

Between *Aufklärung* and *Sturm und Drang*: Leopold and Wolfgang
Mozart's View of the World

by

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Preface	vii
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: Leopold Mozart, 1719–1756: The Making of an Enlightened Father	10
1.1: Leopold's education.	11
1.2: Leopold's model of education.	17
1.3: Leopold, Gellert, Gottsched and Günther.	24
1.4: Leopold and his <i>Versuch</i> .	32
Chapter 2: The Mozarts' Taste: Leopold's and Wolfgang's aesthetic perception of their world.	39
2.1: Leopold's and Wolfgang's general aesthetic outlook.	40
2.2: Leopold and the aesthetics in his <i>Versuch</i> .	49
2.3: Leopold's and Wolfgang's musical aesthetics.	53
2.4: Leopold's and Wolfgang's opera aesthetics.	56
Chapter 3: Leopold and Wolfgang, 1756–1778: The education of a <i>Wunderkind</i>.	64
3.1: The Grand Tour.	65
3.2: Tour of Vienna.	82
3.3: Tour of Italy.	89
3.4: Leopold and Wolfgang on Wieland.	96
Chapter 4: Leopold and Wolfgang, 1778–1781: <i>Sturm und Drang</i> and the demise of the Mozarts' relationship.	106
4.1: Wolfgang's Paris journey without Leopold.	110
4.2: Maria Anna Mozart's death.	122
4.3: Wolfgang's relations with the Weber family.	129
4.4: Wolfgang's break with Salzburg patronage.	135
Chapter 5: The Mozarts and Tolerance: The <i>Aufklärer</i> and their quest for social and intellectual freedom.	145
5.1: Leopold's and Wolfgang's views on Christian denominations.	146
5.2: Leopold's and Wolfgang's views on Turks.	158
5.3: Leopold's and Wolfgang's views on Jews.	162
Chapter 6: Leopold and Wolfgang, 1781-1787: Salzburg to Vienna – The Years Apart.	175
6.1: Leopold's and Wolfgang's attitudes towards Constanze and women.	177
6.2: Leopold's and Wolfgang's attitudes towards nationalism.	185
6.3: Leopold and the education of his grandson, 'Leopoldl'.	195
6.4: Leopold's death and Wolfgang's reaction.	199
Chapter 7: Wolfgang Mozart, 1787-1791: The end of Leopold's vision.	213
7.1: Wolfgang's attitude to education.	214
Conclusion	224
Plates	
Plate 1: Erasmus of Rotterdam.	234
Plate 2: Rubens' 'Descent from the Cross'.	235
Plate 3: Wolfgang wearing the Golden Spur.	236
Bibliography	237

Abstract

This dissertation was conceived with the objective of considering the social, literary and philosophical forces of the eighteenth century through the eyes of Leopold and Wolfgang Mozart. The Enlightenment, and particularly in this dissertation the German *Aufklärung*, was an intellectual movement which attempted to amend many of society's seeming imbalances, such as class structure and church authority. Leopold and Wolfgang Mozart experienced and acknowledged the same *Aufklärung*, but embraced and implemented their understanding in different and conflicting ways.

Among the issues which the Mozarts considered in relation to the *Aufklärung* were: their respective attitudes towards and implementation of education; their mutual fascination with the life and work of Christoph Martin Wieland; their contrastive tolerance towards religious and racial minorities; their patriotism and consequent desire for German institutions; and their opposing attitude to their social standing in regards to the church and state.

In looking at these issues, three main conclusions will be realised: Leopold's preoccupation with education and his yearning to be considered amongst the Men of Letters of the *Aufklärung*; Leopold and Wolfgang's incompatible attitude to social structure and the behaviour that was required of their respective standing; and, finally, the difficulties faced by the father-son relationship in the rapidly evolving eighteenth century.

Declaration

NAME:..... PROGRAM:.....

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On a personal note, I wish to thank my parents, Anne and Michael, whose encouragement throughout my entire education allowed me to undertake this dissertation. Finally to Kylie, who followed the process of this dissertation from its conception and endured the highs and lows of such a mountainous task.

I would, therefore, like to dedicate this dissertation to her – for all the love and support she provided.

List of Abbreviations

- Briefe* *Briefe und Aufzeichnungen* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1962–2005) Wilhelm A. Bauer, Otto Erich Deutsch, Joseph Heinz Eibl, Ulrich Konrad, eds.
- CME* *The Complete Mozart Edition in 45 Volumes* (Netherlands: Philips Classics Productions, 1991)
- Documents* *Enlightened Absolutism (1760–1790): A Documentary Sourcebook* (Newcastle–upon–Tyne: Averno Publications, Ltd., 1985) A. Lentin, ed.
- DWL* Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *The Dramatic Works of G. E. Lessing in Two Volumes* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1878) Ernest Bell, ed.
- FPSD* *Five Plays of the Sturm und Drang* (Lanham: University Press of America, Inc., 1986) Betty Senk Waterhouse, trans.
- GCW* Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Collected Works in 12 Volumes* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1994) Victor Lange, Eric Blackall, and Cyrus Hamlin, eds. & trans.
- HPW* Johann Gottfried von Herder, *Philosophical Writings* (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2002) Michael N. Forster, ed.
- KPW* Immanuel Kant, *Kant’s Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) Hans Reiss, ed.
- Letters* *The Letters of Mozart and His Family* (London: Macmillan Press, 1985) Emily Anderson, ed.
- MDB* Otto Erich Deutsch, *Mozart: A Documentary Biography* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1966) Eric Blom, Peter Branscombe and Jeremy Noble, trans.
- MO* *The Metropolitan Opera Book of Mozart Operas* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991) Paul Gruber, ed.
- MPW* Moses Mendelssohn, *Philosophical Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) Daniel O. Dahlstrom, ed.
- NMA* Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *Neue Ausgabe sämtliche Werke in 20 Bänden* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1954–1991) Wolfgang Plath and Wolfgang Rehm, eds.
- Versuch* Leopold Mozart, *A Treatise on the Fundamental Principles of Violin Playing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985) Editha Knocker, ed.

Preface

Throughout the long and lonely journey of writing this dissertation, I was peppered by friends and colleagues with a recurring question. The form of their collective pondering – all variations on a theme, really – related to the justification of writing a 100 000-word thesis on Mozart: *Isn't there already enough written on Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart?*

My answer was twofold. Firstly, I borrowed a statement from the respected Mozart scholar David Cairns who, in his 2006 publication, *Mozart and His Operas*, began his book with a comparison between his subject and Western society's unwavering attraction to William Shakespeare:

Mozart, like Shakespeare, continues to grow. His music is an ever-expanding universe. The better we know it – the more we explore its heights and depths – the more marvellous it becomes.¹

Secondly, I honestly believed that, despite the rich, voluminous canon of scholarship that already existed on Mozart, there was a void that was yet to be filled. This specific area related to Wolfgang Mozart's relationship with his father Leopold, and how they each perceived the German Enlightenment. Their fraught relationship had always captivated me from an historical point of view. Anyone who surveys the Mozart family letters will quickly realise how the essence of any father–son relationship – notably its many sources of pleasure and hardship – withstands the changing nature of human civilisation and remains the same. In that sense, Leopold and Wolfgang's relationship is universally relatable.

To separate this Mozart project from others, I wanted to approach it differently. The most glaring dissimilarity with most Mozart essays is that this dissertation focuses equal attention on Leopold and Wolfgang. While the usual biography centres on Wolfgang with intermittent entrances from his father, I endeavoured to examine Leopold's life in as much detail as that of his son. While it was a constant challenge to drum up the same quality and quantity of information as that on Wolfgang, further scrutiny of Leopold's life provided not only challenges but also triumphs. It is true that Leopold owes his place in history to the genius of his son;

¹ David Cairns, *Mozart and His Operas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006) 5.

however his enthusiasm for letter writing, provocative opinions and life-long dedication to the family's welfare made him a fascinating subject to study. If we accept that Leopold's life can only be validated by his son's achievements, we should naturally also assume that Wolfgang's genius can only be understood following the illumination of Leopold's incessant involvement in his son's life and affairs.

The challenges in writing a multi-biography are numerous. It can be a struggle to dedicate equal attention to each subject. The disparity in the literature on Leopold and Wolfgang cannot easily be covered. What was necessarily attempted, therefore, was to focus and accentuate certain aspects in the Mozart father-son relationship that had not previously been explored. For example, Leopold's and Wolfgang's mutual enjoyment of the works of Christoph Martin Wieland demonstrates that, amid a rather trying period for the two men personally, they managed to find a common interest. Also, Leopold's life-long pursuit of an educational ideal and his ambition to be regarded as a leading educator of his age cannot properly be established without understanding the discrepancy between his and Wolfgang's pedagogical attitudes.

The ultimate task of this dissertation, therefore, was to illustrate the movements of the two Mozarts but only in relation to each other. Even the opening chapter on Leopold's life before 1756 and the final chapter which explores Wolfgang's final four years following his father's death in 1787, are written with the other subject in mind. Wolfgang's life cannot properly be examined without first exploring his father's rather tumultuous youth. Similarly, Wolfgang's final years can only be comprehended following a proper in-depth study of his father's life and death.

Another intentional feature of this dissertation is the emphasis on the historical, rather than the musical, events in the Mozarts' lives. I have attempted to include as few musical examples or details of compositional works as possible. I did not want the dissertation to be based on autobiographical meaning in Wolfgang's works, as I thought that would sacrifice this dissertation's principle aim: to emphasise the two Mozarts' non-musical influences and philosophies. Therefore, while the lack of musical discussion may be a glaring omission to some readers, I assure them that it was a necessary and intentional decision.

Before concluding this preface I would like to reinforce the purpose of this dissertation: this project is intended to provide *an* answer rather than *the* answer. Some doubt and disagreement have already been thrown at some areas of this study, and while I acknowledge the reservations of some conservative Mozart circles, I can

only urge them to remember that scholarship – particularly Mozart scholarship – is never a closed book.

As the above-mentioned statement by David Cairns suggests, the lively evolution of Mozart academia is a healthy guarantee of the public's interest in the subject. Chapter 6 and the discussion of Wolfgang's flirtations with suicide will appear novel to some readers. Backed by references and sources, I assure them that such an assertion becomes viable when it is placed within its context. Considering that this entire dissertation focuses on the Mozarts' relationship and the German Enlightenment, establishing the spirit of the age or *Zeitgeist* is an essential factor in deciphering Leopold and Wolfgang's separate attitudes.

For me, the highly spirited and deeply personal relationship between Leopold and Wolfgang Mozart is a source of unwavering interest. While it has formally occupied my mind for the best part of five years, I know it will continue to fascinate me for many more. The Mozarts' world is understood and penetrable in so many ways, largely through their surviving letters and music. Paradoxically, however, an abundance of issues and answers remain unsolved and unclear. The lives of Leopold and Wolfgang seem well known to us, yet remain hidden and vague. While much is known about the Mozarts, an equal amount remains frustratingly undiscovered. To this, I offer my dissertation – *an* answer, *my* answer. With this, may the 'ever-evolving' world of Mozart scholarship continue to thrive through fresh ideas and alternative possibilities.

Thomas McPharlin Ford, 2010.

Education gives the individual nothing which he could not also acquire by himself; it merely gives him what he could acquire by himself, but more quickly and more easily.

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, 1780

I must first become one with myself before I can be one with another.

Friedrich Maximilan Klinger, 1776

I must confess that there is not a single touch in your letter by which I recognise my father! I see a father, indeed, but not the most beloved and most loving father, who cares for his own honour and for that of his children – in short, not my father.

Wolfgang to Leopold, 1781