

Bruce Cooper Clarke

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Subject: The Cambridge MOZART Encyclopedia – Comments on entries
for *Franz Xaver Niemetschek* and *Count Franz Wallsegg*

Anniversary celebrations are compelling occasions for remembrance and summing-up. They set the stage for taking a firm stance on what has come down to us from the past and for getting on with the future. Knowing where we came from helps us to know where we have yet to go.

Writing in 1891 on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of Mozart's death, George Bernard Shaw, then active as a music critic, complained about the inordinate amount of "literary and musical business" being set in motion in London. It was ever thus.

This can lead to excess, of course, but by and large it is no bad thing. Consider some of the "literary and musical business" that was prompted by *Mozart-Jahr 2006*, for example:

--Moved by the significance of Mozart's birth 250 years before, the powers that be in Salzburg caused the staging and performance of Mozart's entire operatic oeuvre, all 22 of his operas, musical plays, and dramatic cantatas, to take place – *eine echte Seltenheit*.

--In the German-speaking world, compendia and collections of all sorts were prepared and published. Among the most notable was Ulrich Konrad's comprehensive work, "*Wolfgang Amadé Mozart: Leben, Musik, Werkbestand*," published by Bärenreiter (ISBN 3-7618-1821-1).

--In the English-speaking world, one of the most significant efforts was the 2006 publication of "The Cambridge MOZART Encyclopedia," prepared and produced under the editorial direction of Cliff Eisen and Simon P. Keefe (Cambridge University Press; ISBN 13 978-0-521-85659-1). In a hefty book of some 660 pages (and with a hefty price too), the Cambridge MOZART Encyclopedia covers the Mozart waterfront literally from A (*The Abduction*) to Z (the indefatigable diarist Count Karl Zinzendorf). There are, of course, the usual indexes of Mozart's works by Köchel number as well as by genre. But that's not all. As appropriate to the 21st century, there are appendices for such ephemera as: Mozart movies (theatrical releases); Mozart operas on DVD and video; and Mozart websites.

And as befits such an ambitious undertaking, there is a sterling cast of contributors, including (in addition to the editors themselves) such Mozart *Kenner* as Derek Beales, Peter Branscombe, Ruth Halliwell, Ulrich Konrad, Dorothea Link, John Rice, Stanley Sadie, William Stafford, and Neal Zaslaw, to name but a few (and with apologies to those left unnamed).

The quality of the individual contributions is high and the detail is impressive. It may seem churlish, therefore, to cavil at the occasional lapse. Still, the intent is to contribute to achieving a more perfect record.

In the two instances discussed below, the problem appears to stem essentially from not casting the net for source material wide enough. In each case, scholarship existed that would have contributed to a more accurate discussion but, to judge from the sources cited, was not drawn upon. Prominent in this regard is research and analysis published by the Austrian Mozart and Beethoven scholar, Walther Brauneis, whose work first appeared in German- (and Czech-) language journals but was available soon thereafter in English translation. [NB: The two Brauneis studies cited in the comments below can be found elsewhere in the *Apropos Mozart* website.]

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Niemetschek, Franz Xaver (František Xaver Němeček) (b. Sadska, Bohemia, 24 July 1766; d. Vienna, 19 Mar. 1849). Niemetschek, a native Czech and professor of philosophy at Prague University from 1802, got to know Mozart in all likelihood during Mozart's final trip to Prague in August-September 1791. Following Mozart's death he took Karl Thomas Mozart (1784-1858), the composer's older son, under his wing, housing him in Prague between 1794 and 1797; he also looked after the younger son Franz Xaver Wolfgang Mozart (1791-1844) for six months in 1795-6, while Constanze Mozart was on a concert tour in Germany.

Alongside Friedrich Schlichtegroll's *Nekrolog auf das Jahr 1791* (Necrology for the Year 1791) Niemetschek's *Leben des k. k. Kapellmeister Wolfgang Gottlieb Mozart* (given as *Life of Mozart* in the 1956 translation) is the most important early biographical account of the composer. It was first published anonymously in Prague in 1797, again in 1798 (now attributed to 'Niemetschek') and then in an expanded second edition in 1808. Niemetschek draws almost exclusively on Schlichtegroll for his account of Mozart's life in Salzburg and on his travels up to 1781, but devotes the lion's share of his biography to Mozart's period in Vienna from 1781 onwards, giving special attention to Mozart's associations with Prague. Constanze was one of Niemetschek's primary sources and she is known to have falsified some information, for example on the topic of the

Requiem. Thus, Niemetschek unwittingly became an early perpetuator of myths about the work, such as its commissioning by a mysterious messenger, whose identity remained a mystery to Constanze and from whom she heard nothing after Mozart's death. In spite of demonstrable biographical falsities and an unabashedly hagiographical tone, Niemetschek's book contains a number of trenchant, esthetically significant observations. On Mozart's orchestration, for example, he comments: '[Mozart] judged with extreme accuracy the nature and range of all instruments, plotted new paths for them and from each of them obtained the utmost effect, so that the greatest melodic potentiality was realised. . . Never is an instrument wasted or misused, and, therefore, redundant. But he alone knew how to achieve his most magical effects with true economy, entailing the least effort, often through a single note on an instrument, by means of a chord or a trumpet blast.'

G. Gruber, *Mozart and Posterity*, trans. R. S. Furness (London, 1991)
 F. X. Niemetschek, *Life of Mozart* (1798), trans. Helen Mautner (London, 1956)

W. Stafford, 'The Evolution of Mozartian Biography', in *The Cambridge Companion to Mozart*, ed. S. P. Encyclopedia (Cambridge, 2003), 200-11

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COMMENTARY

General

In 1993, the Hans Schneider Verlag, Tutzing, published Band II: Free Papers from the *Internationaler Musikwissenschaftlicher Kongreß zum Mozartjahr 1991, Baden-Wien, im Auftrag der Österreichischen Gesellschaft für Musikwissenschaft herausgegeben von Ingrid Fuchs*. Among the papers in Band II was one (pages 491 to 503) by Walther Brauneis: *Franz Xaver Niemetschek: Sein Umgang mit Mozart – Eine Legende?* The paper is the result of collaboration between Brauneis and Dr. Tomislav Volek of Prague. The study was also published in the Czech language: *Je legendou, ze se stýkal a Mozartem?*, in: *Bertramka – Vestník Mozartovy obce v CR 1-4/1993*, p.10ff. In August 1994, the paper was distributed privately in English translation to the Mozarteum library and others.

As Brauneis notes in his foreword to the paper: "An autobiographical essay written by Franz Xaver Niemetschek about his marriage with Theresia Schnell, the daughter of a Prague merchant has recently come to light. The document is in Niemetschek's hand and was previously unknown." This autobiographical fragment is an important part of the analysis.

In detail

I. [Encyclopedia](#): “Niemetschek, a native Czech and professor of philosophy at Prague University from 1802, got to know Mozart in all likelihood during Mozart's final trip to Prague in August-September 1791.”

Brauneis p.4: “In 1966, Tomislav Volek undertook to examine the question [of N.'s personal relationship with Mozart] and came to the conclusion that N. probably had never had personal contact with Mozart. 1/”

Footnote 1 -- Tomislav Volek, *Meznama tvar F.X. Nemecka / Das unbekannte Angesicht von F.X. Niemetschek*, in: *Hudebni rozhledy* 19.Praha 1966, Nr.14, S.427ff

Brauneis p.4: “Mozart's first visit to Prague had come at the beginning of January 1787. In autumn of the same year, he was a guest in the Bohemian capital once again. In 1789, he paused briefly in Prague during his travels to Dresden and Berlin and back to Vienna. And in the late summer of 1791, he saw the city that had become his second home so far as art is concerned one last time.

“It is perfectly clear that, in the time spanned by these events, Niemetschek did not live in Prague. According to an early source, once he had finished his studies, he is supposed to have applied for gymnasium teaching positions both in Komotau (today, Chomutov) and in Pilsen (today, Plzen). Following an official decree of 26 August 1787, he was appointed to the collegium of professors made up mostly of Dominican priests and secular (i.e., non-monastic) clergy at the gymnasium in Pilsen. In the lists of professors for the school years from 1788 to 1793, Niemetschek's name is to be found as instructor for poetry. 2/ It is only in the fall of 1793 that Niemetschek came to live in Prague after receiving the position of teacher of language and grammar at the Kleinseitner Gymnasium. 3/”

Footnote 2. Wenzel Nowak, *Rückblick auf das erste Saeculum des k.k. deutschen Obergymnasiums in Pilsen (1776-1891)*, in: *Programm des k.k. deutschen Obergymnasiums zu Pilsen in Böhman für das Schuljahr 1891*. Pilsen 1891, S.7, 19, 24.

Footnote 3. Gottlieb Biermann, *Geschichte des Gymnasiums der Kleinseite in Prag*, in: *Programm des k.k. Deutschen Obergymnasiums der Kleinseite am Schlusse des Schuljahres 1880*. Prag 1880, S.46.

Brauneis p.5 “An important center of Prague's musical life in these times was the salon of the Duscheks. . . . Also to be found coming and going at the Duscheks was Niemetschek's future wife, Theresia Schnell. *"In the years 1790, 1791, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, she was one of (Prague's) most popular hat-makers. Frau Duschek too knew well how to make use of her skill and her pleasing diligence.* [This quotation is from Niemetschek's autobiographical essay.] . . . And at the Duscheks, Theresia Schnell had also met Mozart: *"At Madame Duschek's, she also made Mozart's acquaintance; (in 1787 and 1790 [sic], when he composed Don Giovanni and la Clemenza) he was very kind to her and in the evenings would always accompany her from the Duscheks to*

home, where he would pass some time chatting with her old mother." [This quotation is also from Niemetschek's autobiographical essay.] Nowhere in those parts of the autobiographical essay that have survived does Niemetschek ever mention that he was himself personally acquainted with Mozart. Nor, in fact, is such a claim to be found in Niemetschek's Mozart biography. Not a single comment of Mozart's directed to Niemetschek has come down to us, nor is there any conversation between the two men that is given even in part.

"Thus the 'personal experience' claimed by Niemetschek appears to be nothing more than an effort to validate his capacity to render judgments in the realm of music, something not to be taken as self-evident in a gymnasium instructor trained as a teacher of German and pedagogy. . ."

II. [Encyclopedia](#): "Following Mozart's death he took Karl Thomas Mozart (1784-1858), the composer's older son, under his wing, housing him in Prague between 1794 and 1797; he also looked after the younger son Franz Xaver Wolfgang Mozart (1791-1844) for six months in 1795-6, while Constanze Mozart was on a concert tour in Germany."

Brauneis p.7: "Mozart literature generally attributes upbringing of the two Mozart sons to the Niemetschek family. Carl Thomas had been brought to Prague by his mother early in 1794. . . . In November 1795, the Widow Mozart also brought the four-year-old Franz Xaver Wolfgang Mozart to Prague to stay half a year, until she picked him up at the end of her concert tour. By his own account, Carl Thomas remained in Prague until the end of 1797. . . .Up to now, little note has been given to the fact that Niemetschek did not marry until 1798 and therefore, during the years from 1794 to 1797, he was still single, leading a bachelor's life in Prague without a household of his own and far removed from his family living in Sadská. . . .Carl Thomas spent his holidays and vacations with Niemetschek at the parental home in Sadská, beginning right away with Easter 1794. 13/ According to Niemetschek's account to be found in a letter of 21 May 1800 to the Breitkopf & Härtel publishing house, when the younger brother, Franz Xaver Wolfgang, came to Prague, he was taken to live at the home of Niemetschek's future wife."

Footnote 13. *Brief Karl Thomas Mozarts an Adolf Popelka vom 4.März 1856*, in: *Briefe vom Bertramhof* (Hrsg. Mozartgemeinde Prag) 1/1944. -- Brief von Franz Xaver Niemetschek an Therese Schnell vom 19.April 1794 (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin-Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Musikabteilung, Mus.ep. F. Niemetschek 6).

III. Encyclopedia: “Alongside Friedrich Schlichtegroll’s *Nekrolog auf das Jahr 1791* (Necrology for the Year 1791), Niemetschek’s *Leben des k. k. Kapellmeister Wolfgang Gottlieb Mozart* (given as *Life of Mozart* in the 1956 translation) is the most important early biographical account of the composer. It was first published anonymously in Prague in 1797, again in 1798 (now attributed to ‘Niemtschek’) and then in an expanded second edition in 1808.”

Brauneis pp.9-10: “Tradition has it that ‘Mozarts Biographie in Musikalischer Hinsicht von N***’ (‘Mozart’s Biography from a Musical Point of View by N***’) was published in 1797 by the Prague bookprinting firm with the name of Kasper Widtmann located in the Brückengasse (Kleinseite I 14, II 46; today Mostecká 18), a few steps away from Niemetschek’s apartment. The 31-year-old Prague school teacher can readily be discerned behind the enciphered name. But interestingly enough, despite all efforts, up to now it has not been possible to verify the existence of a single copy of this issue...”

BCC comment: There is little doubt that, chronologically speaking, the Schlichtegroll obituary and the 1798 Niemetschek account are “early.” Whether, given the quality of biographical fact to be found in both, they qualify as “important” is questionable. Looking back over what we have learned in the last 200 years, they can be dismissed as “primary” sources; they are, at best, secondary sources for the study of the evolution of Mozart biography. (For relevant analysis and discussion concerning Schlichtegroll, see “*The Annotated Schlichtegroll: Mozart’s obituary with critical, historical and explanatory notes,*” to be found under BCC in the website.)

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Walsegg-Stuppach, Franz Count (b. 1763; d. Schloss Stuppach, near Wiener-Neustadt, 11 Nov. 1827). In the spring or summer of 1791, Walsegg-Stuppach, a rich estate-owner, commissioned a requiem mass from Mozart to be performed in memory of his wife, Anna, who died on 14 February of that year. He commissioned the work anonymously, either through his lawyer, Johann Sortschan, or business manager, Franz Anton Leitgeb. After Mozart’s death on 5 December 1791 and FRANZ XAVER SÜSSMAYR’s subsequent completion of the REQUIEM, K626, he finally received the work from CONSTANZE MOZART, conducting a performance on 14 December 1793. According to Anton Herzog in his 1839 essay ‘Wahre und Ausführliche Geschichte des Requiems von W. A. Mozart’ (True and Complete History of Mozart’s Requiem), the concert took place at the parish church at Wiener-Neustadt as ‘it was not possible to find all the necessary performers in the neighbourhood of Stuppach’. Intriguingly the score used at this concert, in the Count’s hand, bears the inscription ‘Requiem composito del Conte Walsegg’; whether he seriously intended to market K626 as his own work, however, is matter of

debate. Herzog claims that this was a 'joke': 'We all knew that the Count wanted to make a mystery out of the Requiem. . . for when he claimed, in our presence, that it was a composition of his own, he always used to smile.' In any case, Walsegg-Stuppach, a passionate music lover, also commissioned quartets from contemporary composers – FRANZ ANTON HOFFMEISTER (1754-1812) prominent among them – for twice-weekly music sessions his home and insisted on 'exclusive ownership' of the works, according to Herzog. He subsequently arranged the Requiem for string quintet, presumably for private performance at one of these gatherings.

E. Deutsch, 'Zur Geschichte von Mozarts Requiem', *Österreichische Musikzeitschrift* 19 (1964), 49-60

COMMENTARY

General

In addition to the single source cited – E. Deutsch, 'Zur Geschichte von Mozarts Requiem', *Österreichische Musikzeitschrift* 19 (1964), 49-60 – other more recent sources would have been of value, such as the *Ausstellungskatalog "Requiem Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart 1791/1991,"* Vienna 1991; Christoph Wolff, "Mozarts Requiem," Kassel 1991; and the article by Walther Brauneis, "'Dies irae, Dies illa – Tag des Zornes, Tag der Klage': Auftrag, Entstehung und Vollendung von Mozarts 'Requiem'" ("Dies irae, dies illa – Day of wrath, day of wailing': Notes on the commissioning, origin, and completion of Mozart's 'Requiem'"), published in the *Jahrbuch des Vereins für Geschichte der Stadt Wien* in 1992 and available in English translation at the library of the Mozarteum and elsewhere since May 1993.

In detail

I. Encyclopedia: **Walsegg-Stuppach, Franz Count** (b. 1763; d. Schloss Stuppach, near Wiener- Neustadt, 11 Nov. 1827). In the spring or summer of 1791, Walsegg-Stuppach, a rich estate-owner, . . .

Brauneis p.1 & fn.1, p.11: "Mozart's Requiem is inseparably connected with the person who commissioned it, Count Franz Wallsegg (1763-1827)1."

"1. As was often the case in the then orthographically unsettled times, the spelling of the family name took different forms, such as Wallsseck, Walsegg or Wallsegg. The form used in this article -- Wallsegg -- was chosen from a personal signature made by the count on 29 September 1819. In any event, the form often found in Mozart literature, "Wal(l)segg-Stuppach", is genealogically false."

II. Encyclopedia: He commissioned the work anonymously,. . .

BCC comment: If the word “anonymously” is meant to convey the thought that Mozart did not know who the Requiem was for, it is clearly a misleading prolongation of Constanze-Rochlitz inspired myth and out of place in a work dedicated to fact.

Mozart was a professional who composed primarily in response to demand. If there had not been a request from Wallsegg for a requiem, Mozart probably would not have written one, at least not at that particular time when he was so fully engaged with other things. Being a professional, there were things he had to know in connection with a proposed work: primarily, the venue of performance and the musical forces available. Not only did Mozart have to know where the requiem mass was to be held but when.

Given the scoring of the work, especially the bassett horns, he must have had a commitment from various players in Vienna; Wallsegg would not have had these forces available in the country (just as Anton Herzog noted in his 1839 essay quoted in the encyclopedia account). And because good players were in demand, they could have agreed to perform the Requiem only if the date and venue of the performance were known. Hence, Mozart must have known for whom the piece was being composed, the church setting, and when the memorial service was to take place.

Add to all that the fact that Mozart’s friend and sometime creditor, Michael Puchberg, lived in Count Wallsegg’s Vienna townhouse and may in fact have been the one to instigate Wallsegg’s turning to Mozart in the first place.

And finally, note that a newspaper article written in Vienna in the days immediately after Mozart’s death and probably published there (although the actual source is unknown) contains information concerning the inception of the Requiem that could have come in the first instance only from Mozart himself. It probably reflects accounts passed on in casual conversation with friends, such as Schikaneder at the Freihaus-Theater (where *Die Zauberflöte* was playing at the time), who ordered the requiem mass for the deceased composer held in St. Michael’s church on 10 December. That Mozart might have mentioned to others that he was working on a requiem is not surprising: the secret lay not in the request, but in the requestor. (See *The (London) Musical Times*, December 1996, pp. 13-17, “From Little Seeds,” by BCC; this is the published version of a paper, “*The Requiem’s Inception: Footnote to a Footnote*,” to be found elsewhere in the website.)

III. **Encyclopedia:** After Mozart's death on 5 December 1791 and FRANZ XAVIER SÜSSMAYR's subsequent completion of the REQUIEM, K626, he finally received the work from CONSTANZE MOZART, conducting a performance on 14 December 1793. According to Anton Herzog in his 1839 essay 'Wahre und Ausführliche Geschichte des Requiems von W. A. Mozart' (True and Complete History of Mozart's Requiem), the concert took place at the parish church at Wiener-Neustadt as 'it was not possible to find all the necessary performers in the neighbourhood of Stuppach'. Intriguingly the score used at this concert, in the Count's hand,. . .

BCC comment: The "performance on 14 December 1793" that took place in the morning at the parish church in Wiener Neustadt was part of a *Gedenkmesse* – that is, a requiem memorial service. In this respect, the Requiem was being used liturgically in the Mass as originally intended by its composer; it was not a "concert" in the contemporary sense, nor was it a concert performance given in a church setting.

IV. **Encyclopedia:** Intriguingly the score used at this concert, in the Count's hand, bears the inscription 'Requiem composto del Conte Walsegg'; whether he seriously intended to market K626 as his own work, however, is matter of debate. . . .

BCC comment: There being no evidence that Wallsegg ever "marketed" any of the compositions that he commissioned on a basis of anonymity, there seems no reason to think that he might have "seriously intended to market K626." A "debate" on this point is unknown to me.

What do we know? We know that Wallsegg was an enthusiastic amateur musician; that he commissioned works which he then performed for his friends, passing them off more or less seriously as his own; that Herzog and other musicians who performed with him were fully aware of this; and that there is no evidence of Artaria, Traeg, Hoffmeister or other Viennese music dealers having published anything in Wallsegg's name that had been composed by another. And as a purely personal speculation, I would guess that the Count's houseguests were by and large not fooled either and, as friends and guests, were ready to indulge him in his little game.

Brauneis, pp2-3: "The young lord of the manor was an amateur musician in the best sense of the term, as we can see from musical specimens from his archives which have been partially preserved in private collections. Among the hand-copied scores we find chamber music arrangements of individual arias from works by Mozart ("Die Entführung aus dem Serail", "Le Nozze di Figaro", "Die Zauberflöte"), Salieri ("La grotta di Trofonio", "Palmira, regina di Persia") and Süßmayr ("Der Retter in Gefahr"), as well as by Martin y Soler ("L'Arbore di Diana"), Cherubini ("Die Gefangene"), Peter Winter ("Das unterbrochene Opferfest") and Joseph Weigl ("L'Amore Marinaro"). . . ."

“Writing about the musical life of the Count and his family at Schloss Stuppach several decades later, Anton Herzog (ca.1771-1850), formerly teacher at the patron school in Klamm, had this to say:

Count Wallsegg "was a passionate lover of music and theater. For this reason, quartets were played every week, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, three full hours each time, and on Sundays, theater pieces were performed in which the Count himself and the Countess and her sister as well took part, and all the clerks and officials and the whole, numerous staff of servants also had to play roles, each according to his abilities. To help with the quartet playing, the Count engaged the services of two outstanding artists, Johann Benard on the violin and Louis Prevost on the cello; in the string quartets, the Count played the violoncello and in flute quartets, the flute, and I usually played second violin or viola."

“At the Count's musical soirees, rather insubstantial compositions of his own would be heard and, in addition, the works of well-known composers which he had obtained to let them appear among his circle of friends as though they were creations of his own hand. In such cases, the fee paid was clearly understood to be hush money which obligated the composer to keep mum as to who had commissioned the work. The relinquishing of all rights of ownership was the Count's basic stipulation in such ‘business’ and was intended to keep the work from being printed with its consequent broad distribution and the name of its actual composer becoming known. ‘Because the Count never liked to play from printed music, however, he would have fair copies made on ten-stave paper, but never with a composer's name attached.’ But in fact, Count Wallsegg did not always go to such lengths to camouflage the actual composer, as shown by two pieces of music in the archives of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna -- the one, six flute quartets of Francois Devienne, the other, a flute concerto by Franz Anton Hoffmeister. In each case, the composer's name at the bottom is only pasted over with a narrow strip of paper on which is written ‘*Fr[ancois] C[omte] de Walsegg.*’ The same handwriting is found in the date ‘22. *Fevrier 800*’ that is found on the score of six string quartets which are privately held. Because this handwriting does not correspond to that of the Count, which is well known from various items out of his archives, and must therefore be attributed to one of his musicians, we may confidently assume that concealed behind the cover-up tactics was more a spirit of fun and games than a frustrated case of compositional ambition.”

Bruce Cooper Clarke
Vienna, 2007