

Mozart & his Masonic Music.txt

MOZART AND HIS MASONIC MUSIC
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The period of history which encompassed the Baroque, the Rococco, and the Viennese Classical schools of music can be described as the Enlightenment Era. In my thinking, this roughly spanned the 200 years of the 17th and 18th Centuries.

It was a period of great contributions in the arts. To give some examples, in its early stages it was characterized by the Dutch school of painting, headed by Rembrandt and Vermeer; the French artists Poussin and Lebrun; the architect Christopher Wren; the writers Moliere, Racine, Milton, Shakespeare, and Bacon; the composers Corelli, Vivaldi, Scarlatti, Pachabel, Albinoni, Handel and Bach; the poets Goethe and Burns; the philosophers Kant, Voltaire, Rousseau, and Diderot. And it ended with such musicians as Gluck, C.P.E. Bach, J.C. Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Boccherini, Beethoven, and Schubert.

It was a period which gave us the sonata, the suite, the rondeau (rondo), the fugue, the concerto, the opera, the cantata, the art of improvisation, the application of tonal rivalries between solo instruments, etc. It was a period of enormous output, both in variation of composition and in virtuosity of performance.

It was also a period of fertile growth in Masonic philosophy and ritual. And it was the time when much music was composed for the fraternity. During his brief 7 years as a Mason (1784-1791), Brother Mozart brought his unsurpassed gift of creativity and virtuosity to the fraternity in a series of compositions which are still universally played and used in today's ceremonies of Masonry. The spirit of the Enlightenment shines through Mozart's music, and this is nowhere as true, perhaps, as in his Masonic music.

That music falls into three broad categories--music he wrote specifically for the lodge, music intended for the public built on Masonic ideas, and music he wrote for other purposes, but which were adapted during his lifetime, either by himself or others, for use in lodge. Lodges frequently held concerts for charity, and Mozart wrote much music to be performed at those concerts.

As for the music Mozart wrote for use in lodge, the most obvious question to a non-Mason might be why music would be needed at all. The Masonic ritual makes many provisions for music. The process of walking from one place to another in the lodge room was and is often accompanied by music. Many such "trips about the lodge" represent the passage of time, and in those cases, music was especially appropriate. Music was also used before and after prayer, and for entrances into the lodge. In England, it is still common to sing the "closing ode" at the end of a lodge meeting.

The Blue Lodge of Freemasonry (the original and foundation of all other presently-practiced systems of the Fraternity) is divided into three Degrees, or stages of membership--the Entered Apprentice Degree, the Fellow Craft Degree, and the Master Mason Degree.

The Fellow Craft Degree is important in the story of Mozart's Masonic music because he wrote one of his most beautiful Masonic works, *Gesellenreise* (Fellow Craft's Journey) for the initiation of his father, Leopold Mozart, on April 16, 1785.

To fully appreciate the music, it is helpful to know a little about the degree itself, and about the Masonic histories of both Leopold and Wolfgang.

The Fellow Craft Degree represents, in terms of the stonemason's craft, the

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status of Journeyman. In terms of Freemasonry, it represents manhood in its full vigor and strength, as the first Degree represents youth and the third Degree represents the wisdom and maturity of age.

The ritual of the Fellow Craft Degree takes classical education as one of its strongest symbols. The Mason receiving the Degree is reminded of the five classic Orders of Architecture, as well as the seven Liberal Arts and Sciences--Grammar, Rhetoric, Logic, Arithmetic, Geometry, Music and Astronomy.

The instruction in the ritual takes the form of the ascent of winding stairs, with each step representing a new acquisition of knowledge and insight. That ascent is the Fellow Craft's journey.

It symbolizes more than mere instruction, however. The journey is the journey of life, which at this stage is a preparation for productive living as a spiritual being. Its purpose is to help awaken the individual to his life not just as an intelligent animal but as a mind--free and untrammelled--and as a spirit, bound to all humanity by the Fatherhood of God. The lyrics selected by Mozart for Gesellenreise include:

You, who now are risen higher
Unto Wisdom's high abode,
Wander steadfast higher, higher
Know, it is the noblest road.
Only spirit without blight
May approach the source of Light.

Even in this short passage, you can see the elements of the Enlightenment and of Masonry--the idea that both life and initiation was a journey of stages, the idea of Light, and of drawing nearer to it. The search for wisdom and understanding.

In the introduction to his book *Mozart and Masonry* Paul Nettl writes, ". . . there is a Masonic secret, a mystery, an experience that cannot be taught or explained because it lies, like every mystic experience, beyond the realm of controlled consciousness. At its deepest level it is identical with intense feeling and empathy. The secret of Freemasonry is the secret of experiencing true love for all mankind, a positive attitude towards man and life, and broad affirmation of God. It is the realization that beyond the dark and material world there is a realm of light towards which all men must strive."

It is this journey, this secret, which Mozart celebrated in music for his father.

Wolfgang Mozart was apparently sponsored in his petition to join Masonry by the Baron Otto Freiherr von Gemmingen-Hornberg, Master of Zur Wohltatigkeit (Charity) Lodge. Mozart had met Gemmingen in Mannheim. His name was put before the Lodge on December 5, 1784, and he appears to have received the Entered Apprentice Degree on December 14. On January 7, 1785, he received the Fellow Craft Degree at "Zur wahren Eintracht" (True Harmony) Lodge at the request of his home Lodge. On April 22, he received the Master Mason Degree.

But Jacques Chailley, in *The Magic Flute Unveiled: Esoteric Symbolism in Mozart's Masonic Opera*, points out that Mozart's association with Freemasonry long predated his petition to the Fraternity. At the age of 11, Mozart set the Masonic poem *An die Freude* to music and sent it as a gift to Dr. Joseph Wolf who had treated him for smallpox. At 16, he

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composed an aria on the words of the ritual hymn O heiliges Band. At 17, he was selected by Gebler to compose the incidental music for the Masonic drama Thamos (which he revised in 1779).

Leopold Mozart, it was announced in Wolfgang's Lodge on March 28, 1785, had been proposed for membership. As Leopold was about to leave the city, a dispensation to proceed more rapidly than usual was sought and obtained. On April 6, he was initiated as an Entered Apprentice. On April 16, he was passed to the Degree of Fellow Craft, with Wolfgang in attendance. On April 22, Leopold became a Master Mason. Two days later, father and son attended the Lodge zur gekrönten Hoffnung to honor the Lodge's Master, Ignaz Born. Wolfgang composed a new cantata for the occasion (K.471). The day after the concert, Leopold left for Salzburg. His son was never to see him again.

Mozart's Masonic Music is rich and varied, but any listing is subject to criticism. The simple reason is that music played a very important part in Masonry. Music was used in the Degrees, performed at refreshment as entertainment (which would have been an experience--Mozart's Lodge contained some of the finest performers in Europe, and we know from minutes of the Lodge meetings that they often sat around after Lodge had formally closed and improvised into the small hours of the morning) and at special public concerts, frequently given by the Lodges for charitable purposes. So we have Masonic ritual music, music written for or adapted for entertainment at Masonic functions, and music on Masonic themes, not intended for performance in Lodge, some of which as we have seen, was written before he joined the fraternity. The following listing (based on the work of Charles Tupper) contains elements of all these, with notes showing their Masonic relevance.

Lied: An die Freude, K.53 (setting of a Masonic text)

Psalm 129: De Profundis Clamavi for mixed choir and orchestra K.93 (composed in Salzburg in 1771 and later adapted to Freemasonic work by the composer)

Lied: O heiliges Band der Freundschaft for tenor and Piano K.148 (composed in 1772 and adopted for Masonry; probably sung at refreshment)

Graduale ad Festum B.M.V.: "Sancta Maria, mater Dei for mixed choir and orchestra K.273 (composed in 1777, it was immediately added to the musical canon of the Lodge)

Incidental Music: Thamos König in Ägypten, K.345 (incidental music for a play, the themes are heavily Masonic - considered a forerunner of The Magic Flute)

Canonic Adagio for 2 Bassett Horns and Bassoon, K.410 (composed in 1784, ritual procession music)

Adagio for 2 Clarinets and 3 Bassett Horns, K.411 (probably intended as a processional entrance for the Lodge)

Cantata: "Dir, Seele des Weltalls," K.429 (composed for a public Masonic celebration)

Gesellenreise: "Die ihr einem neuen Grade," K.468 (composed for his father's Fellow Craft Degree)

Cantata: Die Maurerfreude "Sehen wie dem starren Forscherauge," K.471 (composed in April, 1785, to honor Ignaz von Born, Grand Master of the United Lodges)

[According to the records of the Lodge, Mozart wrote the music for two

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additional songs during 1785--Des Todes Werk and Vollbracht ist die Arbeit der Meister (The Work of Death and The Work of the Masters is Finished)--which have been lost]

Maurerische Trauermusik (Masonic Funeral Music) K.477 (written for the memorial services commemorating the deaths of Mozart's brother Masons Duke George August of Mecklenburg-Strelitz and Count Franz Veith Edler von Galantha in November, 1785, and performed in a Lodge of Sorrows)

Piano Concerto in Eb Major, K.482 (written for and performed at a concert given by the Lodge Zur gekronten Hoffnung, December 15, 1785)

Song: Zerfliesset Heut, Geliebte Bruder," K.483 (written to welcome newly-formed Lodges)

Song: "Ihr unsre neuen Leiter," K.484 (written to welcome the newly elected Grand Master of the United Lodges)

Symphony #39 in Eb, K.543 (written as a celebration of the Craft and the joy of living {see Alfred Einstein's notes on the Masonic significance of the work})

Adagio and Fugue in C Minor, K.546 (not originally written for the Masonic canon, it was quickly adopted by the Lodges)

Adagio and Rondo for Flute, Oboe, viola, Cello, and Celesta, K.617 (written while Mozart was working on The Magic Flute and performed at refreshment in Lodge)

Motet: Ave Verum Corpus, K.618 (originally written for Anton Stoll's choir school at Baden, the work was quickly adopted for Lodge use)

Cantata: "Die ihr des unermesslichen Weltalls Schopfer ehrt," K.619 (during Mozart's last year, he paused during composition of The Magic Flute, La Clemenza di Tito and the Requiem to compose this piece at the request of his Lodge.)

Cantata: "Kleine Freimaurerkantate" (little Masonic cantata) K.623 (written for the dedication of the Lodge Zur neugekronten Hoffnung)

Chorus: "Lasst uns mit geschlungenen Handen" K.623b (written as part of the same dedication service as above)

Opera: "Die Zauberflote" (The Magic Flute) K.620

Mozart died at fifty-five minutes past midnight, on December 5, 1791. The Masons held a Lodge of Sorrows in his memory, and the oration there delivered was printed by Ignaz Albertini, a member of Mozart's own Lodge, who had published the first libretto of Die Zauberflote.

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For more information on Mozart and Masonry, see:
Paul Nettl, Mozart and Masonry, reprinted 1987 by Dorset Press
Spike Hughes, Famous Mozart Operas, Dover Publications, 1972 Joachim Kaiser, Who's Who in Mozart's Operas: From Alfonso to Zerlina, Schirmer Books, 1987

Jacques Chailley, The Magic Flute Unveiled: Esoteric Symbolism in Mozart's Masonic Opera, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1971
H.C. Robbins Landon, Mozart and the Masons, Thames and Hudson, 1991