it. The remaining two chapters in part III concern changing concepts of hypnotic suggestion as they first emerged in the work of Franz Anton Mesmer and his glass harmonica, then decades later in the different approach of Jean-Martin Charcot and his tam-tam. In all of these cases, different styles of music and different instruments were associated with different modalities of treatment and therapeutic understanding.

During the eighteenth century, the long-standing use of music to treat melancholia expanded to include other mental maladies, naming and bringing into focus some that previously had not been understood as distinct conditions. Among these, obsession had particular significance as the besetting disorder of modern consciousness, if not its hallmark. During the nineteenth century, monomania became the most frequently diagnosed form of mental illness. For instance, during the period 1826 to 1833, 45 percent of the inmates at the Charenton asylum in Paris were diagnosed with various forms of monomania, according to Jean-Étienne Dominique Esquirol, the French physician who coined this term and brought it to wide awareness. He initially defined it as a single pathological preoccupation in an otherwise sound mind.¹ Later known as *idée fixe*, monomania generally corresponded to what in the following century came to be called obsessional neurosis (Freud), then obsessive-compulsive disorder (in late twentieth-century psychiatry).²

Yet decades before Esquirol, a symphony entitled “Il Maniático” (“The Maniac”) written in 1781 by Gaetano Brunetti, an Italian working at the Spanish royal court, gave a detailed musical depiction of *manía*, the word he applied to the obsessive motives of his symphony’s solo cello.³ Brunetti’s symphony gives a somewhat subversive take on the musical style of his time in the context of the disturbed conditions familiar among his royal Spanish patrons, beset by royal insanity since the beginning of the century.⁴ Brunetti’s symphony has a special place in the unfolding sonic turn in medicine. In contrast to the political dangers of discussing the varieties of royal insanity verbally, Brunetti’s musical depiction of obsession could be direct and detailed with less risk of incurring

royal ire. He not only evoked the static outward signs of mania through the mannerisms of a solo cello but also the dynamic interaction between the solo cello as “maniac” and the surrounding “normal” world, portrayed by the rest of the orchestra. He presented the different stages of their interaction with wit and sympathy in ways that might well have had special significance for his royal patron, soon to become Carlos IV, who had grown up with the mental maladies of his elders. Brunetti ultimately turned the tables on the “normalcy” of contemporary music to reveal obsessional elements that lie beneath the elegant surface of classical style. In a *dénouement* that recalls similar reversals of perspective in classic Spanish dramas, Brunetti disclosed unsettling resemblances between “sanity” and “madness.” In so doing, he gave musical treatment in a new way to themes that had become famous in works like Cervantes’ *Don Quixote*.

From the traditional meanings of various terms for insanity emerged the new developments we discuss concerning “mania” and “melancholy.”⁵ According to one standard medical text, Philip Barrough’s *The methode of phisicke* (London, 1583), “Mania in Greeke is a disease which the Latines do call *Insania* and *furor*,” characterized by “furiousnes” and behavior that is “unruly like wild beastes. It differeth from the frenesie, because in that there is a fever. But *Mania* commeth without a feaver. It is caused of much blood, blowing up to the braine.”⁶ Short of the “furious madnes” of mania, melancholy “is an alienation of the mind troubling reason, and waxing foolish, so that one is almost beside him self. . . . The most common signes be fearfulnes, sadnes, hatred, and also they that be melancholious, have straunge imaginations, for some think them selves brute beastes. . . . Moreover, they desire death, do verie often behight and determine to kill them selves.”⁷ The standard remedies were sleep, exercise, “moderate carnall copulation,” and “delectations of the mind,” especially to “heare musical instruments and singing.”⁸ Other accounts, however, noted that the wrong kind of music could cause rather than cure such maladies.⁹

Barrough’s text was widely reprinted until 1652. After that, the picture became more complicated. Thomas Willis, who coined the word *Neurologie*, gave one of the most extensive accounts of mental illness in *Pathologiae cerebri* (1667) and *De anima brutorum* (1672). Willis turned from explanations of mental conditions in terms of humors (or of the uterus, in the case of hysteria) instead to the influence of “the Brain and Nervous Stock.”¹⁰ He attributed melancholy to “the passion of the heart,” mania to “vice or fault of the Brain.”¹¹ Further, Willis considered these to be related, for “Melancholy being a long time protracted, passes oftentimes into Stupidity, or Foolishness, and sometimes also into Madness [*mania*].”¹² Indeed, melancholy and mania “are so much akin, that these Distempers often change, and pass from one into the other, for the *Melancholick* disposition growing worse, brings on *Fury*; and *Fury* or *Madness* [*mania*] growing less hot, oftentimes ends in a *Melancholick* disposition. These two, like smoke and flame, mutually receive and give place one to another.”¹³ We will shortly return to this connection as it was theorized in Spanish medicine.

In contrast, what later came to be called obsession, monomania, or *idée fixe* was first described in religious contexts, then more broadly, though without clear identification using what later became the standard medical terminology of mania or melancholy. Religious texts from the 1500s address “scruples,” repetitive thoughts that are “a great trouble of minde proceeding from a little motive,” as Jeremy Taylor put it in *Ductor dubitantium, or the Rule of Conscience* (London, 1660), referring to the meaning of *scruple* as a tiny weight that nevertheless can lead to “a sad plight”: “Some persons dare not eat for fear of gluttony, they fear that they shall sleep too much, and that keeps them waking.”¹⁴ Indeed, since the sixteenth century, *obsessio* specifically meant being besieged by the devil, an exacerbated form of *fascinatio*, the diabolic “fastening” of the mind.¹⁵ The term *superstitio* also was used to describe various forms of obsession or compulsion, such as what James Boswell later called Samuel Johnson’s “superstitious habit” of counting his steps.¹⁶ By the eighteenth century, obsession had become the province of physicians rather than clerics; unitary explanations in terms of diseased organs or ill-mixed humors gave way to a notion of “nervousness” that could manifest itself in more complex mixtures of rationality and obsession.¹⁷ There was no general clinical term for such involuntarily recurring thoughts or actions until the descriptions of *idée fixe* and monomania by Esquirol and others in the nineteenth century. Decades before that, though, Brunetti applied the term *manía* to such behavior via a musical evocation of obsessional mental states and their changing relation to the surrounding social milieu.

After the seventeenth century, the terminology of the Romance languages regarding madness changed significantly. Though *manie* is found in French dictionaries as early as 1606 (glossed as “*Fureur, Mania, Furor*”), *El Ingenioso Hidalgo Don Quijote de La Mancha* (whose two parts first appeared in 1605 and 1615) described himself as *loco*, “crazy”; the term *manía* never appears in the book, only *locura*, “craziness.”¹⁸ Thereafter, Don Quixote loomed large as the most famous “madman”—obsessed with chivalry—in European literature, only Prince Hamlet having comparable significance and fame.¹⁹ To be sure, Cervantes left much ambiguity in his descriptions of Quixote as “a man whose power of reasoning is weak [*hombre de flacos discursos*]” or having “no judgment at all [*de ningún juicio*].”²⁰ Much turns on the understanding of mental conditions and its changing vocabulary.²¹ In this case, *manía* as obsessional fixation (as opposed to a social craze like tulipomania) appeared in Spanish usage decades before the 1780 symphony we will consider, which arguably was reflecting this new use of this word.

Brunetti’s symphony addressed a Spanish court with a long history of mental maladies. Felipe V, grandson of Louis XIV, ascended the Spanish throne in 1700 as its first Bourbon monarch. Contemporary observers reported that he was prone to “black fits,” terror, and bouts of melancholy.²² In constant mental crisis throughout his forty-six-year reign, he would bite his arms and legs, stay in bed for days, and refuse to cut his hair; for a time, he believed that he was a frog, among numerous other symptoms.²³ To address the king’s alarming mental instability, in 1737 the queen summoned the famous castrato Farinelli

(born Carlo Broschi) in the hope that his singing might calm the monarch. According to a contemporary report, the queen had “arranged a concert in an apartment adjoining to that where the king was in bed, where he had lain for a considerable time; and from which no persuasion could induce him to rise. Felipe was struck with the first air sung by Farinelli, and at the conclusion of the second, sent for him, loaded him with praises, and promised to grant him whatever he should demand.”²⁴

Farinelli thereafter sang nightly for the king, whose mental stability seemed to depend on hearing this music and often howled for hours on end in imitation of his chosen singer.²⁵ Farinelli ascended to incomparable influence at court, which continued during the succeeding reign of Fernando VI (r. 1746–1759). Though far more stable mentally than his father, Fernando was also given to bouts of melancholy, which he too assuaged with Farinelli’s singing; music and shooting, he said, were his only pleasures. His wife, Maria Barbara, was the patron of Domenico Scarlatti, who had come to the Spanish court in 1731 as her music master and remained until his death in 1757. Maria Barbara’s long and close association with Scarlatti and his sonatas added depth of musical involvement to the Spanish court.²⁶ Her death in 1758 left Fernando prostrate; during the remaining year of his life, he wandered about in his nightgown, unwashed and unshaven.

More than a half century of royal madness led to much perplexity. In 1759, the royal physician, Andrés Piquer y Arrufat, gave a detailed case history of Fernando’s condition, which he described by the novel term “melancholic-manic illness [*affectio melancholico-maniaca*]. Melancholia and mania, although treated in many medical books separately, are the same disease.”²⁷ Here, he seems to have gone beyond Willis’s position that melancholy and mania were merely “related.”²⁸ Thus, some modern scholars credit Piquer with describing the disorder later known as manic-depressive insanity (now called bipolar disorder) almost a century before Jean-Pierre Falret and Jules Baillarger described what they respectively called *folie circulaire* or *folie à double-forme* (1854).²⁹

The childless Fernando was succeeded by his half-brother Carlos III (r. 1759–1788), a man of some intelligence who became “the perfect type of the benevolent despot of the eighteenth century . . . thoroughly imbued with the ideas of the French Encyclopaedists . . . , one of the best, greatest, and most patriotic monarchs that Spain has ever known.”³⁰ In contrast to his predecessors, Carlos III was pointedly uninterested in music, though he built one of the largest contemporary opera houses (in Naples). His punctilious adherence to schedule led him to carry out his public functions always at the same hour with great precision, invariably eating the same things at the same times of day. To mitigate his tendency toward melancholy, he pursued hunting with a comparable kind of obsessiveness; not long before his death, he told a foreign ambassador that he personally had killed exactly 539 wolves and 5,232 foxes.³¹ Carlos III’s own melancholy and obsessive hunting did not keep him from exercising his duties, but he barred his eldest son, Felipe, from the succession on grounds of “imbecility”: Felipe had to be restrained from his violent erotic tendencies, not to speak of his penchant for putting up to sixteen gloves

(each larger than the one before) on one hand.³² As Piquer's work showed, contemporary Spanish medical discourse struggled to find new concepts and vocabulary for these perplexing (and ominous) royal maladies.³³

Though himself unassuming, hard working, and competent, Carlos III could hardly conceal his contempt for his younger son and designated successor, Carlos (IV), "a good-natured man with a fair memory, and he was nowise deficient in judgment once his interest had been aroused, but his development was what is known as somewhat 'arrested.'"³⁴ His father told him he was a "complete fool" for naively believing that his wife would never become amorously involved with men of "inferior rank," as in fact she did.³⁵ Exceedingly fond of hunting and a great collector of clocks, Carlos IV preferred the company of grooms to courtiers, practiced carpentry, advanced Goya to painter-in-ordinary at the court, and was extremely fond of music, playing the violin especially in string quartets, his favorite musical genre.³⁶

In 1767, when the nineteen-year-old Carlos was prince of Asturias and heir designate, Gaetano Brunetti (then twenty-three) joined the court as his violin teacher. Born in Naples, Prince Carlos never mastered Spanish; his court remained basically Italian, the prince surrounding himself with Italians such as Brunetti.³⁷ By the time he came to Spain in 1759 on his father's accession to the throne, Prince Carlos already had "an excellent knowledge and appreciation of musical technique. He was perhaps not exempt from a certain boastful arrogance, for he was a violinist himself."³⁸ Brunetti had studied with the eminent violinist and composer Pietro Nardini; for his royal pupil, Brunetti wrote pieces of considerable difficulty, indicating the prince's level of skill.³⁹ In subsequent years, Brunetti continued to teach Prince Carlos while steadily advancing in rank among the royal musicians, in 1770 becoming director of music for various court festivals, thereby "reaching the highest office and position that any musician at the court could hope to obtain."⁴⁰

The years after 1776 brought considerable political stress and controversy as Spain considered how to respond to the American Revolution, facing "the dilemma of taking an imperial power into an anti-colonial war by pursuing exclusively Spanish interests without allying directly with the United States and without recognizing American independence."⁴¹ Allied with France, Spain then engaged in a war with Britain (1779–1783). During this period, Prince Carlos became embroiled in various court intrigues that pitted him against his father, "who had kept him poorly educated, confined to childish amusements, trusted with nothing, and debarred from even the appearance of doing business."⁴² He became so outspoken in cabinet meetings advocating views that opposed the king's that Carlos III directly warned him that "if it is thought that division exists now between father and son, then there will certainly be people in the future who will suggest to your family to do exactly the same to you."⁴³ The underlying tension between the obsessive king and his rebellious son formed one of the subtexts of the music we now consider.

Such was the tense political and dynastic situation in 1780 when Brunetti introduced his Symphony no. 33, subtitled in the manuscript score "Il Maniático" ("The Maniac").

Like all his other works composed at court, this symphony was designated solely for Prince Carlos's use and implicitly dedicated to him, indicating that its peculiarities should be read within this context; Brunetti never traveled abroad, and the circulation of any of his works outside the court would have required special permission lest it fall afoul of the royal administration or even of the Inquisition. Thus, this symphony remained unpublished until the twentieth century.⁴⁴ What, then, was the significance of Brunetti's depiction of a *maniático*, that is, one suffering from *mania*? Though Brunetti wrote his own explicit program in the score presented to the prince, we will examine it against the primary evidence of the music itself and contemporary understandings of *mania*.

The symphony begins with an extended introduction in C minor, marked "Largo," in a serious, almost tragic style. Peremptory forte chords of the full orchestra alternate with softer statements from the strings, beginning with a sighing semitonal motif shown in figure 10.1 (♯ sound example 10.1), seemingly a gesture of lamentation. The introduction continues in that vein, adding arresting unison statements fortissimo, abrupt silences, and other hallmarks of the "sensitive style" (*empfindsamer Stil*).⁴⁵ Indeed, such introductions also were found in the symphonies of Joseph Haydn, generally taken to have been the exemplar whom Brunetti followed.⁴⁶ Normally a slow introduction would lead to an allegro; instead, after a fermata on the dominant, the strings put on their mutes and begin another slow movement, marked andantino, with a rather dreamy pianissimo phrase, still in C minor and in the prevalent mood of sadness, ending with a sighing semitone. At this point, a solo cello enters, indicated in the score just above the other celli and basses, his line marked *Manía*. Here, then, is the *maniático*, who merely repeats a semitone in pensive thirty-second notes on the dominant (G F#; figure 10.2, ♯ sound example 10.2).⁴⁷ It seems likely that Brunetti would have known the Spanish court poet Tomás de Iriarte y Oropesa, whose didactic poem *La Música* had appeared in 1779, the year before, and who described the chromatic semitone as "primordial": "Let him o'er whom or tears or fears prevail, / Study the tones of the chromatic scale," noting that semitones belong to sad emotion and anguish, "Moanings and groans that speak unnumbered woes / And death's last agonies."⁴⁸ In Brunetti's symphony, the orchestra's melancholy semitones seem to be the trigger for the cello's *mania*. In the following passage, though the *maniático* repeats this semitone gesture in its initial form, he transposes it quite appropriately within the larger harmonic context of the orchestra.

Let us pause over Brunetti's terminology. As noted above, earlier texts did not use *mania* to describe such repetitive ideas, for which there seemed to have been no established term. As a servant of the court, it seems likely that Brunetti knew Piquer as the long-serving royal physician, a fixture of the court; Piquer's 1764 medical textbook made public his hybrid coinage of "melancholic-manic" illness.⁴⁹ By 1780, Brunetti (as well as other courtiers) might well have become aware of this new term because it specifically described the malady besetting the preceding Spanish kings according to their official physician.⁵⁰ Yet Brunetti does not use this new term; indeed, he takes *mania* in a different direction from Piquer's melancholia-mania.

Introduzione
Largo

The musical score shows the beginning of the first movement, marked *Largo*. The key signature has two flats (B-flat major) and the time signature is 3/4. The score includes parts for Oboe (Ob.), Bassoon (Bsn.), Horn in E-flat (Hn. in Eb), Violin I (Vn. I), Violin II (Vn. II), Viola (Vla.), Solo Cello (Vc. solo), and Cello/Double Bass (Vc. & Cb.). The music starts with a *f* dynamic. In the first two measures, the first and second violins play a semitone interval, described as a "sighing" semitone. The score includes various dynamics such as *f*, *p*, and *ff*, and features a first ending marked *a 2*.

Figure 10.1
Gaetano Brunetti's Symphony no. 33, the beginning of the first movement. Note the "sighing" semitone in the first and second violins (measure 1–2). (♯ sound example 10.1)

Contrary to its usual furious connotation, Brunetti's *manía* is not at all a frenzied outburst but rather a melancholy obsession characterized through a repeated semitone. His own written description specifies that this symphony "describes (as far as possible, using only instruments and without the help of words) the fixation of a madman [*maniático*] on one sole purpose or idea. This role is given to the solo cello. Other instruments assume the roles of friends pledged to free him from his delusion, offering him an infinity of other ideas, in the form of various musical motifs."⁵¹ The actual unfolding of this plan, however, includes quite a bit of dramatic interaction between the various instruments. Evidencing his awareness of contemporary symphonic style, the madman shapes his obsessive

The image shows a musical score for the first three measures of the Andantino section. The score is in 3/4 time and E-flat major. It features a solo cello part (second line from the bottom) and other orchestral parts. The solo cello part begins with a fermata, then plays a repeated semitone G-F# (♯) sound. The score includes dynamic markings such as *pp*, *rin.f.*, and *p*. A section labeled "Mania." is indicated in the cello part starting in the second measure.

Figure 10.2

The first three measures of the Andantino, showing the first statement of *mania* in the solo cello (whose line is second from the bottom, just above the line for the other celli), a repeated semitone G F# (♯ sound example 10.2).

semitones to answer anything the orchestra can offer him. For its part, the orchestra seems to keep up the rather lyrical mood of this Andantino, as if good-naturedly trying to ignore the solo cello's obsessive repetitions. Still, at several moments, the orchestra's patience seems to run out, leading to a fortissimo outburst of frustration, shown in figure 10.3 (♯ sound example 10.3). As the Andantino unfolds, the orchestra alternates between such outbursts but more frequently reverts to "sensitive" passages that seem to humor the *maniático*. In the final measures of the Andantino, the strings take off their mutes while the winds accompany the solo cello's continued obsessing, his mutterings dying out (*pìu piano e morendo*).

After a fermata general pause, the orchestra launches fortissimo into an allegro in E-flat major, as if to try the effect of this upbeat tonality and tempo. The *maniático* listens silently for seventy-five measures, evincing no reaction to this cheery, mostly triadic material. Well into the second group of its sonata form, a phrase with descending semitones moves him to respond with his obsession, expressed in the prevailing tempo

Figure 10.3

The orchestra's outburst at mm. 43–45 of the first movement (♩ sound example 10.3).

and tonality (the dominant). The orchestra responds with a (seemingly exasperated) fortissimo, which does not deter the cello from repeating his phrase more forte but pizzicato; the orchestra redoubles its outburst, but (not backing down) the *maniático* likewise repeats his fortissimo as well.

To this point, the orchestra and solo cello have generally alternated, but now both begin to overlap their heretofore separate utterances as the *maniático*'s obsessive semitones accompany the orchestra's lyrical second theme. This denotes a changed relation between them: the solo cello alone begins the development section by taking its obsession through a rising scale of semitones, as though self-consciously showing his awareness of the conventions of sonata form, using his obsession to begin the modulatory "tour of keys," a standard procedure for this part of the movement. In such a reading of the cello's agency, he even shows his lucidity by always conforming to the changing harmonies around him.

On one hand, he still repeats the same semitonal obsession; on the other, he moves that gesture up and down the scale in such a way as to fit the developmental agenda. The orchestra even seems to appreciate this contribution, at one point even adopting a similar semitonal gesture.

Whether simply to humor the *maniático* or out of a more sincere appreciation for his efforts, the progression to the moment of recapitulation utilizes versions and inversions of his semitonal obsession (figure 10.4, ♪ sound example 10.4). During the development section, the relation between *maniático* and orchestra alters, though it never really breaks the hold of his obsession. Afterward, a kind of standoff ensues; the recapitulation fastidiously repeats all the byplay of the exposition, but now in the tonic major. The movement ends on this inconclusive note after having briefly opened the possibility of some deeper rapport between the solitary obsessive and his orchestral milieu. Throughout, we can read this thematic byplay in terms of widely used procedures in contemporary composition alongside the programmatic and dramatic interpretation offered here, invited by the composer's own program. As we shall see, these two readings converge at the end of the work, in which Brunetti will emphasize the ironic similarities between these musical conventions and the *maniático*'s obsession.

The middle movement (“Quintetto: Allegretto”) begins with winds alone, still in E-flat major; the “Minore” section uses only strings, in which the solo cello makes brief appearances relying on his semitone, though he allows it to move upward at the very last minute, at the end of figure 10.5 (♪ sound example 10.5). By comparison, though he often used a single theme as a unifying principle throughout a movement, Haydn never used it past the first movement. Though generally following his example, here Brunetti seems to take Haydn's practice even further in order to underline the extent of the *maniático*'s obsession.

As figure 10.6 (♪ sound example 10.6) shows, the final allegro spiritoso seems to mark a decisive break that evidently corresponds to the next phase of Brunetti's program: “The *maniático* for some time clings to his original fancy, until he meets an allegro motif which attracts him, and he joins the others.”⁵² For the first time, the *maniático* joins with the other cellos in playing the same material, seemingly totally integrated with his peers. Though the movement's theme seems an unexceptionable example of the “brilliant” style, it retains aspects of obsession—attractive to the *maniático*—by taking the initial semitone trill and transforming it into a diatonic descending motif, thrice repeated (figure 10.7, ♪ sound example 10.7).⁵³ He continues to play this highly repetitive material with the other cellos throughout most of the movement, occasionally stepping forward for brief solo appearances. But as figure 10.7 (♪ sound example 10.7) shows, at the very end of this movement, one of these solos merges back into his initial obsession, the orchestra falls silent, and even the metric pulse fails, marked *ad libitum, senza rigore di tempo*. As Brunetti's program specified, “Soon he falls back into his previous manner.” The *maniático* has relapsed, his initial obsession reasserting itself above his participation in the orchestral whole.

The image displays two systems of musical notation. The first system consists of seven staves. The top two staves (treble and bass clefs) show a melodic line with dynamic markings of *f* and *p*, and articulation marks like *v* (accents) and slurs. The bottom five staves (piano and bass clefs) provide harmonic support with dynamic markings of *f* and *pp*. The second system also has seven staves. The top two staves feature a melodic line with *ff* dynamics and slurs. The bottom five staves provide a rhythmic and harmonic accompaniment with *ff* dynamics and various rhythmic patterns.

Figure 10.4

The passage leading up to the recapitulation, the first violins presenting upwardly “sighing” semitones, an inversion of the *manidtico*’s downward semitones (♩ sound example 10.4).

The musical score is divided into two systems, each containing five staves. The first system (measures 6-11) features vocal lines with the lyrics "più" and piano markings *pp* and *p*. The second system (measures 12-19) features vocal lines with the lyrics "rin.f." and piano markings *p* and *f*. The bass line in both systems shows a consistent eighth-note pattern in the lower register.

Figure 10.5

Measures 6–19 of the Minore section of the second movement, showing the *maniático*'s slightly varied semitones (m. 18) (♯ sound example 10.5).

Allegro spiritoso

The image shows the first six measures of an *Allegro spiritoso* movement. The music is written for a solo cello in the first system and a full ensemble in the second system. The key signature is C minor (three flats) and the time signature is 2/4. The tempo is marked *Allegro spiritoso*.
Measures 1-6: The solo cello part is marked *f*. The ensemble enters in measure 7 with a dynamic of *ff*. The ensemble parts include violin, viola, flute, oboe, and cello. The cello part in the ensemble is also marked *ff*.
Measures 7-12: The ensemble continues. The solo cello part from the first system continues in the lower staff of the second system. Dynamics include *p* (piano) for some parts and *ff* for others. Performance markings include *[Div.]* (divisi) for strings, trills (*tr*), and accents (*v*).

Figure 10.6

The first six measures of the *Allegro spiritoso* (♩ sound example 10.6). Note that here, the solo cello plays along with the others.

The musical score for Figure 10.7 consists of five staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Cello, and Double Bass. The key signature is C minor (three flats). The tempo marking is *ad libitum, senza rigor di tempo*. The lyrics "Si metano (sic) y Sordini" are written above the Cello staff. The score shows a "relapse" section with various rhythmic patterns and dynamics, including a *pp* marking at the end.

Figure 10.7

Measures 73–76 of the Allegro spiritoso, the “relapse” just before the return of the Andantino (♩ sound example 10.7).

The orchestra now resumes the muted Andantino in C minor that preceded the *maniático*'s obsession in the opening movement. Aside from its status as a quasi-cyclical form, one could read this as a mournful recognition of his relapse but also as a way the orchestra joins him in that relapse by recalling its part in its causation.⁵⁴ The concluding Allegro spiritoso is in C major, corresponding to the final phase of Brunetti's program: “At last, swept along by the general feeling, he ends with the others quite happily.”⁵⁵ Indeed, the solo cello now joins in the exuberant texture, at times soaring above the other cellos to join the violins, at times playing along with their tutti. Though these key relations fall within conventions widely shared by contemporary composers, we should reconsider the status of such conventions in light of the satirical context of this symphony.

Though Brunetti's program does not mention it, in the midst of this general rejoicing, the strings launch into an extended unison repetition of the *maniático*'s obsession, which the solo cello and winds accompany with jaunty eighth notes (figure 10.8, ♩ sound example 10.8). The obsessive gesture, it seems, is here exalted, practically canonized. One might read this as the orchestra mocking the obsession after it has finally been dispelled.

The image displays a musical score for measures 9 through 16 of the final Allegro spiritoso. The score is arranged in two systems, each containing five staves. The top staff of each system is a treble clef, and the bottom staff is a bass clef. The music features a complex texture with multiple layers of rhythmic activity. In the first system, the top staff has a melodic line with eighth notes and rests, while the bottom staff has a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The second system introduces a more intricate texture with multiple layers of eighth-note patterns in both hands, marked with accents and dynamic markings like *[mf]*. The third system continues this texture with some melodic fragments in the upper staves. The fourth system shows a shift in the lower staves, with a more active bass line and some melodic movement in the upper staves. The overall style is highly rhythmic and energetic, characteristic of an Allegro spiritoso.

Figure 10.8

Measures 9–16 of the final Allegro spiritoso, showing the orchestra playing the *mania* theme (♩ sound example 10.8).

Yet given the maniac's history of relapse and the orchestra's repeated experience of having triggered those relapses, I think it more likely that the orchestra itself has been overtaken by the obsession, now not in a melancholic but a jubilant form, while the solo cello (seconded by the winds) stands back and enjoys it. Indeed, the orchestra had indulged in various forms of the "obsessive" semitone trill many previous times but less consciously, using such repeated motifs as part of the conventional style or perhaps as a stratagem to allure the *maniático*. In its musical intercourse with him, the orchestra has seemingly awakened and acceded with good humor to the obsessional quality of its own common practice, to the classical style's notable dependence on repetition of simple motives.

Within Prince Carlos's circle, the *maniático* may have alluded to a well-known figure, the cellist and composer Luigi Boccherini. There is some evidence that Boccherini stood apart from the prince's court and from Brunetti.⁵⁶ Boccherini (who arrived a few years after Brunetti) served in a rival aristocratic circle: that surrounding Prince Carlos's uncle, Don Infante Luis, whose strong claims to the throne held by his brother, Carlos III, led the king to treat him with marked care and respect. Further, an anecdote recounted by Alfredo Boccherini (the composer's great-grandson) indicates Prince Carlos's irritation with Boccherini precisely on the issue of obsessional musical motifs. One day, Prince Carlos expressed the desire to hear Boccherini's latest quartets:

The prince took up his bow, with the intention of playing the part allotted to the first violin. This part consisted of a series of supremely monotonous bars, the notes *do, si, do, si* [the solfège syllables spelling a repeated semitone such as C B C B or G F# G F#].

Utterly exasperated, he rose to his feet and said angrily: "This is abominable! Any beginner could write stuff like this! *Do, si, do, si!*"

"Sire," replied Boccherini, "will Your Highness graciously pay attention to the modulations that the second violin and the viola are executing, and to the pizzicato that may be heard in the part of the cello while the first violin repeats itself. The uniformity of the first violin ceases to be monotonous the moment the other instruments enter and take part in the dialogue."

"*Do, si, do, si!* And it goes on like that for a half an hour. A delicious dialogue indeed! It is the music of a beginner and of a bad beginner!"

"Sire, before pronouncing such a judgment it is necessary to understand music."⁵⁷

According to one of Boccherini's biographers, this cutting retort led to his being excluded from Prince Carlos's palace, where his name was never to be mentioned henceforth.⁵⁸ Nor was this exceptional: other stories relate Boccherini's prickly behavior in defense of his compositional practices.⁵⁹

Prince Carlos's ill-tempered comment probably touched a sore point: Boccherini's penchant for repetition. Indeed, Rudolf Rasch judged that among classical composers, Boccherini's "works make the most abundant use of repetition procedures."⁶⁰ Though the exact work that irritated the prince eludes identification, in one candidate (the third movement of the quintet op. 28, no. 2, G. 308, 1779), the second violin and viola remain stuck on *do* for almost the whole movement, occasionally interspersed with *si*, while the cello is allowed a virtuosic flight at the movement's close.⁶¹ A celebrated virtuoso on that

instrument, Boccherini was closely identified with the cello, which he often used soloistically in his chamber music. Regardless of whatever may have been the composition in question, Brunetti's symphony can plausibly be read as a satire on Boccherini by making his chosen instrument the voice of the *maniático*, whose obsessional *do si do si* fits the tenor of the story and may well have amused the prince.

In addition, within the context of Prince Carlos's circle, Brunetti's symphony also offered a mirror to the various forms of royal insanity that had plagued the preceding reigns. Though far less subject to "mania-melancholia" than his predecessors Felipe V and Fernando VI, Carlos III was somewhat melancholic, to which his obsessive regularity seemed to have offered a kind of counterbalance. Though there was considerable tension between them, any open mockery of the king before Prince Carlos would have been out of the question. Still, Prince Carlos may have appreciated a veiled satire on his father's obsessiveness, especially expressed in music, an art to which he was devoted, despite (or perhaps because of) his father's aversion. Having served as his violin teacher for thirteen years, Brunetti was a familiar and well-accepted figure; every known detail of Prince Carlos's relation to him suggests their sympathy. In the stormy days of 1780, this symphony's gentle but pointed picture of obsessiveness may well have lightened the prince's mood. At the Spanish court, instrumental music was allowed a degree and kind of dramatic mimicry that would scarcely have been permitted in a texted work.

As this analysis has pointed out, Brunetti's symphony goes far beyond a parody of obsession to give a more complex picture of the *maniático* as deeply embedded in his social context (not merely an isolated figure), while also reflexively critiquing aspects of the prevailing symphonic style. Brunetti presents obsession as both emerging from yet coping with melancholy. Though there is a certain pathos in the *maniático*'s mournful repetitions, Brunetti also underlines the ways in which the *maniático* is able to accommodate to his surroundings, both maintaining his obsession while reshaping it to fit its surrounding harmonic context. By alternately humoring him and trying to shake him into normalcy, the orchestra undertakes a certain effort of compassion that (in my reading) ultimately becomes a kind of self-recognition: the *maniático*'s private obsession turns out to be a part of a larger tissue of obsession that marks the stylistic world all the instruments inhabit together.

Thus, straightforward versions of the *maniático*'s "cure" are overshadowed by a far more ironic interpretation.⁶² Prince Carlos may have savored this irony: the singular *maniático* at the center of the composition (perhaps standing for the king or even the prince himself) is finally reconciled to his world through a universal realization of the obsessiveness—even the madness—of their shared world. Though Pedro Caldéron de la Barca's reputation by then had faded somewhat in Spain, one wonders whether the prince identified himself with the crown prince Segismondo, protagonist of Caldéron's play *Life Is a Dream* (*La vida es sueño*, 1635), imprisoned and tormented by his father through illusory scenes of reconciliation. Brunetti's symphony could likewise have held up a mirror

to the tormented mental states and relationships known to father and son. Even more, it seems likely that Spanish listeners to this tale of obsession and melancholia would have thought of Don Quixote, the famous “knight of the melancholy countenance,” obsessed by chivalry.

Apart from such topical references, Brunetti’s symphony presents a careful musical rendition of the phenomenology of obsession, an unusual (perhaps even unique) example of a mental condition being anatomized musically before being described clinically. Brunetti does not present musically as simple and triumphant a narrative of cure as his program might suggest (and as many of its interpreters have assumed). His premise is deeply social: the *maniático* can only be understood in terms of his enviroing musical world, in which he participates even through his obsession. Even in the score, his line stands next to the other celli, not apart from them, as later became the convention for concertos. The *maniático*’s obsession ultimately reflects the stylistic practices of his time, which his story brings to consciousness, first to the orchestra’s awareness and thereby to the listeners as well. The larger irony is that the whole orchestra (and the world it represents) is obsessed no less than the *maniático* himself. Brunetti shows his obsessions as congruent with (and responsive to) the orchestra around him. At first, the orchestra treats the *maniático* as irrelevantly repetitious but in the course of the development gradually involves itself in his material in service of what increasingly seems a shared endeavor. Such an irony would have been familiar to its courtly listeners, reared on *Don Quixote*, in which successively more and more characters (including a duke and duchess) come to be obsessed with the melancholy knight, in the process becoming (as Cervantes noted) madder than Quixote himself.⁶³

Indeed, during the eighteenth century Don Quixote’s obsessions became the premier exemplar of *idée fixe* in the Western tradition.⁶⁴ In defining monomania and setting forth his case histories, Esquirol noted that “one finds in Don Quixote an admirable description of monomania, which reigned over almost all of Europe after the Crusades: a mixture of amorous extravagance with chivalrous bravura, which in many individuals was a real insanity [*folie*].”⁶⁵ This brings us back to our starting point and to Spain, where the first musical portrayal of obsession appeared after decades of royal insanity, in a court ruled by an obsessive monarch in the land of Quixote. To be sure, literary depictions of obsession preceded and prepared its clinical description, which (as with Esquirol himself) sometimes indicated their indebtedness to the artistic originals that illuminated so many maladies.⁶⁶ Yet Brunetti’s symphony, so long forgotten, added significantly to the description and understanding of *mania* precisely because it could give an entirely new—musical—form to what had previously only been expressed in words.