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„Fatherly Friend,“ „Most obedient Son“:  
Leopold and Wolfgang Mozart

Mozart biography is replete with perennial and seemingly indestructible themes that appear and reappear in various formulations, sometimes baldly stated, other times merely hinted at, whose plausibility has hardly been subject to question. They have become the stuff of common knowledge: fond notions meant to endow this man of unfathomable musical genius with a tragic, human side, without which, it seems we are incapable of conceiving artistic creativity. But more than that, they enable us to heap blame on Mozart's contemporaries while, at the same time, reinforcing our own conviction that we, we enlightened people of today, whose love for him and his music knows no bounds, **we** assuredly would not have failed him. One of the themes is this: that in those last Vienna years, Mozart was hardly ever performed anymore, was forgotten, ultimately, and buried in a potter's field. Not a word of it is true, of course, and yet this general perception of Mozart's supposed fall from society's grace at his life's end in Vienna, this perception persists.

Yet another recurrent theme is the adverse judgment rendered on Constanze Mozart. In his 1913 biography of Mozart, Arthur Schurig characterized her in acid terms: "She was not an agreeable or pleasant person at all, but rather a demanding, emotional, grumpy, sensual woman." Schurig spoke of her "nasty, mean, ugly, mediocre attributes." She "had no real respect for the silly fool, as he (Mozart) always struck her" and it was "impossible" that she could ever "have loved" him. The heart of the matter, said Schurig, is that "at no time in her life did Constanze. . . have the faintest idea of the depths of Mozart's innermost loneliness." Taking Schurig's idea to its logical conclusion led to the thesis of Mozart, the Man of Great Loneliness. This, in turn, became the leitmotiv of Wolfgang Hildesheimer's 1977 Mozart biography. In Hildesheimer's case, of course, the vocabulary is more modern, psychoanalytical overtones can be heard, and the reader is offered a more balanced and thoughtful literary style.

Even that Grand Old Man of Sociology, Norbert Elias, chose to link himself with this chain of argument (admittedly, his text was edited posthumously):

"Obviously, he died feeling he had failed in his social existence, or to put it another way, he died, metaphorically speaking, from the meaninglessness of his life, from a total loss of belief in the possibility of finding fulfilment for what his heart craved most. Two sources of his will to carry on, sources vital to his individual sense of worth and well-being, were running dry: the love of a woman whom he could trust completely and the love of Viennese audiences for his music. For a time he had enjoyed both; both had stood at the peak in the hierarchy of his desires. There is much to suggest that, in the last years of his life, he felt more and more that both had been lost to him. That is his tragedy -- and ours, mankind's, as well."

But: from all the sources and documentation on Mozart that have come down to us, that is not the least bit "obvious."

Even lines of inquiry, such as Mozart's relationship to his father, who was the only teacher he ever had and a highly regarded musician besides, remain little touched, so much so that a certain anxiety when confronted with the subject of Leopold Mozart must be presumed. Thus, there remains great latitude for psychological interpretations, ones inevitably having the basic fault that they are grounded more in a biographer's "empathetic reading" of the Mozart family letters rather than in a deep understanding of their surrounding historical circumstance. Especially when it is a matter of family relationships, of father-son conflicts, where each biographer tends to believe he can speak out of the background of his own experiences and observations, then the danger of pop-psychology is great indeed and uttermost detachment is in order. Instead of giving precipitate interpretations, it is often better simply to settle for raising questions, even when they cannot yet be answered.

". . .no one who could advise me. . ."

Leopold Mozart (1719-1787) died only four and a half years before his son (1756-1791) died. Except for the year of the tragic trip to Paris (1778) and the Vienna years (after 1781), Leopold lived constantly at his son's side. Our knowledge of this father is based on the letters the Mozart family wrote to one another with a frequency and a passion for detail seldom seen in the 18th century (keep in mind that postage in those days was very expensive -- but for this family, it was worth it). The letter-writing occurred, of course, only when one part of the family was off travelling or when the "children" were no longer living in Salzburg. Periods of extremely frequent correspondence, usually once a week at least and with a wealth of intimate details as well as gossip of all kinds in abundance, alternate with extended intervals of total silence, for the simple fact that the family was together at home. Leopold Mozart's letters to his Salzburg landlord, friend, and sometime creditor, Lorenz Hagenauer, written during the trips of the entire family to Vienna and later throughout Europe, constitute the only exception. All this, then, enables us to gain a close-up view of the Mozart family such as we hardly find elsewhere.

And yet these are but chance glimpses and we must be clear as to just how fragmentary and incomplete they are. For so far as Leopold Mozart is concerned, what we know of his years before his son was born, of his origins and his activities as a composer, as a musician, as a teacher, is really very little indeed. At least a third of his compositions has been lost and cataloguing of his extant works has only begun. We should not be surprised, then, that up to now there has been no really adequate biography of this important man, one grossly neglected by Mozart research. For he was more than the father of a gifted son. And what he was to his son, he could be only because he was more than just his father.

If we limit our interest in Leopold Mozart simply to his role as father, if out of the on-going internal family dialogue we seek merely to identify some solitary traits, then our perspective must inevitably remain distorted, disfigured beyond all recognition. A perfect example of this is to be found in the characterization that Arthur Schurig puts forth, thereby sketching out, with lasting impact, the picture of A Dreadful Father:

"He was not a complicated man at all. His love of order to the last petty detail, his fussy meticulousness, his stubbornness, his easily wounded vanity -- all are manifest. Looked at as a whole, he materializes before us as the typical example of a smug, self-satisfied, reputable member of the lower middle class. The proper organization of things for his own convenience is his guiding principle. His estimation of others is never unprejudiced. He is just as pleased to ignore the merits

of others as he is to overrate himself. Two things he has in full measure: a sense of family, and his preoccupation with the little things that make up daily life. Out of all these attributes comes a strict and idiosyncratic sense of duty, directed at himself as well as at his family, one that constitutes the leitmotiv of the gloomy and (all things considered) narrow outlook of this hypochondriac. Joie de vivre, a casual, easy-going touch, a sunny disposition -- these he lacked totally. Towards his subordinates, overbearing, with his own class, frequently blunt, but when the shoe was on the other foot and highborn personages were gracious and condescending to him, it was his greatest delight. As soon as he sensed failure, he saw himself surrounded by adversaries and antagonists, even in those cases when he should more properly have placed the blame on himself. Despite all the care and solicitude he showed for the members of his family, he was often carping and critical, inconsiderate and unjust, even with them. The sons who are capable of loving such a father with all their heart will be few indeed."

Other biographers (in particular, Erich Valentin) have chosen milder terms to express their view of Leopold, but the construct of "the deadful father" is to be found gleaming through wherever you look, although, to be sure, the son's affection for him also constantly rates mention (even by Schurig).

The career of Leopold Mozart, who was born the son of a bookbinder in Augsburg, is certainly unusual in every respect. The fact that he was able to attend the Jesuit gymnasium of St. Salvator in Augsburg and then, later, the St. Salvator lyceum attests to the secure circumstances of the Mozart family -- or was it that he was meant to become a priest? As a choirboy in the monasteries of the Benedictines and the Augustinian Canons, he was given solo parts to sing, and early on he undertook leading roles in the celebratory dramas at the Jesuit schools. In addition to a basic education in the humanities given by well-regarded teachers, he also learned to play the organ in a "quite unparalleled" way. When his father died suddenly in 1736, however, the seventeen-year-old Leopold was obliged to end his studies prematurely, perhaps in order to work in his father's workshop now being run by his mother. The skills in arts and crafts he later displayed probably derive from this time. A year later, however, in 1737, we suddenly find him in the Benedictine University in Salzburg applying himself to "Studien der Weltweissheit und Rechtsgelahrtheit," in other words, the study of philosophy (rhetoric, poetics, logic) and jurisprudence.

He could hardly have hoped for financial support from his family, but who, then, financed his attendance at the university? Or secured a scholarship for him? What were his objectives? Even here, an estrangement with his family must have come about. Had he taken up his studies against their wishes? Later on, he would write that "I had no one who could advise me and, from my youth on, there was no one I fully trusted if I hadn't made sure of them first." These are the words of a lone wolf, of prematurely imposed self-responsibility. Strange to say, it was not only the family ties to Augsburg that were largely broken off (with the exception of those to his younger brother Franz Aloys, father of Wolfgang Mozart's "Bäse"), but also the connection to the Catholic community in Augsburg in which Leopold Mozart had grown up. Or was it that he had had contacts in his youth with the Protestants who made up the majority in this city of two confessions, perhaps through the Protestant church music that was so well nurtured here? If so, then it must have been largely on the sly, for his father was such a strict Catholic that he even belonged to a Marian brotherhood. When the Mozarts would visit Augsburg in later years, their contacts were limited almost exclusively to members of Protestant families. And only once did they stay at the Heiligenkreuz monastery, where they had personal ties; otherwise, they would stay at inns -- and never with relatives.

Although he retained his Augsburg citizenship, Leopold Mozart knew very well what he thought of the Augsburgers: he called them "Abderiten" and exempted only a few close friends from this term for smug, materialistic, narrow-minded persons. On the other hand, of course, Salzburg -- the city Leopold Mozart would be chained to for the rest of his life -- was even more parochial and small-minded than the Free Imperial City of Augsburg.

As it turned out, even the university in Salzburg could not satisfy him. His performance in his first year was just so-so and, the next year, he was called before the rector for indolence and poor attendance; because he made no effort to excuse himself, he was expelled. When we reflect on the range of Leopold Mozart's later intellectual interests, it can only have been that, fundamentally, the subject matter on offer was not able to meet the demands of his alert and critical intellect and he was dissatisfied. If he had been focused solely on an assured career, it would have been easy enough for him to go along and meet the minimum requirements, if for no other reason than his impoverished financial situation.

What he never could succeed in doing, however, was to settle for intellectual restraints or mediocrity. Along with his wide-ranging interests, his mind with its strong stamp of rationalism constituted his sole source of capital and he was not about to squander it. His lifelong motto "aut Caesar aut nihil" ("all or nothing"), which shows up repeatedly in later letters, signified his constant readiness to bet his all on his own cleverness and superiority, an inner conviction that could, on occasion, lead to rash acts of impertinence, as we can observe in connection with his dealings with the Archbishop of Salzburg he hated so. Indeed, in his younger years, there was even an affair that almost landed him in prison when he presumed to address an impudently formulated letter of complaint to the cathedral chapter.

It appears he was never guilty of total servility or toadyism for there was always a perceptible hint of cunning, even insubordination, and in any event an overweening sense of superiority to be felt in him and it made him rather unpopular, especially with those in positions above him and with the authorities in Salzburg. After his death, Dominikus Hagenauer, the son of Lorenz Hagenauer, summed it up this way in his diary: he was "a man of much wit and wisdom, and would have been able to render good service to the State even apart from music. . . , but he had the misfortune of always being ill-used here, and was by far not so highly thought of as in other places in Europe." He had, in short, the makings of a senior civil servant, or a diplomat, or, as one might put it today, a politician.

True, he was, at first, a failure as a student, albeit one with extensive interests. Later on, however, he will immerse himself in history, geography, physics, and the natural sciences; he will bring keen interest and subtlety to the analysis of current political events. In all these fields, he will read an amazing amount, but particularly in the "belle lettres" of writers from Johann Christoph Gottsched to Christoph Martin Wieland, who obviously was his favorite; he will enter into correspondence with the poet Christian Fürchtegott Gelert; he will even act as middleman between the Protestant north and Catholic Salzburg, and have meetings with Enlightenment thinkers and literary figures. Returning home from England, he will bring instruments of the finest optics with him, not something for the talented amateur but instruments of professional caliber that would be the envy of many a researcher. Leopold Mozart: an educated man of the world, a rare breed.

And then, of course, there was music, which was supposed to be his chosen profession. But, here again, we really know very little in detail about his musical career. In Salzburg, he appears to have devoted almost no time to the playing of the organ. When it was that he took up the violin, who his teachers were, when and why he decided to be a musician, to start composing -- all this has remained unknown and he never spoke of it himself. But one thing is certain: whoever looks on him solely as a musician fails to grasp the essence of his personality -- his many-sidedness that was in constant play.

Actually, as an expelled student, he ought to have left Salzburg within three days, but in the cathedral chapter he finds a highly placed benefactor in the person of the prominent Salzburg canon, Count Johann Baptist Thurn-Valsassina und Taxis, who makes Leopold his chamberlain. In gratitude, Leopold Mozart dedicates his first published composition to him, six trio sonatas, "Sonate Sei per Chiesa e da Camera a Tre, Due Violini e Basso," copper-engraved by the composer himself and accompanied by a highly self-assured dedicatory inscription. Playing the role of lackey was rather foreign to him, despite finding himself in such a position for the time being. The Count must have thought much of him, however, for later on, he would go out of his way to further Leopold's career in the court orchestra of Salzburg's prince-archbishops.

There follows a gradual coming to maturity in his profession as musician. But it could have been quite otherwise. One can just as well imagine Leopold Mozart as a scholar (and the most diverse branches of study come to mind), or as a civil servant, or as a popular philosopher and author (and here too his pedagogical streak is included) -- but in no case can one imagine him as an instrumental virtuoso. Certainly, he had an active love and affection for music, but it is not what he lives and dies for. Advancement in the orchestra, the hoped-for position as deputy kapellmeister: these are important to him primarily for the financial security they signify. For him, the violin is primarily a pedagogical preoccupation; characteristically, we do not know of a single violin concerto he might have composed to put himself forward with "his" instrument. Instead, we encounter him as a member of Lorenz Christoph Mizler's "Sozietät der musikalischen Wissenschaften" (a corresponding society of musical scholars) and as a contributor to the "Historisch-kritische Beyträge zur Aufnahme der Musik," a periodical edited by Friedrich Wilhelm Marpurg.

In a contribution to Marpurg's publication, he summarized his compositional accomplishments as follows:

"Among the compositions by Mr. Mozard [sic] that have become known in manuscript, many contrapuntal and other church pieces are particularly noteworthy; in addition, a great number of symphonies, some only á 4, but others with all the usual instruments; also, more than thirty grand serenades with solos included for various instruments. Moreover, he has composed many concertos, particularly for transverse flute, oboe, bassoon, horn, trumpet, etc., innumerable trios and divertimentos for a variety of instruments; also, twelve oratorios and a number of pieces for the theater, even pantomimes, and in particular musical pieces for special occasions, such as a martial piece with trumpets, kettledrums, drums, and fifes, in addition to the usual instruments; a piece of Turkish music; a piece with a steel xylophone; and finally, a musical sleigh-ride with five sleigh-bells; to say nothing of marches, so-called nocturnos, and several hundred minuets, opera dances, and smaller pieces of this sort."

It may be that Leopold Mozart visualized Marpurg's periodical as being essentially one for a North-German Protestant readership; this would account for the fact that his church music, which certainly belongs to the best of his compositions, is not given here in more detail. Over and beyond that, however, one has the impression that he wanted the readership to regard him primarily as a master of colorful orchestral scoring.

In any event, his major musical accomplishment -- as Leopold Mozart himself no doubt also felt to be the case -- was acclaimed by editor Marpurg himself, who in doing so called attention to the exceptional pedagogical and musical-theoretical quality of the work. And in this respect, the "Versuch einer gründlichen Violinschule" ("Treatise on the Fundamental Art of Violin Playing"), which was published by Johann Jacob Lotter in Augsburg in 1756, has remained a basic text for understanding 18th century musical aesthetics, performing practice, and outlook down to the present. Marpurg wrote:

"A work of this kind is one we have long hoped for but hardly dared to expect. Those most skilled in drawing the bow of a violin are not always master of the pen, and those few equally adept in both often lack the inclination to write. How much more, then, are we indebted to the author of the present work! The adroit and discerning virtuoso, the thoughtful and systematic teacher, the erudite music-theoretician, all these qualities, each one of which alone would suffice to make a man of merit, come together here."

In Leopold Mozart, we find one of rationalistic Enlightenment's best representatives: broadly educated, versatile, virtually universal in his interests, imbued with the idea that everything can be grasped and understood through proper application of the rational intellect, and possessed of a highly developed pedagogical gift for conveying his knowledge to others. Even the way his interests are interlinked, his inability and disinclination to limit himself to a single area of interest, is testimony to this enlightened way of thinking and its intellectual ramifications. One would dearly love to know how he came by it; the Catholic traditions of south Germany hardly square with it at all.

As it happened, just at the time when Leopold Mozart was a student in Salzburg, a crisis erupted that culminated in the so-called sycophant controversy (*Sykophantenstreit*). A Muratori society was formed that was viewed as a fundamental attack on the teachings of the Benedictine University. It is at least possible that he belonged to the society, for he had works of Muratori in his library. The focus of the controversy was the critical clash between a conception of science and knowledge mandated solely by Church dogma and one that was rational and independent.

However much Leopold Mozart may have looked on himself as a pious, God-fearing Catholic, still his sympathies were with the Catholic reform movement and his letters are full of complaints about abuses in the Church. It begins with "how he pulled the wool over the eyes of the clerics about becoming a priest" and goes as far as grumbling about public displays of excessive piety that were, for him, "the obvious sign of moral shortcomings which such disgusting, spiteful people try to hide by their sanctimoniousness." Fully in the spirit of Josephism, he says: "It is and will certainly always be a good thing if the nunneries are abolished," for they are "nothing but coercion, dissembling, insincerity and no end of childish tricks, and, when all is said and done, veiled maliciousness." When Leopold Mozart reports from London concerning a Jew who has left his faith and who he hopes to convert, then this burst of missionary zeal (even assuming no irony is intended) is certainly not on behalf of the Roman Catholic Church but rather the Catholic faith, and he knew very well how to distinguish between them. He was certainly not

indifferent, nor was he a freethinker. For him, the work of the Enlightenment was no more in collision with traditional belief in God than was true for the majority of his contemporaries, but he was quite touchy in his reactions when confronted with hypocrisy clad in pious garb. Indeed, for a comprehensive profile of his personality, fundamental study of his religious beliefs and his world outlook would be required.

That God moved in mysterious ways was something Leopold Mozart never doubted, and so he caused many masses to be read as offerings of thanks for dangers avoided and sicknesses overcome. But he was no less convinced of the rational intellect and man's self-responsibility, of the need to act according to the best of one's knowledge and to perceptions critically arrived at, of a morality of veracity instead of deceit, of the utility and necessity of planning ahead and assessing the consequences.

As he pictured himself, Leopold Mozart was first and foremost a man of the Enlightenment and a teacher. Music was merely his field of activity. He had arrived at the career of a musician somewhat haphazardly, even though he had a pronounced gift for music, one that probably is underestimated because we still know too little about it. In his great project of furthering the genius of his son Wolfgang and bringing it to fruition, virtually the sole preoccupation of some fifteen years of his life, he was happily able to join his pedagogical gifts with his specifically musical ones and to see for himself the measure of his success.

#### Even a Wunderkind has to practice

People have often reproached Leopold Mozart for having misused his son as a "Wunderkind," for having put him on ostentatious display before the public and causing him to engage in silly little tricks (such as playing the piano with the keys covered). Once again, the picture of "the dreadful father." But note: it was he who early on recognized the astounding musical endowment of his barely four-year-old son, an endowment that did not lie merely in the finger acrobatics that enabled the child to play his first little minuets but in his musical receptivity, in his ready comprehension of tones and sounds, in his eagerness to learn more about music.

Naturally, the Mozart home was constantly filled with all kinds of music. Students came to the home to be taught, people rehearsed, made music, composed, Wolfgang's older sister Maria Anna (Nannerl) had her lessons and would later emerge as a highly talented musician herself -- all this could have greatly fired a child's imagination. But if we read the later letters right, the most decisive aspect of Leopold Mozart's early cultivation of his son's talents, if not of his entire education, appears to have been that he did not rely on drill and insist on discipline, he did not start with a systematic progression of individual steps leading to some set of dogmas for music and musical practice (for which the boy would have been too young anyways). Instead, the father let the son go about playing as he liked and was constantly ready to deal with all the questions raised by the child's natural curiosity. He observed the lad's evolving musicality, furthered it by taking it seriously and admiring it, gave it room to grow, and helped the child with the things he asked of his father.

This is something that was possible only in a relaxed and loving family atmosphere. The father was the unquestioned authority, that is clear, but everyone was happy to entrust themselves to his good sense, foresight, and thoughtfulness. There was nothing of harshness or severity about it. Leopold Mozart may well have given the outside world the impression of aloofness, of being a man of reserved seriousness (and thus he appears in his known portraits), but within the family a completely different tone must have prevailed.

Surprising indeed is the gaiety and candor and often the sheer exuberance that could go as far as wordplay formulated in ways that most assuredly were not always in keeping with middle-class decorum. However much the Mozarts set store by proper behavior befitting the genteel social circles in which they moved and to which they claimed equal standing, still in the privacy of the family a lower threshold of inhibition marked by unreserved affection prevailed. No one had to fear being wounded in their innermost feelings or wounding the others. The delight in the unseemly and the indecent, such as later would become known and notorious especially in Wolfgang's letters to his "Bäsle" in Augsburg, also came out, for example, in the pictures painted on the targets used for shooting that the whole family enjoyed. Perhaps this predilection was something that came into the family through Mozart's mother.

This marked distinction between inside and outside, between home and society, evidently played an important role. Even in the days when Wolfgang Mozart's parents married, they were regarded as the handsomest pair in Salzburg and that suggests they presented themselves accordingly and knew how to dress. At the same time, this "handsome" appearance must have been hard for them, for they were both churchmouse-poor. It was only after several years, when Leopold Mozart had finally received a salaried position in the court orchestra, that they were able to marry. He would later speak of his marriage as "the order of patched pants" and, with this irony, make clear how palpable was the difference between appearance and reality. Wolfgang Mozart in turn fully inherited this vain concern for external appearances (something, by the way, that is not surprising in short persons, as all the Mozarts were). Towards others, through their conduct and self-presentation, they sought to emphasize the special quality they claimed for themselves; within the family, on the other hand, there was no need for anyone to pretend and a spontaneity, sometimes fully unbuttoned, was always possible. Whether Leopold Mozart himself took full part in all this, or just gave it his benevolent approval, or merely put up with it, is by no means clear. In any event, he never wasted a single critical word on it -- except on those occasions when spontaneity threatened to put the soundness of good planning for the future at risk.

Let us cite, for example, an occasion when this familial behavior broke out quite unexpectedly in an extraordinary situation and a "strange" place, totally obliterating all social boundaries: the occasion was the visit of the six-year-old Wolfgang and his family to the imperial family at Schönbrunn in Vienna. Leopold Mozart to Lorenz Hagenauer: "If I were to tell the story, people would consider it a fairytale. But to continue! Wolferl leaped into the lap of the Empress, put his arms around her neck and literally smothered her with kisses." Children are forgiven every breach of etiquette, of course, and Maria Theresa and the Emperor will not have taken it amiss. But what is striking is the completely unabashed way the father, at that point a simple fiddle player in the Salzburg court orchestra, goes about reporting it, obviously finding nothing the least bit disrespectful in this scene because somehow, given the situation, it did not seem totally inappropriate. In this connection, keep in mind that this took place at a time when Wolfgang's fame as a "Wunderkind" had only just begun, indeed, was but a couple weeks old.

At this point, of course, Mozart's playing at the harpsichord was already causing the greatest astonishment. Whether he also played something from the first of his own little minuets is not known. They had come into being quite spontaneously and without instruction as the lad imitated those first short pieces he had learned to play on the piano. Naturally, regular lessons had come along later, exercises in basso continuo, the art of melodic accompaniment from a figured bass line, from later years we know of his exposure to the standard counterpoint textbook of the times, the "Gradus ad Parnassum" of Johann Joseph Fux, and it goes without saying that young Mozart had to practice the piano,

something that even the greatest talent is not spared. But there was no need to wring progress out of compulsion because, for Mozart, it all came so readily that playfulness could dominate. And his need to express himself musically grew faster than his ability to express himself in writing. The little fingers were not yet able to write notes when Leopold Mozart was already notating the first compositions. (We begin to see Wolfgang's own handwriting in the music only from about his eighth year on.) And until the time of the opera scores written during the Italian travels (1771-1773), his father's hand will continue to be found in his manuscripts. (In this connection, detailed research still remains to be done on whether Leopold was acting in the role of composer, or of teacher making corrections, or merely that of supervisor and general overseer.)

From about the time he was eight years old, young Mozart occupied himself constantly with composing; before then, he had chiefly written occasional individual pieces for practice. And the first pieces immediately appeared in print, something that would not have been possible, of course, without the doing of the proud father. But Leopold Mozart did not use the occasion to dress up the musical thoughts of his son or to perfect that which had been written down in rough, inexact, and unaffected terms. Instead one would have to say that these first works convey exactly what it was that Wolfgang Mozart wanted to express. There are certainly awkward and conventional passages to be found in them, and in particular simple emulations of known compositional models, but there also are surprising turns of phrase as well, first traces of the composer's musical intelligence and his unique voice. Here, Leopold Mozart proved himself to be neither schoolmaster nor pedant, neither smoothing the rough edges nor polishing the end product, but rather the admiring on-looker who helped Mozart to be himself. To let him find his own musical language and to reinforce him in this: this was the greatest virtue of Leopold Mozart's approach to teaching.

The prevailing method of instruction then (and it hasn't changed a great deal since) was essentially one where the student was obliged to go about learning the rules of composition, of harmony, of melodic structure, counterpoint, instrumentation, and so on and so forth, step by step, and only after completion of all this theory was he permitted for the first time to sketch out something himself as a kind of graduation exercise. Leopold Mozart appears to have gone at the task in exactly the opposite way, allowing Wolfgang to express himself long before he had learned everything he needed. He could learn by searching, inexperienced, for solutions to the musical problems he posed for himself in his compositions, all the while guided and supported by his farsighted father and teacher. In other words, it was a teaching method not based on the teacher's authority and an aping of his example but rather one that included strong autodidactic moments, with a helpful, fatherly friend nearby.

Naturally, Leopold Mozart was completely aware of just how unusual his son's education was. For from the very beginning, Wolfgang Mozart was called on to demonstrate his abilities and all the steps in their development to the public at large, to the "connoisseurs and amateurs," including the most prominent musicians of the day. To prove himself before them was important and Mozart's youth was marked by that. In addition, there was his self-confidence, his personal pride, this unshakeable grandiosity of his feeling within himself the ability to master everything in the realm of music. Mozart was exceptional, and his father saw it as his duty not to let this "miracle" grow to maturity hidden and unnoticed -- indeed, in a backwater like Salzburg would it even have been possible to grow at all? would the necessary resources and stimulation have been there? one may well doubt it -- but instead "to proclaim this wonder to the world." He wrote: "I owe this deed to God Almighty, otherwise I would be the most thankless creature." And, full of

pride, he added: "and wasn't it a great joy and a great victory for me when I heard an apostle of Voltaire say to me in amazement: *Now I have seen a miracle for once in my life; this is the first!*"

Today we still regard Mozart as a miracle, even if we are no longer wont to speak of miracles of God. Faced with such an extraordinary gift, what should you do with it? What would be the most careful and responsible way to do justice to such a child, to foster the proper development of his talents and, in the long run, to help him find a way of life in which such a remarkably endowed person can fulfil his own destiny while enabling his fellow men to share in it? There can be no single answer to such a question. Moreover, such an existence is inevitably surrounded on all sides by snares, shocks and uncertainties. In such an unforeseen and unforeseeable situation, Leopold Mozart did the most intelligent thing there was to do: he exerted himself to give the child everything in the way of support and help that he was capable of – and that was a lot, for he was himself an accomplished musician – while, at the same time, observing his son carefully to see what more he could absorb. In all the documentation we have of Wolfgang Mozart's life, there is not one passage that would justify the suspicion that he had been driven or pressured to give a performance he himself (for whatever reason) did not want to give. Nor a composition forced out of him by his father that Mozart would not have composed of his own volition. The sheer abundance of his music came from himself alone.

Leopold Mozart knew full well the responsibility he had taken on, it was something he spoke of on frequent occasions, but he also knew that more was involved than just a musical education. Wolfgang not only spent his entire childhood in the glare of public performance but he was also completely walled off from those his own age, from regular playmates, even from any form of public schooling. That was the price to be paid for such an early beginning to his developing into an exceptional musician. As it turned out, however, the lad was so fully preoccupied with music that he did not miss the more normal way of children, or at least we do not know of the slightest complaint in this direction. All his needs for play and tomfoolery were met within the sociability of his family; all his school-learning and what we call education, he received from his father.

The prolonged travels of the six- to eleven-year-old are forever being depicted as an enormous strain that could only end in ruining the child's health, a constant hurrying from here to there for new presentations and concerts. But even here, we must put things in perspective and then we shall be astonished at the father's thoughtfulness and care. Travel could be exceedingly unpleasant in the days of horse-drawn stagecoaches, with their hard seats. But the Mozarts, who for the longest time travelled together as a family and usually with as many as two servants, provided themselves with a comfortable, well-sprung carriage, because they wanted "to travel like nobility or cavaliers to keep their health" and they "did not associate with anyone except nobility and other distinguished persons." The time they spent in places between travels often amounted to several weeks or months (they remained in London for more than a year) and, during these times, the family led a normal life (albeit living in hired lodgings), with the usual studying, practicing the piano (on a travel-clavichord they took with them), sight-seeing, etc. During the more than three years of the great European trip, they spent some seventy days riding in their carriage, but hardly ever more than two or three days at a time.

In other words, a great deal of time remained and it was used for the usual lessons by which Wolfgang learned to read, write and do his sums. In addition, he studied languages: Latin, French, and Italian. Other "subjects" were added, prompted by the sights, questions, and discussions coming from

their travels: geography, for instance, as well as biology, literature, and history. Thus, Wolfgang's private schooling probably was much more to the point and useful than it would have been with the normal school curriculum of the times. And, of course, the wealth of travel impressions made a contribution of their own.

Given that Leopold Mozart not only watched over the health of the children very carefully but also meticulously described all their illnesses, we can only be amazed at how robust in fact they were. Only occasional colds, the usual childhood diseases survived without complications, it was only epidemic diseases such as smallpox that posed a serious danger. But in those days, everyone was helpless before exposure to such diseases, which were largely responsible for the high rates of infant and child mortality. Wolfgang was as healthy as living conditions at the time allowed and he enjoyed the best of care from his medically fascinated father.

We often have a false impression, too, regarding the number of concerts that were involved, because, for the most part, the children were only called upon to perform in small gatherings and that, usually not more than once in the week. Real concerts or performances where they would have to prove themselves before larger audiences took place, on the average, only once a month. Moreover, there is no comparing them with the stress of concerts today where young pianists, perched all alone on the stage, must work away at a Bösendorfer while, Argus-eyed, the crowd below in the hall waits and watches for the first mistake. Auditoriums were smaller in Mozart's day and the appearances took place without the pressure of today's usual routine.

In this connection, Leopold Mozart had to all intents and purposes withdrawn as a musician in his own right. He was present for the public musical performances of his children, of course, but at no time do we hear that he appeared as a soloist, indeed, he did not even put himself forward as a composer, although he continued to compose at least into the 1770s. Because we do not have a catalog of his works, to say nothing of a chronological listing, it is still not clear how he himself assimilated the overwhelming musical impressions of these travels. For in Paris and in London, the Mozarts enjoyed a wealth of new musical experiences, as when, for example, they had their first exposure to the passionate and brilliant piano style of a Johann Schobert or were confronted with the elegant Italian style of a Johann Christian Bach. We must not forget that Leopold Mozart and his son made these musical discoveries together at the same time. Even Leopold Mozart, as his son's teacher, still had something to learn. And remember too that, during the Italian trips, when Wolfgang Mozart had to compose major operatic works, he was working in a musical idiom in which his father had had no personal experience whatsoever. Thus, the father as teacher was, simultaneously, school comrade, conversation partner, mentor, and friend.

Shortly before the great European journey began, Leopold Mozart received the long-coveted title of a deputy kapellmeister, but it amounted to little more than a title securing his place in Salzburg society. For between the years from 1763 and 1777, he was to devote himself almost exclusively to educating his son and managing his career. In these fifteen years or so, Leopold Mozart was off travelling half the time and showed all too clearly just where *his* priorities lay. Thus, in this time too, prospects for his own further career were sacrificed. And in all this, the device affixed to Leopold Mozart's banner – "aut Caesar aut nihil" – was put to the test, for with a six-year-old child, regardless of how exceptionally talented he may be, there is no possible way to foresee how he may develop, where the road may lead, whether he is in fact capable of taking advantage of his gifts. It was a high-risk enterprise, a mortgage on the future whose redemption did not depend solely on pedagogical skill, and it signified yet

another break in the life of this many-faceted father, for it brought with it, realistically speaking, the end of his own career.

Significantly, when the position of kapellmeister became vacant later, Leopold Mozart did not even bother to apply for it. That reflected the troubled relationship with his employer, the Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg, of course, but it also reflected the difficulty the Mozarts had re-integrating themselves back into Salzburg society after the trip through Europe. They had returned to the provincial residence heaped with gifts and honors and worldly experience, and now they found its depressingly ingrown outlook and isolation particularly burdensome. There was no future for them here, and from now on, the only thing that mattered was how the family could arrange its escape.

In 1777, when Wolfgang Mozart was twenty-one years old, they decided to risk all their chips on one card: another journey was planned with the goal of finding a new position somewhere, anywhere, else. Tactical errors resulted in Leopold Mozart not being able to go along if he did not want to lose his position and, with it, the family's established place in society. It was the first time that he had to face being separated from his son. Up to now, Wolfgang Mozart had been allowed to bury himself in his music, he did not have to concern himself with commissions for compositions or performance engagements. Leopold Mozart had functioned not only as father, teacher, and musical partner, but also as a highly proficient booking agent, financial administrator, and travel organizer. In short: Wolfgang Mozart had never had anything to do with organizational, business, and contractual matters and, in his spontaneous, short-term way of looking ahead, he had never been much interested in such matters anyway. And now, all at once, in the new journey leading north and west (as far as Paris), he was supposed to take charge of everything himself, with the additional assignment of finding an appropriate position that would make it possible for the family to come along later. For one thing constantly mattered: to keep the family together.

Under the circumstances, Leopold Mozart's only recourse was to send Wolfgang's mother along on the trip. She provided moral support, to be sure, but for the things that were important, Mozart had to act, with only himself and his inexperience to draw on. It is easy to understand that Leopold Mozart was nervous in the extreme and did all he could in his letters (which of course were up to a week in transit) to direct the progress of the trip, all the while keeping his son focused on what its main purpose was. It is, in fact, the letters he wrote in connection with the Paris journey that are largely responsible for posterity's negative view of Leopold Mozart as a narrow-minded pedant and an excessively strict and hardhearted father.

If, however, we look at the situation from another perspective, then things take on a different aspect. The trip was supposed to pay for itself, so to speak, indeed, it had to. But even as early as Munich and Augsburg, Wolfgang persisted in staying too long even when there was nothing promising in either place. Instead, he pursued various hare-brained schemes that revealed how little practical experience he possessed. So, for example, in Munich, he entertained the idea that a consortium of connoisseurs might be found that would pay him a monthly sum, allowing him to lead a free and independent creative life. In Mannheim, he fell in love with Aloysia Weber and immediately fantasized taking concert tours and travels with her and her family, going off to Italy and other places. Because the financial situation of the Webers was rather precarious, Mozart, instead of thinking about his own situation, felt himself called upon to be their saviour. "I'm so fond of this unlucky family," he wrote his father, "that there's nothing I would rather do than make them happy; and perhaps I can, too. My advice is that they should go to Italy." And he added: "And the thought of being able to help a poor family without hurting

oneself pleases me to my very soul." He also informed his father about a "vacation trip" he had made to Kirchheimbolanden with the Webers, in other words, spending holidays there during which he paid half of the Weber family's expenses, at a time when Leopold Mozart was writing from Salzburg that he did not know how he was going to pay the bill from the tailor.

It is easy to understand the enamored Wolfgang's generosity, but Leopold Mozart's harsh reaction can hardly be regarded as overdone. He wrote back:

"This letter was all the more depressing to me because I had had the reasonable hope that certain circumstances you had already encountered, together with my spoken and written reminders, would have persuaded you that, for the sake of one's happiness as well as being able to seek one's fortune in the world and finally reach the goal one seeks among such a variety of persons, good and bad, happy and unhappy, one must safeguard one's generous heart with the greatest reserve, do nothing without the greatest reflection, and never let oneself be carried away by enthusiastic ideas and more or less blind inspirations. . . . Our difficulties in Salzburg are fully known to you -- you know my miserable income, and finally why I kept my promise to you to let you go away, and all my tribulations. The purpose of your trip had two motives: either to find a good, permanent position; or, if this doesn't work, to situate yourself in a major location where there is lots of money to be made. Both are meant to assist your parents and to help your dear sister along, but first and foremost to bring you fame and honor in the world, which partly happened to you already in your childhood and partly in your adolescence, and now it is entirely up to you to lift yourself, little by little, to one of the greatest reputations a musician has ever known."

This can only mean that Leopold Mozart saw with blinding clarity that the whole project he had set in train with his son's education, and to which he had totally subordinated his own life, was in mortal danger. His orders were:

*"Off with you to Paris! and be quick about it! Find your place among great people -- aut Caesar aut nihil, the mere thought of seeing Paris should have shielded you from all these flighty ideas. From Paris, the name and reputation of a man of great talent travels throughout the whole world, the nobility there treat persons of genius with the greatest of deference, esteem, and courtesy -- there you will find a genteel way of life that contrasts mightily with the coarse ways of our German lords and ladies."* (12 February 1778)

The advice was not basically wrong -- despite the fact that the Paris trip ultimately was a fiasco because Mozart found it exceedingly difficult to come to grips with conditions there. Without his father's help, he simply was not up to it. And then, when his mother suddenly died, Mozart felt his utter failure.

Leopold Mozart immediately set about doing everything he could to prepare a fallback position, writing letters in every direction; in the end, however, there was nothing to do but for Mozart to return to Salzburg, the city he always hated. There, Mozart was supposed to be installed once more as court organist under tolerable conditions. It was an act of penance, taken in the hope that, from here, the way to Munich or Italy would be easier to find. Leopold Mozart, who was still convinced his son would ultimately find the means to get away from Salzburg, had a feisty attitude toward any future dissension with the Archbishop: "so we won't put up with any annoyance at all, or we're on our way." And in connection with his son's personal situation,

he added: "As far as Mademoiselle Weber is concerned, you must not imagine that I have anything against this acquaintance. All young people have to do things their own way. You can continue to exchange letters as you do now, I won't ask you anything about it, and even less ask to read anything." Indeed, he even offered to his son that Aloysia Weber could come to Salzburg with her father and live with them.

### Appeal for a fatherly friend

Wolfgang Mozart had more or less acquiesced in all of Leopold Mozart's rebukes and admonitions made in the course of the Paris trip, not solely for the sake of peace in the family but also in recognition of his father's worldly wisdom and experience. Repeatedly he had put forward spontaneous, will-o'-the-wisp projects and travel plans and then let himself be talked out of them. As for conflict with his father, or protest or rebellion, it never came to that, not even to a kind of secret resentment on the part of the son against superior paternal authority. And for his part, Leopold Mozart had, with understanding, gone to great lengths to make the reluctant return to Salzburg bearable in every way.

The next two years, Wolfgang's last in Salzburg, are a time of calm and concentration, of testing his abilities, a time in which he revealed, so to speak, the first masterpieces of his mature style: here we find the "Coronation" mass (K.317), the "Posthorn" serenade (K.320), the C major symphony (K.338), the concerto for two pianos (K.365), and the sinfonia concertante for violin and viola (K.364) that he may have played with his father. Finally, here too we find "Idomeneo," the long-awaited opera commission, for which Mozart spent almost three months alone in Munich. The brisk exchange of letters with his father that took place in this time testifies to an intense working discussion of all aspects of the opera, an extremely productive exchange of ideas, and reveals an altogether friendly relationship. In later years, Mozart would refer to these times as the happiest of his life. And again he writes his father: "when I reach my goal -- that I can be handsomely employed here -- then in that very moment you must be away from Salzburg." Mozart even has another opera almost finished in his pocket, "Zaide," that came into being under the eye of his father and probably was intended for the "National-Singspiel" in Vienna. Mozart is crouched in the starting blocks, even though his father is skeptical whether the time is ripe for success.

What happened next is known to all and often told: After the "Idomeneo" premiere, Mozart is suddenly ordered to Vienna by the Salzburg archbishop to appear with his retinue. After the first few concert successes, the city of Vienna is bathed in the rosiest light imaginable and he provokes his break with the archbishop, which takes place under rather drastic circumstances, albeit without an official dismissal from service. In this case, Mozart is proceeding without his father's backing and is himself acting according to the "aut Caesar aut nihil" principle. Leopold Mozart is horrified: the step strikes him as hasty and ill thought out and he has an exceedingly jaundiced view of further prospects in Vienna – and in the beginning, he is right. When he realizes that still other motives are involved, that Mozart has fallen in love with Constanze Weber, even would like to marry her, then serious conflict with his son breaks out.

For Leopold Mozart, the situation that had existed three years earlier in Mannheim is essentially repeating itself, only this time Wolfgang Mozart will not let himself be rebuked and ordered around. Once again, Mozart has neither a position nor a commission or concrete prospects in Vienna and, once again, a "Weber girl" is involved. But when Leopold Mozart tries one more time to create a fallback position in Salzburg and calm the waters with the archbishop, he faces a new reality: he can no longer influence his son's decisions.

Strictly speaking, it was a normal, everyday father-son conflict: for Wolfgang, the cutting of the umbilical cord to the family, objectively necessary, subjectively fraught, the end of growing up and the beginning of autonomous action, the founding of one's own family and taking exclusive responsibility for oneself – but for Leopold, all this was felt as the painful loss of his influence, as the disregard and renunciation of his well-intended advice, yes, as the separation and end of a symbiotic relationship that up to now had been so successful.

There is something else besides, and it greatly aggravates the conflict. Leopold Mozart suddenly sees himself left all alone in a Salzburg he too abhors. For him, the long-standing agreement to keep the family together has been broken, especially since Mozart's sister, Maria Anna, still is not taken care of and ekes out a boring living giving piano lessons. In addition, Leopold Mozart can only experience this as a humiliating defeat of his usually trustworthy foresight and well-conceived planning, for in the last years he has not given the remotest thought to alternatives for his own situation in later life. To be sure, he had dedicated fifteen years to educating his son and, in doing so, had deliberately limited advancement of his own career, but by 1777 and the time of the Paris trip, the educating was over. And still he had continued to plan everything around his son and not even so much as considered other possibilities. That he might one day have to entrust his son with his own responsibility, that his son might one day be able to found a family of his own, these had never crossed his mind. The old, naive ancestral dream of children as the assets at disposal to assure a comfortable old age was gone. It had slipped the mind of the great pedagogue Leopold Mozart, of all people, that the ultimate goal of bringing up children is to become dispensable and that the time available for this is limited. Whether it had failed or not, his Project "Mozart" had reached its end.

The "Idomeneo" times showed how much Mozart still trusted his father, but only as a fatherly friend and no longer as the overseer of his life. Mozart was continuing to solicit such a relationship between them when, writing from Vienna, he addressed his father as "Mon très cher amy!" But Leopold Mozart either could not or would not understand this. He clung to a duty that was long over and put no other in its place. And as for beginning some new professional undertaking on his own, he was too old. It is no wonder, then, that, seeing himself abandoned, he lapsed into bitterness.

And now, just at this time, a serious suitor for the hand of Mozart's sister appeared, one Franz Armand d'Ippold, a court military councillor in Salzburg. Although his feelings were fully reciprocated, his position was not considered adequate for marriage to the daughter of Leopold Mozart. Moreover, for the father, this may well have been perceived as yet another threat. Writing from Vienna in September 1781, Wolfgang even injected himself into the matter and promised to help his sister:

"It's going to be hard -- I'm quite sure of this -- for you and d'Ippold to make it in Salzburg. Couldn't d'Ippold manage then to do something *here*? As for himself, at least he's not *completely* broke. . . .If that were arranged, then you could certainly get married, for believe me, you would make enough money here by playing in private concerts, for example, and giving lessons. People would be after you to give them -- and paying you well. Then my father would have to quit his job and come too -- and we could have a right jolly life together again. . . . For I would like [our dear father] to have his peace and not have to bother or trouble himself. In this way, I think it would work, for with your husband's income, your own, and mine, we could easily make it and provide him with peace and quiet and a pleasant life." (19 September 1781)

So far as Leopold Mozart was concerned, this was surely just another one of his son's castles in the air and it must have enraged him even more. For the fact is that, in these first years in Vienna, Wolfgang Mozart was poor as never before and never again in his life. There could be no question of his providing support, as his father correctly surmised, although Mozart tried to keep the true state of affairs hidden from him, even sending money in payment of debts to make a better impression. In Salzburg, Leopold Mozart at least had the guarantee of his income as deputy kapellmeister. But that his daughter should also leave him, that was too much. And so with her renunciation of Franz d'Ippold, Maria Anna Mozart sacrificed herself and continued to keep house for her father. It may be that Maria Anna held her brother responsible for the failure of her marriage to d'Ippold to take place (and Leopold Mozart may have reinforced her in this), for from now on one senses an estrangement with his sister that was never really overcome. He had emancipated himself from the parental abode – at the expense of those who remained behind, or at least so it might have looked from the Tanzmeisterhaus in Salzburg.

In the meantime, Mozart had received the libretto for the opera, "Die Entführung aus dem Serail," although a long, weary year was to pass before the premiere would take place on 16 July 1782 and he would receive his fee. And without this in hand, marriage with Constanze Weber was out of the question. When the time came, however, and he asked his father for his consent to the marriage, Leopold Mozart procrastinated so long in granting it that it only arrived after the wedding was over. Just how profoundly peace in the family had been disturbed can be seen in a letter of Wolfgang's:

"Today I received your letter of the 26th, but such a cold and indifferent letter, one I could never have anticipated in connection with the news I wrote you concerning my opera's warm reception. I had thought (going by my own feelings) you would be so full of excitement you would hardly be able to open the package, the quicker to behold the work of your son which didn't merely please but caused such a furore in Vienna that no one wants to hear anything else, and the theater is constantly swarming with people. It was given for the 4th time yesterday and on Friday it will appear again. But no, you didn't have enough time -- so the whole world maintains I have made enemies of the music professors and other persons besides because of my bragging and criticizing! And what is that for a world? Presumably the Salzburg world; because whoever is here -- they will see and hear enough that is just the opposite; -- and that's my answer to that." (31 July 1782)

That Leopold Mozart did not even look at the "Entführung" score his son had sent him because he "didn't have time" (one cannot believe it, but that is apparently what he wrote) was in any event a climax in the interfamilial exchange of blows and it clearly shows it was intended to hit Wolfgang Mozart personally.

### Alienation

Out of Mozart's entire time in Vienna, not a single letter of his father's to him has been preserved. Thus it is only from the allusions contained in Wolfgang Mozart's answers that we are able to infer what Leopold Mozart wrote. It appears that Leopold did not write a single derogatory word about Constanze. No one in Salzburg knew her, of course, and therefore they withheld their judgment. And all the reservations Leopold Mozart had against his son's marriage were never directed at Constanze personally but rather at the intolerable fact itself, as well as the circumstances. What became known of the mother-in-law little by little was more than eyebrow-raising. She evidently had a

fondness for the bottle and was a crabby, quarrelsome person. Mozart had been forced to sign a very unusual marriage contract: in the event that the marriage did not take place, the mother-in-law demanded payment of a large annual pension. And this at a time when Mozart hardly had enough money to found a household of his own.

There certainly were enough other irritations besides and concern for the situation was by no means out of place. Moreover, added to all Leopold Mozart's basic objections was the fact that the long overdue visit of the young married couple kept forever being put off – by Wolfgang Mozart himself. Almost a year passed by before Wolfgang's father and sister got to meet Constanze. The three-month-long visit was not especially marked by cordiality, which is hardly to be wondered at, but this was not Constanze's fault. Following this single visit to Salzburg, even Mozart's relationship with his father lapsed into little more than one of filial obligation. There was a perceptible decline in the number of letters that used to be written once a week; now months could pass between letters that, when they came, were but short factual reports. And the relationship with his sister congealed to the freezing point.

A solitary comment on Constanze Mozart has been preserved in a letter Leopold Mozart wrote to the Baroness Waldstätten and it reveals both his fears and his relief: "That his wife isn't like the rest of the Weber family pleases me no end, for otherwise he would be unhappy; Your Grace assures me she is a fine person, and that is enough for me!" But in another letter also addressed to the Baroness, he formulated a terse critique of Wolfgang Mozart's character and, along with it, the failure of all his fatherly educational efforts:

"Yes, I would be feeling quite comfortable if only I hadn't discovered a fatal flaw in my son, and that is that he is either much too *indulgent* or *indolent*, too *easy-going*, often perhaps too *haughty* and however you want to call it altogether when a man is *idle*, -- or he is *impatient*, too *impetuous* and can't wait for anything. There are two opposing principles at war in him -- either too much or too little and no happy medium. When he doesn't need anything, then he is instantly satisfied, takes his *leisure*, and is *idle*. If he has to get busy, then he is all full of himself and *wants success immediately*. Nothing should stand in his way; but unfortunately it is so that the greatest obstacles stand in the way of the smartest people, the most gifted of geniuses." (23 August 1782)

And in a postscript, he added:

"My son wrote me earlier that as soon as he was married he did not plan to live at the mother's place. I hope he really has left this house. If it hasn't happened, then that will be unlucky for him and his wife."

All this was sensible enough and not entirely wrongly perceived, but one can also feel Leopold Mozart's sense of loss and resignation over no longer having any influence and being obliged to leave his son, with his completely different temperament, to find his way all by himself. Still, when Leopold Mozart paid his visit to the young married couple in Vienna in 1785, he was granted the satisfaction of finding his son at the peak of his success, financially as well as artistically.

Mozart may have been fully aware that this visit would be the last chance he had to convince his father he had made the right decisions and to re-establish the old familiar friendly relationship, far removed from all vestiges of paternalistic pressure. The schedule of events taking place during the visit is a

virtual fireworks of memorable occasions: the very day he arrives, Leopold Mozart enjoys the premiere performance of his son's D-minor piano concerto (K.466), the following day he takes part in playing three of Mozart's quartets dedicated to Joseph Haydn with Haydn himself present, who says to the father, "As God is my witness, I tell you honestly, your son is the greatest composer I know personally or by reputation. He has taste and, what is more, the most profound knowledge of composition." A day later Wolfgang Mozart is playing with the Emperor in attendance, and so it goes, day after day.

At the same time, there are invitations to dine and Leopold Mozart can only be amazed at the Lucullan feasts. He is taken into the Freemasons and rapidly promoted to Master Mason. In these ten weeks of visiting in Vienna, Leopold Mozart is present for nineteen concerts in which Wolfgang Mozart takes part, to say nothing of evenings at the opera, excursions, visits with theater acquaintances, musicians, and wealthy friends. He almost literally never has a quiet moment. And he notes (in a letter written to Wolfgang's sister): "I believe my son, if he has no debts to pay off, can deposit 2,000 florins in the bank right now; he certainly has the money and the household, so far as eating and drinking are concerned, is very modestly run." Extrapolating in terms of present monetary values, the sum named by Leopold Mozart corresponds to some \$65,000 (of course, the skeptical aside as to possible debts is not to be overlooked). But Mozart's father probably does not get a really close look into his financial situation. And the good old days of free and friendly discussions of musical projects and problems do not come again.

In 1784, Mozart's sister was permitted to marry at last – a widower with several children from previous marriages living in St. Gilgen and not the man of her first choice. Her first-born was still in his infancy when he was left in Salzburg in the care of Leopold Mozart, who was also boarding three music students in his home at the time. When Wolfgang Mozart inquired in the fall of 1786 whether he might leave his two children with his father for some time while he made a planned trip to England (which never came about), he received a clear and curt refusal. Telling his daughter Nannerl about it, Leopold Mozart wrote:

"You will readily understand that I had to pen a very stiff letter. . . .Not a bad deal at all. They could go ahead and travel – could even die – or stay in England – while I could run after them with the children, etc. . . .Well, enough of that! He'll find my excuse persuasive and instructive enough if he'll only make use of it." (17 November 1786)

By now, the father has come to expect nothing but the worst from his son. There is no longer even a minimum of trust and shared family concern to be felt.

A scant six months later, Leopold Mozart was dead. He died suddenly after a short illness. And only four and a half years later, the life of Wolfgang Mozart – so filled with highs and lows, successes and failures, poverty and riches – also came to a sudden end.

The Mozarts, especially father and son, were a family that gave each other everything there was to give of love, devotion, and sacrifice, and then still – or perhaps for that very reason – had to live through and endure their insoluble conflicts. Where feelings and bitter disappointments are involved, even the vaunted rational intellect often fails.

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