

*A note of introduction: Elsewhere in the website ["Mozart – The conservative Revolutionary"], Volkmar Braunbehrens comments "When we try to visualize Mozart on the podium, I believe it must be as. . .one constantly with an eye to his listeners, taking careful account of whether what he was doing was coming through, in other words, as someone who for this very reason eagerly sought contact with his audience to see if the response was there." In her detailed discussion of the performer Mozart, given below, **Katalin Komlós**, Professor of Music Theory at the Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest, illuminates and amplifies the point, drawing on her extensive knowledge and experience as a musicologist and fortepiano recitalist.*

Katalin Komlós

Mozart the performer

WHEN TRYING TO RECREATE an image of Mozart as a performer, we must remember that the word 'performer' conveys a quite different meaning today from what it would have conveyed in the eighteenth century. A knowledge of the craft of music and outstanding musical abilities made a performer exceptional at that time, rather than an ability to play the most technically complex pieces in the fastest possible tempo, after enormous amounts of practice on an instrument. Like so many other modern thoughts about the art of music, the later conception of the 'performer' originated in the first third of the nineteenth century. The Czerny-type of drill and relentless daily practice have brought about a fundamental change in music making.

This is not to say, of course, that Mozart was not a virtuoso performer of the first order. Especially in his last decade, he became the celebrated star of Viennese concert life. He had found the ideal medium for his artistry in the eighteenth-century fortepiano and was, in fact, the first great exponent of that instrument.

Childhood and youth

THE VERSATILITY OF MOZART the *Wunderkind* was so disconcerting that it would have been impossible during his early years as a performer to predict how his future career would develop. Besides composing, he played not only the harpsichord and the clavichord, but also the organ and the violin; he also sang in public. Although the well-known stories connected with the early travels of the Mozart family often remind us of the productions of entertaining troupes, the unique gifts of Wolfgang shine through right from the outset.

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Wolfgang's unique gift was an all-round musicianship of the highest level, manifest in every kind of performance. From age six onwards, all of his appearances consisted of sight-reading, improvisation, transposition and so on. He possessed phenomenal aural skills and musical memory. To the credit of contemporary Europe, the unprecedented fame of the young Mozart was due more to his fabulous musicianship than to his dexterous clavier or violin playing. From Paris to London, from Vienna to Italy, he played all types of music at sight (*prima vista*), improvised melody to a given bass, improvised accompaniment to a given melody and extemporized in contrapuntal manner.

What types of music were put in front of Wolfgang in the various centres of Europe during his travels in the 1760s? Unfortunately, Leopold's eloquent reports seem to be more concerned with the income generated than with the programme of these events. Only occasionally do we learn important historical details. We know, for instance, that in October 1762 Wolfgang played music by Wagenseil to the Empress Maria Theresia in Schönbrunn, in the presence of the composer. The name of the revered Hofklaviermeister turns up again in another royal encounter, on this occasion in London in 1764. Leopold describes this encounter in a letter of 28 May 1764:

The King placed before him not only works by Wagenseil, but those of [Johann Christian] Bach, Abel and Handel, and he played off everything *prima vista*. He played so splendidly on the King's organ that they all value his organ-playing more highly than his clavier-playing. Then he accompanied the Queen in an aria which she sang, and also a flautist who played a solo. Finally he took the bass part of some airs of Handel (which happened to be lying there) and played the most beautiful melody on it and in such a manner that everyone was amazed.¹

No less remarkable was the musical taste and sensitivity of the seven-year-old Mozart towards the performance of others: he criticized the violin playing of Karl Michael Esser, for example, because he considered it overembellished.²

The organ held a special attraction for Wolfgang, an attraction that remained with him for life. (He professed the organ to be his favourite instrument to the *Orgelmacher* Johann Andreas Stein in Augsburg, in October 1777.) His first recorded playing on the instrument took place in the church of Ybbs in 1762; the following year, on his travels again, he learnt to play the pedal in Wasserburg. According to Leopold, he did this standing on the pedal board, for his legs could not reach down from the bench.³ In subsequent

1. *LMF* (Emily Anderson, ed. and trans., *The Letters of Mozart and His Family* (3rd edn, London, 1985)), p.47.

2. Remembered by Leopold Mozart in a letter of 7 December 1780; *ibid.*, p.683.

3. Letter of 11 June 1763; *ibid.*, p.20.

years Mozart acquired a wide knowledge of the various organs in Europe. He played in the Royal Chapel in Versailles and on the King's organ in London, in the cathedral of Antwerp and on the great organ in the church of St Bavo in Haarlem. Much later, in 1778, he played on two different Silbermann organs in Strasbourg; and later still, in 1789, on J. S. Bach's organ in the Thomaskirche in Leipzig. From 1779 to 1781 he held the position of Hoforganist in Salzburg.

Early acquaintance with the organ made Mozart familiar with the particular keyboard action of the instrument on the one hand, and provided practical experience in strict contrapuntal style on the other. (In later years, when Mozart improvised in a fugal manner, he always referred to it as 'orglmässig', or 'im Kirchenstyl'.) His strong inclination towards organ-like thinking led him to have a pedal board attached to his fortepiano in the 1780s.

As the son of one of the leading contemporary authorities on violin playing, it is hardly surprising that Wolfgang was also proficient on the violin from an early age. The first charming story concerns the six-year-old child: Leopold reports in a letter that Wolfgang, in the course of their travels, 'played the customs officer a minuet on his little fiddle'.⁴ The following year he performed on both the keyboard and the violin in Nymphenburg and Frankfurt, just as he did elsewhere in his teenage years. Although the keyboard eventually became Mozart's primary artistic medium, he never stopped playing the violin and the viola, the latter being a special favourite.

'You yourself do not know how well you play the violin', wrote Leopold to his son in 1777,⁵ in response to Wolfgang's account of an *ad hoc* concert at the Schwarzer Adler inn in Munich, where he played the violin in two string quintets of Michael Haydn as well as in his own keyboard trio K. 254 and Divertimento in B flat major, K. 287. 'I played as though I were the finest fiddler in all Europe', he boasted with his usual sprightliness.⁶ One month later he played Vanhal's B flat major Violin Concerto and his own 'Strassburg concerto', K. 216, at the Holy Cross Monastery in Augsburg. 'Everyone praised my beautiful, pure tone', he wrote proudly to his father.⁷

4. Letter of 16 October 1762; *LMF*, p.5.

5. Letter of 18 October 1777; *ibid.*, p.331.

6. Letter of 6 October 1777; *ibid.*, p.300.

7. Letter of 23 October 1777; *ibid.*, p.338.

The two great composers Haydn and Mozart often met in Vienna during the 1780s and occasionally played together in string quartets. Michael Kelly remembers that the English composer Stephen Storace gave a quartet party in the summer of 1784, where the participants were Haydn, Dittersdorf, Mozart and Vanhal.⁸ Mozart played the viola part, as he usually did in his mature years. In his last known performance of instrumental music, at a private concert in Vienna in April 1791, he played viola in two of his masterworks – the E flat major Trio, K. 563, and the Clarinet Quintet, K.581.

To return to Mozart the *Wunderkind*, the portrait would not be complete without references to his vocal performances. A natural inclination towards cantabile style and the gift of writing for the human voice were surely in his genes; this was reinforced by the strong musical influences of his Italian travels. It was almost inevitable that Mozart the child would express his musicianship in the most direct manner: through singing. He had the good fortune of receiving singing lessons from the celebrated castrato Giovanni Manzuoli in London. Manzuoli's contract for the 1764-5 opera season coincided with the London sojourn of the Mozart family: he and Wolfgang subsequently became good friends.⁹ The philosopher Daines Barrington, who wrote a detailed report on Mozart's extraordinary abilities for the Royal Society in 1765, commented on the boy's singing: 'His voice in the tone of it was thin and infantine, but nothing could exceed the masterly manner in which he sung.'¹⁰

As far as public appearances are concerned, we know that in July 1766 Wolfgang and Nannerl Mozart gave a concert for two harpsichords in Dijon; in the same programme, Wolfgang sang 'an air of his own composition.'¹¹ Another family concert with vocal performance took place in the Stift Nonnberg, on a special occasion in 1769. Following a High Mass and a festive dinner, Leopold Mozart and his children crowned the day with music, in the presence of a large clerical assembly. Cajetan Hagenauer (Pater Dominikus) wrote in his diary on 16 October 1769: 'Filius Wolfgangus... sang, and played the violin and the clavier to general amazement.'¹²

8. *MDL* (Otto Erich Deutsch, *Mozart: Die Dokumente seines Lebens* (Kassel, 1961)), p.456; *MDB* (Otto Erich Deutsch, *Mozart: A Documentary Biography*, trans. Eric Blom, Peter Branscombe and Jeremy Noble (Stanford and London, 1965)), pp.531-2.

9. For details, see Ian Woodfield, 'New Light on the Mozarts' London Visit: A Private Concert with Manzuoli', *ML*, 76 (1995), pp.187-207.

10. *MDL*, p.88; *MDB*, p.96.

11. *MDL*, p.56; *MDB*, p.57.

12. *MDL*, p.86; *MDB*, p.94 (translation slightly adapted). See also Christoph-Hellmut Mahling, "'...new and altogether special and astonishingly difficult": Some Comments on Junia's Aria in *Lucio Silla*', in Stanley Sadie (ed.), *Wolfgang Amadè Mozart: Essays on His Life and His Music* (Oxford, 1996), pp.377-9.

Mozart's singing career was confined to his preadolescent years. The last recorded public performances were parts of the prodigious concerts of January 1770 in Verona and Mantua. The long and extraordinarily varied programme of the concert at the Accademia Filarmonica in Mantua has fortunately survived and has often been reproduced in the Mozart literature. Among the surviving items we find the following description: 'Aria composed and sung at the same time by Sig. Amadeo extempore, with the proper Accompaniments performed on the Harpsichord, to words made for the purpose, but not previously seen by him.'¹³

The 19 January 1770 issue of the *Gazzetta di Mantova* described the extraordinary event in glowing terms:

The incomparable boy Sig. Wolfgango Amadeo Mozart. . . performed. . . concertos and sonatas for harpsichord, extemporized, with most judicious variations, and with the repetition of a sonata in another key. He sang a whole aria extempore, on new words never before seen by him, adding the proper accompaniments. He improvised two sonatas on two themes successively given him on the violin by the leader of the orchestra, elegantly linking them both together the second time. He accompanied a whole symphony with all the parts from a single violin part submitted to him on the spot. And what is most to be esteemed, he composed and at the same time extemporaneously performed a fugue on a simple theme given him, which he brought to such a masterly harmonic interweaving of all the parts and so bold a resolution as to leave the hearers astounded; and all these performances were on the harpsichord. Finally he also played marvellously well the violin part in a Trio by a famous composer.¹⁴

The Mantua concert might be considered a summary of the musical potential and artistic achievements of the fourteen-year-old Mozart. After a long period of learning, travelling and performing, he demonstrated not only his prodigious gift, but also the first-class musical education he had received from his father, and – directly or indirectly – from dozens of eminent musicians across Europe. On the threshold of adulthood, a glorious career lay before him.

Mozart at the keyboard

AS IT HAPPENED, THE KEYBOARD – with its polyphonic resources, its suitability for improvisation and its versatility as a solo or an ensemble instrument – was to be the primary medium for Mozart as a performing artist. 'Clavier', a generic term in German-speaking lands, referred to various types of keyboard instruments in the second half of the eighteenth century. The harpsichord, the clavichord and the fortepiano (*Hammerklavier*) were used in varying geographical locations, and for different purposes. The gradual shift from harpsichord to fortepiano as a major solo instrument took place during Mozart's lifetime; the clavichord remained in use as a domestic instrument throughout the century.

¹³. *MDL*, p.96; *MDB*, p.106. ¹⁴. *MDB*, p.107.

Mozart was familiar with all types of keyboard instrument. In the first half of his life he played the harpsichord most of all, in Salzburg and elsewhere. Later in the 1770s, in the course of his travels outside conservative Salzburg, he became acquainted with the new fortepiano. The effect was immediate and profound for his subsequent composition and performance alike. 'Everyone thinks the world of Wolfgang, but indeed he plays quite differently from what he used to in Salzburg – for there are pianofortes here, on which he plays so extraordinarily well that people say they have never heard the like', his mother wrote in December 1777 from Mannheim.¹⁵

Our first vivid picture of Mozart the fortepianist dates from 1777-8, from the time of the long journey he took with his mother. The two weeks in Augsburg and the months spent in Mannheim were especially rich in brilliant performances, for the inspiring encounter with the excellent fortepianos of Johann Andreas Stein in Augsburg and the high-level musical milieu in Mannheim gave tremendous impetus to Mozart's artistry. His long letters to his father in Salzburg give detailed descriptions of his successes and experiences.

Mozart performed on numerous occasions in Munich, Augsburg and Mannheim – in private circles, in the houses of eminent musicians, at *ad hoc* visits and in public concerts. He played his first six sonatas, K. 279-84, repeatedly, presented his concertos K. 175, 238, 246 and 271, read everything they put before him, *prima vista*, and extemporized everywhere, to the great astonishment of his audiences. The programme of his famous concert in the Augsburg Fugger Hall (22 October 1777) included the Concerto for Three Pianos, K. 242, on three new Stein fortepianos (with the participation of Stein himself and the organist J. M. Demmler as well as Mozart), the Piano Sonata in D major, K. 284, the Piano Concerto in B flat major, K. 238, and 'another solo, quite in the style of the organ, a fugue in C minor and then all of a sudden a magnificent sonata in C major, out of my head, and a Rondo to finish up with', as Wolfgang wrote to his father.¹⁶

On private occasions Mozart often played the clavichord. Stein's instruments must have been very common in Augsburg, for Mozart mentions 'a good clavichord by Stein' at various locations in the city. It seems that the small instrument inspired improvisation, mainly in the strict style ('orglmässig' or 'fugirte' playing, in Mozart's words). Wolfgang's account of a long musical evening at the Holy Cross Monastery in Augsburg includes a minutely detailed description of his clavichord improvisation on a given theme: the process, complete with thematic inversions and a closing fugue, might be considered a model of Mozart's 'old-style' extemporizations.¹⁷

15. Letter of 28 December 1777; *LMF*, p.436.

16. Letter of 23 October 1777; *ibid.*, p.340.

17. Letter of 23 October 1777; *ibid.*, p.339.

Beyond the information regarding instruments, programmes and venues, the portrait of the young artist comes to life in a number of documents. The twenty-one-year-old Mozart emerges as a born performer, with all the characteristics and attributes of the performer's personality. On the one hand, this implies an urgent eagerness to show off, to prove himself and even to dazzle his audience. On the other hand, the exuberance is complemented, in the highest moments of inspiration, with the feeling of transportation. 'Words fail me to describe my feelings', he confessed about an apparently exceptional performance in the house of the flute player Johann Baptist Wendling in Mannheim.¹⁸

It was not only for solo performances, however, that Mozart sat down at the keyboard. As an accompanist and continuo player he directed smaller and larger ensembles, according to the custom of the time. By the age of fourteen, he had already directed the premiere of his opera seria *Mitridate, rè di Ponto* at the Ducal Theatre in Milan, 'seated at the clavier in the orchestra'. He followed this practice in his mature years in opera productions as well as in oratorio performances, as explained below.

In the early 1780s, Mozart's phenomenal sight-reading and score-reading abilities played a crucial part in the historically important musical gatherings organized by Baron van Swieten in Vienna. An ardent admirer of 'early music', van Swieten produced the works of J. S. Bach, Handel, Graun, C. P. E. Bach and others in his house, every Sunday at twelve noon. The select company went through an enormous repertory, including large-scale compositions. Seated at the fortepiano, Mozart often provided the entire instrumental/orchestral material by himself, while fellow musicians (Salieri, Starzer, Teiber and van Swieten, for example) sang the appropriate vocal parts. Joseph Weigl, a regular attender at these matinees, later wrote in his autobiography:

No one can imagine this pleasure. To hear Mozart play the most difficult scores with his own inimitable skill, and sing the while, and correct the mistakes of the others, could not but excite the greatest admiration.¹⁹

For years, Mozart never missed these Sunday concerts. The first-hand acquaintance with the masterworks of his predecessors widened his musical horizons, while the encounter with J. S. Bach's music transformed his compositional awareness at a deeper level.

18. Letter of 8 November 1777; *LMF*, p.363.

19. *MDB*, p.519.

Concert career in Vienna

'VIENNA IS CERTAINLY THE LAND OF THE CLAVIER!' wrote Mozart enthusiastically to his father from the Imperial city in June 1781.²⁰ His reputation as an esteemed performer spread quickly: barely half a year after taking up residence in Vienna he was asked by the Emperor Joseph II to compete with the celebrated Muzio Clementi on the fortepiano. The special event took place on Christmas Eve 1781 in the presence of the Emperor and his aristocratic guests, the Grand Duke and Duchess of Russia.

The bold decision of the twenty-five-year-old Mozart to start a freelance career in Vienna was promptly marked with great success. Within two years he had become a sensation as a concert performer, as well as a much sought-after piano teacher. After the first appearances in private *soirées*, he gave an *Akademie* (concert) in the Burgtheater in March 1782, and Prince Galitzin engaged him for a series of concerts in his palace for the winter of 1782-3.

Before going into the details of Mozart's Viennese concert career, we must identify the types of concert in which he performed and the venues in which these concerts took place. In the Vienna of the 1780s, the structure of concert life was still quite backward by comparison with big cosmopolitan centres such as London or Paris. As far as public concerts are concerned, the most prestigious venues were the court theatres; such events were restricted to Lent, however, when performances of plays and operas were suspended. For a series given by a single artist (so-called subscription concerts) one could rent a hall, or a building, or some other similar locality in the city.

The commonest type of Viennese concert was still the private one, taking place in the residences of the higher and lower nobility and the houses of the wealthy middle class. Many aristocratic patrons maintained an orchestra and offered regular concerts. Mozart soon became a favourite in the musical salons of Prince Galitzin, Count Esterházy, Count Zichy, Count Palffy, Prince Kaunitz, Gottfried von Ployer and others.

Mozart's Viennese career – which depended on teaching and concertizing as major sources of income – developed rapidly in the early 1780s. Between 1783 and 1785 he gave approximately three to five *Akademien* per year at the Burgtheater, and several series of subscription concerts at the Trattnerhof and the Mehlgrube. The number of his subscribers for the Trattnerhof series in Lent 1784 was 174, half of them from the nobility; the Mehlgrube series in 1785 attracted over 150 subscribers. Two further series were offered at Advent 1785 and Advent 1786.

20. Letter of 2 June 1781; *LMF*, p.739.

*Mozart's Viennese concerts during Lent 1784*²¹

Public concerts			
Date	Mozart's own concerts	His participation in other concerts	Private concerts
4 March			Prince Galitzin
5 March			Count Esterházy
8 March			Count Esterházy
11 March			Prince Galitzin
12 March			Count Esterházy
15 March			Count Esterházy
17 March	Trattnerhof		
18 March			Prince Galitzin
19 March			Count Esterházy
20 March		Trattnerhof	Count Zichy
22 March			Count Esterházy
24 March	Trattnerhof		
25 March			Prince Galitzin
26 March			Count Esterházy
27 March		Trattnerhof	
29 March			Count Esterházy
31 March	Trattnerhof		
1 April	Burgtheater		
3 April		Trattnerhof	
9 April			Count Palffy
10 April			Prince Kaunitz
11 April		Burgtheater	

21. All data in this table is taken from Mary Sue Morrow, *Concert Life in Haydn's Vienna: Aspects of a Developing Musical and Social Institution* (Stuyvesant, NY, 1988), pp.237-384.

The culmination of Mozart's concert activity came in 1784 and 1785. The public concerts outnumbered the private ones in 1785, while the salon appearances were strikingly more frequent in 1784 than in any other year. Within forty days in Lent 1784 Mozart gave a grand total of twenty-three concerts in Vienna: this would be a record for any star performer of today (see table).

The substantial series of fortepiano concertos Mozart composed for his Viennese concerts begins with K. 414 in A (1782). It is hard to imagine the excitement of those occasions when he premiered these concerto masterpieces from the freshly finished – and at times not even completely finished – manuscript scores. In fact, Mozart often added the final touches to his concertos in his performances of them. In any case, the well-documented success of these concerts was tremendous – in both financial and artistic terms.

It is gratifying to think that Leopold was able to witness Mozart's glorious success in Vienna first-hand, when he was a guest of his son and family in the first half of 1785. 'The concert was magnificent and the orchestra played splendidly', he wrote to his daughter about the first subscription concert at the Mehlgrube, which included the first performance of the Piano Concerto in D minor, K. 466.²² The presentation of the Piano Concerto in B flat major, K. 456, made an even more profound impression on the usually reserved Leopold, as another excerpt from his letters certainly illustrates: 'I had the great pleasure of hearing so clearly all the interplay of the instruments that for sheer delight tears came into my eyes. When your brother left the platform the Emperor waved his hat and called out "Bravo, Mozart!"'²³ Leopold's ten-week visit must have been a rich reward for fatherly efforts and anxieties stretching back over many years.

In addition to the piano concertos, the eagerly awaited attractions of Mozart's *Akademien* were his improvisations. These always featured in his concerts. For Mozart, extemporization on the fortepiano meant playing variations on well-known tunes of the day. In fact, some of his major variation sets (the two Parisian compositions, K. 264 and 354, and K. 398, 455 and 613 written in Vienna) might be the notated versions of such improvisatory performances. They have a fantasia-like quality, with long cadenzas and other free passages, and their level of virtuosity is very high indeed. These sets and the most technically demanding concertos (probably K. 450 and 451) reflect Mozart's brilliant instrumental mastery.²⁴

As well as performing solo, Mozart appeared in concert with other musicians. He played the Concerto for Two Pianos, K. 365, and the Sonata for Two Keyboards, K. 448, with his pupil, Josepha von Auernhammer, at a house concert in November 1781: the latter was composed specifically for this occasion. Mozart and Auernhammer performed K. 365 again the following year at an Augarten concert. Another pupil, Barbara von Ployer, the dedicatee of the concertos K. 453 and 456, was Mozart's partner in a Döbling concert in June 1784 (K. 448). The famous Italian violinist Regina Strinasacchi inspired the Violin Sonata in B flat major, K. 454: she played the sonata with Mozart at her *Akademie* in the Burgtheater in April 1784. In fact, K. 454 and the Quintet for Piano and Winds, K. 452, presented at Mozart's Burgtheater concert in the same month, were the only keyboard chamber works by Mozart to be heard in a public concert.

22. Letter of 16 February 1785; *LMF*, p.886.

23. *Ibid.*

24. See details in Katalin Komlós, "Ich praeludirte und spielte Variationen": Mozart the Fortepianist', in R. Larry Todd and Peter Williams (eds.), *Perspectives on Mozart Performance* (Cambridge, 1991), pp.31-42.

Mozart's concert activity seems to have declined gradually after 1786. Several explanations have recently been offered for this apparent decline: the general deterioration of Viennese concert life, due to political developments; the decrease in Lent-time concert opportunities in the theatres after the embargo on the performance of plays was lifted; and the lack of documentary evidence detailing Mozart's concerts.²⁵ While these explanations are correct, the main reason might lie elsewhere. After several years of intense concertizing, composing and teaching, Mozart's energies must have been seriously depleted. Organizing one's own concerts in the late eighteenth century, before managers and agents were on the scene, took enormous effort. The artist had to do everything himself – from the renting of suitable locations and the hiring of orchestral musicians to the publicity and the distribution of tickets. In Mozart's case, this was further complicated by the fact that he had to transport his fortepiano, complete with a heavy fortepiano pedal, to and from every concert venue.

As mentioned above, the considerable income from the Viennese concerts in 1782-6 secured a comfortable living for Mozart and his family. In later years, the lack of this income resulted in severe financial difficulties. (Robbins Landon believes that yet another subscription series was given in 1788, although this cannot be proved.)²⁶ Travel, illnesses and the immeasurable demands of composition took Mozart in other directions, and when he tried to organize subscription concerts in his own home in 1789 and 1790 – in order to improve his financial situation – it met with little response from the musical public. Outside Vienna he gave isolated, highly successful concerts in Prague (January 1787), Leipzig (May 1789) and Frankfurt (October 1790). Regarding the Frankfurt concert, he wrote wistfully to his wife on 15 October: 'It was a splendid success from the point of view of honour and glory, but a failure as far as money was concerned.'²⁷

Another important field of concert activity for Mozart was the performance of oratorios. Supported by a society of noblemen in the late 1780s, Baron van Swieten organized the performance of large-scale works by Handel and other masters, with Mozart playing a key role in the productions. He directed two performances of C. P. E. Bach's oratorio *Die Auferstehung und Himmelfahrt Jesu* in February and March of 1788 at the Esterházy palace; the

25. Mary Sue Morrow, 'Mozart and Viennese Concert Life', *MT (The Musical Times)*, 126 (1985), pp.453-4; Morrow, *Concert Life in Haydn's Vienna*, pp.234-5; Dexter Edge, 'Mozart's Reception in Vienna, 1787-1791', in Sadie (ed.), *Wolfgang Amadè Mozart*, pp.66-117.

26. H.C. Robbins Landon, *1791: Mozart's Last Year* (London, 1988), pp.31-3.

27. *LMF*, p.946.

concert was given for a third time shortly afterwards at the Burgtheater in Vienna. According to Johann Nikolaus Forkel's contemporary review, 'Mozart directed and had the score [*taktirte und hatte die Partitur*], and Umlauf played the harpsichord.'²⁸ Mozart also directed Handel's *Acis and Galatea* in 1788 and the *Messiah* in March 1789, the latter in Mozart's own orchestration.

According to eighteenth-century practice, Mozart directed the first performances of his operas from the keyboard, which was situated in the orchestra. As Joseph Weigl testifies in his autobiography, Mozart conducted the first three performances of *Figaro* at the Burgtheater, with Weigl taking over for subsequent performances.²⁹ The same applies to the Viennese premiere of *Don Giovanni*, and perhaps even to *Così fan tutte* as well (although there is no documentary evidence for this). On 30 September 1791, at the Theater auf der Wieden, Mozart directed the last operatic premiere of his life – that of *Die Zauberflöte*.

Artistic personality

IT WOULD APPEAR THAT Mozart's artistic disposition was characterized by an ideal balance of spontaneity and discipline. He had definite views on the proper way to perform, and was highly critical of the playing of others. Thanks to an abundance of long letters, we know a great deal about Mozart's principles and priorities where performance is concerned. As Siegbert Rampe points out, Mozart has more to say about performance than other eighteenth-century musicians, with the exception of C. P. E. Bach.³⁰

The irresistible urge to perform prompted Mozart to take to the organ during Mass on more than one occasion. He relates the unusual course of a Sunday service in the Mannheim court chapel in November 1777 as follows:

I came in during the Kyrie and played the end of it, and, when the priest had finished intoning the Gloria, I played a cadenza. As my performance was so different from what they are accustomed to here, they all looked round, especially [*Kapellmeister*] Holzbauer ... Instead of a Benedictus the organist has to play here the whole time. So I took the theme of the Sanctus and developed it as a fugue. Whereupon they all stood gaping. Finally, after the *Ite missa est*, I played a fugue.³¹

28. Quoted in Morrow, *Concert Life in Haydn's Vienna*, p.11.

29. *MDB*, p.519.

30. Siegbert Rampe, *Mozarts Claviermusik: Klangwelt und Aufführungspraxis* (Kassel, 1995), p.88.

31. Letter of 13 November 1777; *LMF*, p.370.

A similar event occurred six years later in the Lambach monastery, en route from Salzburg to Linz, where Mozart 'arrived just in time to accompany the Agnus Dei on the organ'.³²

Highly sensitive (*empfindsamer*) playing, practised primarily by German musicians of the time, allowed – even required – appropriate comportment. Mozart refrained from external habits, whether facial expressions or the swaying of the body. 'I do not make grimaces, and yet play with such expression', he explained to Leopold, reporting the opinion of his admirer J. A. Stein.³³ He ridiculed the 'flopping about' of the young Nannette Stein at the clavier, and found the playing of a certain Miss Hamm 'curiously affected'.³⁴

Concerning the essential elements of performance, Mozart considered keeping strict time and playing in moderate tempi indispensable for an intelligible and clear performance. A quiet hand and precision in musical and technical domains were further aspects of performance that he admired.³⁵

Mozart upheld the high standards and self-respect of the musical professional to a remarkable degree. 'Give me the best clavier in Europe with an audience who understands nothing, or don't want to understand and who do not feel with me in what I am playing, and I shall cease to feel any pleasure', he wrote in a disillusioned moment in Paris.³⁶ Fortunately, in the later years of his great success as a performer he experienced the spiritual interchange that can occur between a charismatic performer and a perceptive audience: 'I told you about the applause in the theatre, but I must add that what delighted and surprised me most of all was the amazing silence', he informed Leopold in April 1781.³⁷

Two important concepts appear time and again in Mozart's communications about performance: taste and feeling (*Geschmack und Empfindung*). These are the qualities he privileged above all and sought constantly in the performances of others. In his judgement, no kind of technical bravura could compensate for a lack of taste and feeling. As Mozart remarked severely about the famous virtuoso Muzio Clementi: 'He has not a kreuzer's worth of taste or feeling – in short he is simply a *mechanicus*.'³⁸

32. Letter of 31 October 1783; *LMF*, p.859.

33. Letter of 23 October 1777; *ibid.*, p.340.

34. Letters of 23 October and 16 October 1777; *ibid.*, pp.339 and 322.

35. See further in Komlós, 'Mozart the Fortepianist', pp.52-3.

36. Letter of 1 May 1778; *LMF*, p.532.

37. Letter of 8 April 1781; *ibid.*, p.722.

38. Letter of 16 January 1782; *ibid.*, p.793.

Such condemnations – sometimes made humorously, sometimes sharply – did not apply only to keyboard players. Mozart's harsh criticism of a concert given by the flautist Johann Philipp Freyhold in 1784 illustrates this point: 'I found very little to admire in his performance and missed a great deal. His whole tour de force consists in double-tonguing. Otherwise there is nothing whatever to listen to.'³⁹

Performers of Mozart's music today should not forget the composer's artistic creed. They should remember the infinite care with which Mozart tried to teach the nuances of an Andante (K. 309) to his pupil Rosa Cannabich, and the 'indescribable pleasure' he felt when she played it 'with the utmost expression'.⁴⁰ Performing instructions are marked carefully in Mozart's notation, and a wealth of ideas on music and musical performance survives in his voluminous correspondence. All is available: we can be true Mozart pupils today.

Katalin Komlós

39. Letter of 20 February 1784; *LMF*, p.867

40. Letter of 6 December 1777; *ibid.*, p.408.

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