GALANT SOCIETY VALUED POLITE YET PLAYFUL CONVERSATION. In the skillful
turn-taking that animated courtly banter, the ability to come up with an elegant riposte was
at least as important as the ability to lead off. The slyest, most teasingly ambiguous opening
gambit could fall flat if no one found a riposte to counter it. The chosen riposte could be
effective even if it were conventional—perhaps an old saying or proverb—as long as it was
employed with a certain flair at just the right moment. An ill-chosen riposte could be a
social disaster. Isabelle de Charrière (1740–1805) was a brilliant, highly educated woman in
courtly society at The Hague. She had real gifts as a writer, and many critics feel that her
letters are among the finest of her time. In 1764 she wrote to her secret male correspondent
about a young man who had the notion of marrying her. Her letter mentions that she had
asked the suitor, alluding to Corneille’s French tragedy about an ancient Roman general,
“Do you know Cinna?” The poor man, guessing she must be referring to something in
antiquity, responded, “Oh yes, I read it in Latin.” His riposte doomed him.

In courtly musical society, an opening gambit like the Romanesca invited an elegant
musical riposte, and one of the favorite choices was a pattern I call “the Prinner,” in honor
of the humble seventeenth-century pedagogue introduced in the previous chapter.
Prinner’s treatise, important more for its typicality than its originality, covered a range of
topics deemed necessary for the aspiring provincial musician. Under the heading
“Instruction for the Organ,” he treats what an accompanist should know of figured and
unfigured basses. His discussion follows the time-honored practice of describing counter-
pointing voices as proper responses to a motion in a reference voice. In earlier centuries
the reference voice would have been a tenor. In Prinner’s seventeenth century, it had
become the bass. He dutifully shows how the counterpointing voices should behave if the
bass ascends or descends one step, two steps, three steps, and so on. When he comes to a
bass that descends four steps, he notates the proper responses as follows (I have added the indications of scale degrees for comparison with later examples):\(^2\)

ex. 3.1 Prinner, *Musicalischer Schlüssel* [The Key to Music], fol. 58 (1677)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRINNER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>( 6 5 4 3 ) Partitura</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ex. 3.2 Wodiczka, Opus 1, no. 3, mvt. 1, Adagio, m. 1 (1739)

His intent may have been to show that two different voicings (mm. 1, 2) in two different keys (C and B\(\flat\)) share the same figured-bass pattern given under his rubric *Partitura* (mm. 3, 4). Yet his two voicings also represent the old and the new. The voicing in his first measure had long functioned as a form of the ancient *clausula vera* (see chap. 11), while the voicing in his second measure—what I term the Prinner—would become a preferred riposte in the nascent galant style.

The Romanesca of Wodiczka shown in chapter 2 was the type of opening gambit that demanded a suitable riposte:
Wodiczka chose a popular variant of the Prinner that featured a lengthened third stage. That is, while each of the first two stages of Wodiczka’s Prinner lasts for only an eighth note, the third stage, with its melodic trill on ❶, lasts for a quarter note and allows for the interpolation of ❶ between ❶ and ❶ in the bass. This adjustment places the Prinner’s fourth event squarely on the downbeat of measure 3, a stable place at which Wodiczka gives both the listener and the soloist time to pause before the music sets forth with a new phrase.

Extending the third stage was but one of many common options available to galant musicians who wished to vary the Prinner riposte. When Wodiczka repeated his Romanesca-Prinner combination later in the same movement (immediately following the double bar), he took advantage of this latitude to introduce a number of minor alterations:

ex. 3.3  Wodiczka, Opus 1, no. 3, mov. 1, Adagio, m. 6 (1739)

For instance, in its opening appearance, his Romanesca’s melodic ❶ moved up to ❶, whereas after the double bar the ❶ moves down to ❶. Similarly, the Prinner’s ❶–❶ was initially higher than its ❶–❶, but the reverse is true when the Prinner reappears after the double bar. Yet this second passage, even with these and other changes, would still have been perceived as a restatement of the opening theme (in the key of the dominant) because Wodiczka respected the range of variation allowed for both the Romanesca and its Prinner riposte.

Wodiczka, who will serve as galant Everyman in this text, could have studied with any of several “most wise maestros” of the Italian galant. His treatment of the Romanesca-Prinner pairing finds echoes in many works of the period. An excerpt from the Opus 1 sonatas of Benedetto Marcello (1686–1739), for instance, is easy to imagine as Wodiczka’s point of departure and compositional model, though as a nobleman Marcello would not have taken students (see ex. 3.4).
Wodiczka could also have studied works like the Opus 2 sonatas of Pietro Castrucci (1679–1752). Castrucci, a violin pupil of Corelli in Rome, was—like many in a long line of Italian and Italian-trained musicians—recruited to work in the north. In Castrucci’s case that meant England, where he met with considerable success as the leader of Handel’s opera orchestras in London. Although Castrucci left Italy in 1715 and thus could not have been Wodiczka’s direct teacher, their styles are nonetheless similar. Note how, in the fourth of these sonatas for violin and thoroughbass, Castrucci presents a Prinner riposte that adopts a cadential bass in place of the usual 4–3–2–1:

ex. 3.5 Castrucci, Opus 2, no. 4, mvt. 1, Andante, m. 1 (London, 1734)
Wodiczka might also have learned and mimicked the Opus 6 sonatas of Pietro Locatelli (1695–1764). Again, a personal connection is unlikely, since this great violinist from the Corelli orbit seems not to have taken students. He had already left Italy in the late 1720s for work in the north, centering on Amsterdam:

**ex. 3.6** Locatelli, Opus 6, no. 11, mvt. 1, Adagio, m. 16 (Amsterdam, 1737)

The above example is actually a later restatement of the initial, more playful theme (see ex. 3.7). Locatelli begins his Prinner, then halts, and then begins it again. Though only hinted at here, in later decades it became common to separate ⑥–⑨ from ④–⑦:

**ex. 3.7** Locatelli, Opus 6, no. 11, mvt. 1, Adagio, m. 1 (Amsterdam, 1737)
Many of the elite young musicians from this era studied in Naples with the famous maestros of its four conservatories. Leonardo Leo (1694–1744) taught a whole generation of galant composers. The following passage from the slow movement of his flute concerto in G major could have served Wodiczka as a model for a slow, stately presentation:

ex. 3.8  Leo, Concerto in G Major for Flute, mvt. 2, Largo (Naples, ca. 1730s)

Whatever the specific pieces that Wodiczka learned, and whoever served as his “most wise maestro,” he obviously absorbed what was happening in Italian music of the 1730s. If these examples sound vaguely familiar, it is probably because many modern listeners have heard the work of Wodiczka’s contemporary Domenico Gallo (fl. 1750s) in the famous retouching by Stravinsky for the Ballets Russes (Pulcinella, overture, mm. 1–2):

ex. 3.9  Gallo, Trio in G Major, mvt. 1, Allegro, m. 1 (ca. 1750s)
Gallo’s movement, still frequently attributed to Pergolesi, begins with a Romanesca whose bass avoids the usual leap from 6 to 3. The Prinner riposte, however, could hardly be more conventional.

The examples by Wodiczka, Marcello, Castrucci, Locatelli, Leo, and Gallo all embody an important tradition of how to present a Romanesca-Prinner pairing. To borrow the terminology used in eighteenth-century fugal partimenti, this conventional linkage of Romanesca _proposta_ with Prinner _riposta_ was important for any student to learn. Paisiello included an obvious example of this pairing in one of his partimenti, and one can set either version of Wodiczka’s melody above Paisiello’s bass without any modifications save the lengthening of note values required by the change of meter. Below is Paisiello’s bass with Wodiczka’s second melody. Though written more than four decades apart, the two fragments fit perfectly because both musicians knew the same “compulsory figures”:

EX. 3.10 A Paisiello partimento bass (1782) with a Wodiczka violin melody (1739)

![Ex. 3.10](image)

The speed and confidence with which many of the best eighteenth-century composers wrote multivoice works has long been a subject of marvel for modern musicians. Though the skill and invention of those composers remains impressive however one might try to explain their abilities, there are obvious advantages that a stockpile of “interchangeable parts” would give to the rapid, secure crafting of complex compositions. Anyone who knew the above tradition of a Romanesca leading to a Prinner could draw upon a number of stock melodies, basses, and harmonizations—everything would fit together. Today we tend to equate “compose” with “invent,” yet the older, more literal meaning of “put together” (com + posare) may provide a better image of galant practice.

There were also other traditions for connecting a Romanesca with a Prinner. Among the earliest exponents of the galant style was Giovanni Bononcini (1670–1747, son of Giovanni Maria Bononcini). In example 3.11 from his opera _Il trionfo di Camilla_ (1696), Bononcini incorporated the Romanesca into another opening gambit that I term, for obvious reasons, “the Do-Re-Mi” (see chap. 6). His Prinner riposte matches the length of his opening gambit, and he repeats the Prinner in perhaps an echo effect (the use of repeat signs below is a space-saving expedient and not a feature of the original manuscript).
EX. 3.11 Bononcini, Il trionfo di Camilla, Sinfonia, mvt. 3, Allegro, m. 1 (Naples, 1696)

Bononcini’s Prinner is in the key of the dominant, C major (note the B♭ indicated by the “6♯” in m. 7). In early eighteenth-century terms, this requires the Prinner’s initial melodic tone, A5, to change its orientation from mi in the hexachord on F to la in the hexachord on C. A two-clef solfège example, like those from Prinner’s own treatise (cf. ex. 2.15), can make the point in a manner consistent with Bononcini’s era:

EX. 3.12 The core Prinner melody in two different hexachords

That is, la–sol–fa–mi in the “soft” system (shown by the treble clef with one flat) is “the same” as la–sol–fa–mi in the “natural” system (shown by the baritone clef with no sharps or flats).

A Prinner heard to end in the key of the dominant, which I call a “modulating Prinner,” was very common in galant music. It provided an excellent means of moving rapidly to the dominant while at the same time fulfilling the expectation for a riposte.
Among the maestros of the Neapolitan conservatories its use was considered standard practice. Saverio Valente, a maestro from 1767 until the early nineteenth century, recommended the following esempio (It., “example”), an almost exact copy of the partitura from Prinner’s treatise, “for a departure to the fifth of a key in the major mode”:

EX. 3.13  Valente, an example of how to move to the key of the dominant (ca. 1790s)

The modulating Prinner of Valente’s example begins in the key of F major and then shifts toward C major. Had the same passage followed a C-major context, it would represent an ordinary, non-modulating Prinner. Below is a Prinner, also by Valente, from a florid partimento (for its opening Sol-Fa-Mi, see chap. 18). Its bass (mm. 14–17) corresponds closely to the four notes shown above, but the context is entirely that of C major:

EX. 3.14  Valente, from a partimento in C Major, m. 11 (1790s)

The choice of which type of Prinner to use depended on a number of factors, including the size of the intended movement (small movements needed to move more quickly to a second key). Bononcini’s younger rival Handel also knew how to incorporate an opening Romanesca into a larger Do-Re-Mi opening gambit. But in example 3.15 the German musician leaves his Prinner in the main key and expands it with a circle-of-fifths bass and a corresponding harmonic sequence, all in keeping with the greater breadth of his movement as compared to Bononcini’s.
ex. 3.15 Handel, Suite in G Major, Courante, m. 1 (before 1720)

“Well-established maestros” taught these same combinations of schemata. The Naples-trained castrato Giuseppe Aprile (1732–1813) gave his students the following solfeggio. It opens with a Romanesca and Do-Re-Mi that lead into a canonic, non-modulating Prinner. The downward scalar motion of the canonic Prinner extends to a half cadence:

ex. 3.16 Aprile, Solfeggi per voce di soprano, fol. 41v, m. 1 (Paris, 1763)
A charming passage by L'Abbé le Fils (1727–1803) can serve as a summary example of a large and complex Prinner from the 1760s (ex. 3.17). Taken from his Opus 8 violin sonatas (1763), this passage embodies a further extension of the Bononcini/Handel/Aprile template. Where Handel’s Do-Re-Mi had a full cadence (m. 4), L'Abbé inserts a deceptive cadence, which he must then repeat with a full cadence. He also presents a large, non-modulating Prinner twice. On repetition, the Prinner gains additional melodic decoration and a circle-of-fifths accompaniment. The all-root-position, leaping-fifths-and-fourths bass of Handel had lost favor by midcentury, so L'Abbé was keeping up with fashion when, for his circle of fifths (mm. 11–14), he wrote the more modern bass with alternating 5/3 and 6/3 chords:

**ex. 3.17** L’Abbé, Opus 8, no. 1, mvt. 1, Allegro, m. 1 (Paris, 1763)

I expect that a listener even modestly familiar with Romanescas and Prinners will find this passage perceptually clear in spite of its ornate melody. Eighteenth-century courtiers with a taste for music must have heard thousands of instances of the Romanesca-Prinner
pairing, and I presume that the aural recognition of these and other schemata would have been a matter of course. The musical paths at court were very well worn, and as soon as one perceived which path had been chosen, attention could shift toward appreciating the nuances of presentation. A Prinner in response to a Romanesca was no more surprising than a curtsy in response to a bow. It was the manner or style of presentation that mattered as the real object of aesthetic attention.

Isabelle de Charrière, as we read earlier, was a courtier who knew how to judge a riposte. As an amateur composer of keyboard sonatas, she wrote an opening gambit for which she provided an emphatic riposte of two Prinners:

ex. 3.18 De Charrière, Sonata in D Major, mvt. 1, Allegro, m. 1 (The Hague, ca. 1790s)
Is this inspired music? No. Does it show proper behavior at court, executed with zest and confidence? Yes. It is securely in the galant style, though it may lack the “superior gracefulness” we might expect from a professional.

A title by Hugo Riemann (1849–1919), *Verloren gegangene Selbstverständlichkeiten . . .* [Things Once Self-evident but Now Lost to the Past . . .] might well describe the Prinner. Few patterns in galant music were more common, but the concept, regardless of what name one might apply to it, has all but disappeared. In the eighteenth century, even amateurs like de Charrière knew that a Prinner was a typical response to almost any opening gambit. What de Charrière knew about Prinners and other schemata came to her partly through osmosis, as an avid member of galant musical society, and partly through instruction from gifted teachers. For some time she employed the Neapolitan maestro Niccolò Zingarelli (1752–1837) as her private tutor (he was later to teach Bellini). Zingarelli had his own repertory of partimenti and solfeggi, and I imagine that de Charrière worked her way through them as part of her training.

Below I provide the opening phrases of three of Zingarelli’s partimenti (exx. 3.19, 20, 22), with plausible realizations added in smaller notes. The thoroughbass figures are Zingarelli’s. The annotations of schemata and scale degrees are mine. The first bass demonstrates a textbook example of the stepwise Romanesca, one that merges with a *clausula vera* (see chap. 11) or Prinner: 9

**Ex. 3.19** Zingarelli, from a partimento in C Major, m. 1 (ca. 1790s)

De Charrière was studying with Zingarelli at roughly the same time that another talented woman, Barbara Ployer (1765–1811), was studying with Mozart in Vienna. Mozart and Zingarelli were contemporaries, and though they had few if any personal contacts (Mozart visited Naples only briefly in the summer of 1770, when Zingarelli was still a senior student at one of the conservatories), the similarity in their approaches as teachers can be heard in the lessons they wrote. First Zingarelli. His second bass (ex. 3.20) begins with a brief Do-Re-Mi as opening gambit (the Do-Re-Mi “melody” is in the bass, and the normal
bass is in the melody; see chap. 6 for details). The riposte is obviously a Prinner, with its third stage lengthened (m. 3):

**Ex. 3.20** Zingarelli, from another partimento in C Major, m. 1 (ca. 1790s)

Compare Zingarelli’s lesson with one that Mozart wrote for Ployer to complete and continue. The bass, melody, and figures are Mozart’s, the annotations and alto voice are mine:

**Ex. 3.21** Mozart, from his exercises for Barbara Ployer (KV 453b, mid 1780s)

Finally, in a third example by Zingarelli (ex. 3.22), we see him call for a modulating Prinner between an opening theme in C major and its restatement in the dominant key of G major. He added figures only for the first cadence, and wrote “sec: pos:” (seconda posizione) at the beginning of the modulating Prinner to alert the student that the third of the chord (E5) should be in the melody. Everything else was presumed to be self-evident.
As we will see in chapter 16, this theme, with its canon between melody and bass, was a favorite galant schema. I name it “the Fenaroli,” after the composer whose partimenti came to be the most famous of all in the nineteenth century, and who, more than coincidentally, was Zingarelli’s own maestro. Like the Romanesca and Prinner, it was replicated time and time again within the close-knit world of teachers and students.

How did we become deaf to the Prinner? Answering that question would take us beyond the scope of this volume and into the history of nineteenth-century music theory, especially the rise of “harmony” as an imagined force of nature. Yet cognizance of the Prinner and other similar patterns need not be irretrievably lost. We can, through an archaeology of musical utterances, dust off the galant schemata and listen to what they have to tell us about this courtly mode of musical thought.

In archaeology, one can infer centers of influence and style based on the distribution and dissemination of potsherds and other fragments of material culture. When, as in this chapter, one encounters example after example of similar Romanesca-Prinner pairings, and when those “potsherds” are distributed among the works of violinists like Castrucci in London, Locatelli in Amsterdam, and L’Abbé le Fils in Paris, whose lineages of maestros are known to converge on Arcangelo Corelli (1653–1713) in Rome, one would expect to find the same or similar pattern in the works of this seminal figure. That is indeed the case. Castrucci’s phrase shown earlier as example 3.5, for instance, is an almost note-for-note
recasting of one of the several Romanesca-Prinner pairings found in Corelli’s famous set of violin sonatas.

*ex. 3.23*  Corelli, Opus 5, no. 10, mvt. 2, Allemanda, m. 1 (1700)

Almost every type of Romanesca and Prinner discussed so far can be found in Corelli’s Opus 5. Castrucci was able to learn them from the maestro himself. But thousands of other violinists became familiar with Corelli’s repertory of galant schemata through the independent study and frequent performance of this much lauded collection. Though Corelli’s absence from the field of operatic composition limited his influence on the premier genre of galant music, and though Corelli did not invent the galant style, he played an important role in its dissemination.