

IN CELEBRATION OF THE LIFE AND MUSIC OF W. A. MOZART,  
Prairie Society Nov. 10, 1991

A. With the kids

How many of you have had lessons with a music teacher....with a teacher who wasn't your parent or school teacher?

How many of you have ever taught music in one way or another?

~~xxxx~~ The relationship between music teacher and student is a common one, but it has its difficulties, and that is why, alas, I never had a music teacher. When I was about 5, my parents sent my big sister to a violin teacher.....who was something of a monster. He would reduce my sister to tears, and after I while she quit. My parents never sent me to a teacher to spare me the pain.....

(I suppose that monster might deserve some sympathy too....)

I hope your fortunes with music teachers are better. There are many great ones, and today we light the chalice for one of the greatest, Leopold Mozart, father of Wolfgang Amadeus....of Salzburg, Austria.

<sup>teacher</sup>

To be a good teacher it helps to have good students, and Wolfgang was a good student. He was one of the first famous child prodigies, young children who can do things most grownups cannot do. He learned to play the piano when he was about four years old and started composing music when he was about 7. The family was famous, and~~xxxx~~ they went on a long tour through Europe ~~xxxxxxx~~ for three years ~~xxxx~~ starting when Wolfgang was 7 years old. One of his first piano pieces was written in Paris or London about then...

in royal courts,  
with powdered wig  
& sword, like a  
gentleman

(1) Gretchen Vetzner, who says she is herself a beginner in this activity

Wolfgang wrote for singers too, and he liked people who could sing well. He liked birds who could sing too, and I think he had birds in his household most of his life. When he was about 30 he had a canary, and when the canary died he got a starling.....we don't usually think of starlings as song birds....how do they go? ....but starlings are smart, they can be taught, and Wolfgang said he taught his starling to ~~xx~~ sing some of his songs. Alas, the starling died in 1787. Wolfgang was unhappy about it. In the same year he wrote one of his most popular pieces for orchestra, a piece which can cheer up almost anyone. In German it is called "Eine Kleine Nachtmusik," which means "A Little Night Music" in English, or a "Serenade" in Italian.

(2) George Calden and Mandolin.

The children can go to their RE classes now.... with their own song.

13 d. 5/28/87

Starling d 6/4/87

Serenade 8/10/87

What I didn't tell the kids: Leopold Mozart died 2  
(2) week before the starting... w/o much grief ~  
or so maybe some strains in the relationship. (But  
no psychoanalytic theory of WAM)

B. It's hard to bring off a successful relationship between a professional music teacher and his or her students. It tends to be harder for parents to teach their own children to become proficient in a complex skill like playing the piano. Music teachers I have known may teach their own kids at the beginning, but usually they send them to another teacher when it gets serious. Leopold and Wolfgang were exceptions. My own explanation for their exceptional success is that they really didn't work at TEACHING, at changing Wolfgang. Partly they played with music, and when they worked, they worked together to conquer the world.

You might put it crudely and say that Leopold, like the parents of other prodigies, knew that he had a potential gold mine on his hands and set out to exploit it. I think that would be a mistake, because ~~xxxxxx~~ the Mozart family really worked together to profit from the children's skills. Mozart's sister Nannerl (Maria Anna) was 5 years older than him, and they performed together on that first European tour. Quote Hildesheimer, p. 31.

The following piece would have been played by Wolfgang and Nannerl in London in 1765.

### (3) Doleta and Susan

Biographers are confident that Wolfgang really did write K 19d. They aren't so confident about some of the early symphonies. Leopold passed some of his own symphonies as those of Wolfgang.

C. The women in the life of a composer, at least in the 18th century, are likely to be singers. Composers love beautiful voices, and they often end up loving those who have the voices. In 1778 Wolfgang met the Weber family, with 4 daughters. First he fell in love with Aloysia, the best singer, who rejected his proposal of marriage in Jan. 1779. On the rebound he courted her sister Constanza. They were married in 1782, the year after he declared his independence from the Archbishop in Salzburg. It seems to have been a reasonably happy marriage, given the times. They had 6 kids in their 9 years of marriage, 4 of whom died in infancy. \* ~~xx~~ His son Karl grew up to be a musician. In Wolfgang's last letter, to Constanza, he tells of taking Karl to a performance of the Magic Flute and that Karl loved it. I don't know for whom the next two songs were composed.

### (4) Doleta and instrumental group.

D. Leopold Mozart worked for the Archbishops of Salzburg most of his career, Schrattenbach until 1771, Colloredo after that, and working in that court might have been a career option for Wolfgang. Religious and secular princes maintained large musical establishments in those days, and the court at Salzburg had about 100 musicians. It was natural that Wolfgang would compose religious music.

### (5) Lacrimosa

The Archbishops of Salzburg treated Wolfgang in a shabby manner. For years he wasn't paid anything, and only in his 20's was he made concertmaster of the orchestra. Here is an excerpt from a letter to his father in 1781 sent from Vienna where he was with the archbishop: Pelican, p. 158, 17 March.

In May of that year Wolfgang rebelled against the archbishop, quit in

\* Constanza left out  
of Vienna to spend time  
in Baden after 1787...  
birth control?

(3)

a huff, and got physically kicked out of the archbishop's residence in Vienna. He was determined to make a musical living on his own.

The following piece was written in that year of personal rebellion. The 18th c. saw many technical innovations in music, including the development of new musical instruments. Mozart wrote for the mechanical organ, and also for the glass harmonica...two instruments that didn't really catch on. So we cannot give you his Adagio on the glass harmonica.....

(6) Mike Briggs

E. The greatest rewards to a composer in Vienna in those days went to the composers of operas. Operas then as now are expensive and complex social enterprises, and they are hard to pull off.....The composer needs power, or friends with power. In Vienna it had been the case that the power that supported the opera was the imperial power. Mozart had some spectacular successes with the royal opera, with works like the Marriage of Figaro and Don Giovanni. After the French Revolution got going in 1789, those works weren't as popular in Vienna. Mozart's last opera was financed privately by his Masonic friends. The Magic Flute was first performed Sep. 30, 1791.

(7) Doleta, Mike, Norma, and Co.

The Abduction from the Seraglio was a success from Mozart's first year of independence in Vienna. Belmonte's "Romance" in that opera more or less summarizes its plot. Only at Prairie can every member of the congregation become an operatic tenor. *(But not even at Prairie a soprano hero)*

(8) Susan

F. In the last month or so of 1791 Mozart became ill while composing his Requiem. A performance of his mostly completed Requiem was given at his bedside on Dec. 4, the day before he died. \*

I don't know exactly when "Longing for Spring" was written in the year of 1791. It's nice to think of it being in November, when he would be longing for the Spring of 1792. Barbara tells me that in German speaking countries it has more or less gone to the people, is a popular song.

(9) Barbara Park

\* \* \* \* \*

Announcements: You still have a chance to see the Mozart/Salieri double bill at the University Opera this coming Friday and Saturday.

\* It is not true that he was loved in by Antonio Salieri. Peter Schaffer's play shows Salieri as a jealous, envious, and a good guy, friend of Mozart.