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Franz Xaver Niemetschek:
Is his association with Mozart only legend?

Author's preface: An autobiographical essay written by Franz Xaver Niemetschek about his marriage with Theresia Schnell, the daughter of a Prague merchant has recently come to light. The document is in Niemetschek's hand and was previously unknown. Quotations from the autograph appear below in italics and are published here for the first time. Biographical details revealed by this document suggest that it is necessary to reconsider Niemetschek's relationship to Wolfgang Mozart.

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Mozart research has long regarded the first biography of Mozart, written by Franz Xaver Niemetschek and published in Prague in 1798 with the title, "Leben des K.K. Kapellmeisters Wolfgang Gottlieb Mozart," as a primary source of exceptional value because of its supposed authenticity. Even though there were complaints from the beginning that it failed to provide details from Mozart's later years that might have been expected, it nevertheless remained essentially uncontested, that is, there seemed no reason to doubt that Niemetschek had indeed known Mozart personally and, together with his wife, had assumed responsibility for some years for the care and upbringing of Mozart's two sons after he died. This appeared moreover to have been confirmed by Otto Jahn in the foreword to the first volume of his Mozart biography published in 1856. Niemetschek had, Jahn wrote, based his work "in part on his personal acquaintance with Mozart", and "what the author, a sincere admirer of Mozart, reports is reliable and true."

In 1869, Constant von Wurzbach associated himself with Jahn's view, writing about Niemetschek's relationship to Mozart "who he personally knew very well and enthusiastically supported." Almost no one bothered to inquire into the personal relationship; instead, largely unquestioned, it was simply passed along. Ultimately it came to be embodied in the title given Jost Perfahl's 1984 annotated edition of the first Mozart biography: "Ich kannte Mozart -- Die einzige Mozart-Biographie von einem Augenzeugen" ("I knew Mozart -- The only Mozart biography by an eyewitness").

[The Chronology relating to Wolfgang Mozart and Franz Xaver Niemetschek follows on the next two pages; the text of the article continues on page 4.]

This article originally appeared in the Report of the Internationaler Musikwissenschaftlicher Kongress zum Mozart-Jahr 1991, Baden – Wien, ed. Ingrid Fuchs (Hans Schneider Verlag, Tutzing 1993).

The Footnotes begin at page 11, the Index, at page 13.

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Wolfgang Mozart and F.X. Niemetschek -- A Chronology

- 27 January 1756 - Wolfgang Mozart born in Salzburg.*
- 5 January 1762 - Constanze Weber born in Zell.*
- 8 December 1763 - Theresia Schnell, Niemetschek's future wife, born into a merchant family in Prague.*
- 24 July 1766 - Franz Xaver Niemetschek born in Sadská.*
- from 1778 on - Niemetschek attending school in Prague.*
- 21 September 1784 - The Mozarts' second child, Carl Thomas, born in Vienna.*
- 1787 & 1790(1?) - Theresia Schnell, working as milliner, becomes acquainted with Mozart at the Prague home of Josephine and Franz Xaver Duschek.*
- Jan/Feb 1787 - Wolfgang and Constanze Mozart in Prague for first time, in connection with performance of "Figaro."*
- 1787 - Following completion of his studies, Niemetschek applies for teaching positions both in Komotau and in Pilsen. On 26 August, appointment to teaching staff at the gymnasium in Pilsen.*
- Oct/Nov 1787 - Mozart and Constanze back in Prague for première of "Don Giovanni."*
- April/May 1789 - Mozart passes through Prague going to and from Berlin on trip with Prince Karl Lichnowsky.*
- 26 July 1791 - The Mozarts' sixth child, Franz Xaver Wolfgang, born in Vienna.*
- Aug/Sep 1791 - Mozart's last trip to Prague, with Constanze and Süßmayr, to present "La clemenza di Tito."*
- 5 December 1791 - Mozart dies in Vienna.*
- Autumn 1793 - Niemetschek moves to Prague to teach at the Kleinseitner Gymnasium. Meets and falls in love with Theresia Schnell.*
- February 1794 - Mozart's widow brings Carl Thomas (9 years old) to Prague to live with Niemetschek, apparently at the suggestion of Canon Franz Xaver Noe, a friend of the Mozarts from earlier days. Carl Thomas remains with Niemetschek until 1797.*

- November 1795 - Constanze brings Franz Xaver Wolfgang (then 4 years old) to Prague to stay with Theresia Schnell for six months.
- 25 August 1796 - Niemetschek's mentor, Canon Franz Xaver Noe, dies.
- 1797 - According to traditional view, the first version of Niemetschek's biography of Mozart is published in this year by Kasper Widtmann in Prague; no known copy exists.
- November 1797 - Constanze Mozart comes to Prague to pick up Carl Thomas from Niemetschek. While there, she presents a benefit concert.
- 10 January 1798 - Niemetschek and Theresia Schnell are married.
- 1798 - First edition of Niemetschek's biography of Mozart prepared with Constanze's help and published by Johann Herrl.
- 4 May 1799 - Constanze publishes newspaper appeal in Prague for original scores of unpublished Mozart compositions; Niemetschek given as point of contact for respondents.
- 26 May 1799 - Niemetschek's daughter Theresia born in Prague.
- 20 January 1800 - Niemetschek receives his degree as doctor of philosophy.
- 2 January 1802 - Niemetschek's son Franz Xaver born in Prague.
- 1802 - Niemetschek is appointed professor at the university in Prague.
- 1808 - Publication of second, revised edition of Niemetschek's biography of Mozart.
- Summer 1810 - En route to Copenhagen, Constanze spends three days with the Niemetscheks in Prague to introduce her new husband, Georg Nikolaus Nissen.
- around 1820 - Niemetschek takes up teaching post in Vienna and moves there with his family.
- 16 January 1828 - Niemetschek's wife Theresia dies in Vienna.
- 19 March 1849 - Niemetschek dies in Vienna and is buried in St. Marx Cemetery.

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But did Niemetschek really know Mozart? As early as December 1798, Friedrich Rochlitz was raising serious doubts about this in a review he wrote of Niemetschek's recently published biography: ". . .of course, he apparently was not personally associated with Mozart." Niemetschek defended himself against the charge with a limp reply: ". . .but I am compelled to say I was indeed associated with Mozart; only not very long, to be precise, during his last visit to Prague." In any event, the doubts were never fully stilled. In 1966, Tomislav Volek undertook to examine the question once more and came to the conclusion that Niemetschek probably had never had personal contact with Mozart. ^{1/} As for Niemetschek, at the end of the first edition published in 1798, he cited two main sources for his work: his "personal experience" and "contact with Mozart's family."

Niemetschek's personal experience

If Niemetschek wrote his biography out of personal experience with the composer, then exactly where and when did he run into Mozart? The answer to this not uninteresting question is to be found in reviewing information concerning Niemetschek's career as gymnasium teacher (that is, instructor in a secondary school designed to prepare students for the university) contained in the autobiographical essay mentioned above.

Niemetschek began his essay right after his wife Theresia died in January 1828. He appeared to have in mind writing a kind of historical account of the thirty years of their marriage, beginning with a general picture of the family and social circumstances in which his wife had been raised in the years before they were wed. *"My most dearly beloved and unforgettable wife Therese was the daughter of the well-known merchant Andreas Schnell and Anna Stoll, daughter of Prince Schwarzenberg's overseer Stoll."*

The manuscript was, however, never finished; moreover, some parts of those passages that were completed must be regarded as lost for the time being. A gap first appears right after the description of what life in Prague was like for the merchant's daughter. The text then takes up in the midst of recounting how hectic the marriage festivities had been because of a misplaced wedding ring and how the first night of wedded bliss was marred by the bridegroom's toothache. A full account is given of the births of daughter Theresia and son Franz Xaver, and of the quest to find an apartment with enough room for the family. The events culminating in Niemetschek's receipt of his degree as doctor of philosophy on 20 January 1800 are present in a finished version but the difficulties surrounding his subsequent appointment to the university in Prague appear only in draft. Then comes a leap of some twenty-five years. The second section of the manuscript begins with the birth of Niemetschek's granddaughter Theresia on 3 April 1825 and ends with his beloved wife's tragic death in 1828.

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

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

instructor for poetry. 2/ It is only in the fall of 1793 that Niemetschek came to live in Prague after receiving the position of teacher of language and grammar at the Kleinseitner Gymnasium. 3/

An important center of Prague's musical life in these times was the salon of the Duscorks: he -- Franz Xaver -- was prominent as pianist, composer, and music teacher; she -- Josephine -- was 21 years younger than her husband and a celebrated concert and opera singer. In Niemetschek's essay, there is this to read about the household: ". . . *at the time Madame Duscork's house was the gathering place for persons of outstanding intellect and talent, those from Prague as well as from abroad. Because it was only fitting that she set the tone so far as music was concerned, so it happened that no musician came to Prague who did not find the hoped-for entrée and encouragement.*"

Also to be found coming and going at the Duscorks was Niemetschek's future wife, Theresia Schnell. *"In the years 1790, 1791, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, she was one of (Prague's) most popular hat-makers. Frau Duscork too knew well how to make use of her skill and her pleasing diligence. Here, Therese made the acquaintance of a host of different persons and personalities -- she was confronted with many who were excellent in art, but also with many lacking in character and morals. There is no denying that her range of ideas was broadened, her sense of the beautiful sharpened and refined, and her understanding of human nature advanced: but she was also directly exposed to the danger of becoming infected by flippancy for all that is holy and sacred, as was the nature of the times and the overriding tenor of educated circles. Fortunately for her and for me too, her childlike spirit, her maidenly humility and modesty -- the outcome of a mother's pious upbringing -- were not overwhelmed by this rather overly frivolous life!"*

The essay speaks, too, of *"the influence that the goings-on at the Duscorks could have had on her character"* and *"of the company's seductive dangers and opportunities,"* which Theresia had unfailingly withstood, thanks to her education and the moral principles imparted to her by her husband-to-be. *"She emerged completely unscathed from Madame Duscork's school! -- Moreover, she openly assured me that, although she [Mme. Duscork] treated her very personally, still she never did or said anything improper in her presence or encouraged her to do anything improper. Of course, this must be limited only to dealings with men; for as regards religious subjects, immortality, etc., Frau Duscork or someone else appears to have sown doubt and strange ideas in her mind; for she used to ask me about such things."*

The great difference in the ages of the Duscork couple provided occasion for all sorts of rumors in Prague and at their center stood Count Christian Clam-Gallas, from whom Josephine Duscork allegedly later received a yearly payment of 900 florins. 4/ Niemetschek's emphatic refrain as to his wife's virtuous conduct tends to lend substance to these rumors.

And at the Duscorks, Theresia Schnell had also met Mozart: *"At Madame Duscork's, she also made Mozart's acquaintance; (in 1787 and 1790 [sic], when he composed Don Giovanni and la Clemenza) he was very kind to her and in the evenings would always accompany her from the Duscorks to home, where he would pass some time chatting with her old mother."* Nowhere in those parts of the autobiographical essay that have survived does Niemetschek ever mention that he was himself personally acquainted with Mozart. Nor, in fact, is such a claim to be found in Niemetschek's Mozart biography. Not a single comment of Mozart's directed to Niemetschek has come down to us, nor is there any conversation between the two men that is given even in part.

Thus the "personal experience" claimed by Niemetschek appears to be nothing more than an effort to validate his capacity to render judgments in the realm of music, something not to be taken as self-evident in a gymnasium instructor trained as a teacher of German and pedagogue. Although his father Franz Simon and his younger brother Jakob Johann performed as cantors and organists in the hometown village church of Sadská 5/, we are aware so far of no performing musical activity on the part of Niemetschek. The only mention comes from Gottfried Johann Dlabacz in his *Künstler-Lexikon* from 1815, which says Niemetschek "plays the fortepiano with much taste." Nor are there any accounts of Niemetschek in contact with musicians of his period. The only one we encounter in Niemetschek's biographical essay is the pianist and student of Franz Xaver Duschek, Johann Wittasek.

Niemetschek saw to it that his children received a good musical education. Daughter Theresia had *"an excellent talent for music. . . .Nature bequeathed her a voice of unusual strength and purity, a very good ear, and a great love of music -- the last a legacy from both her parents. She was unusually quick to develop these striking gifts, and even as a beginning singer she gave pleasure and stirred interest. And a deep feeling for music manifested itself just as promptly in the son [Franz Xaver] -- but unfortunately that most beautiful of musical gifts, a good voice, was completely denied him. He made rapid progress in piano, however, and showed an unusual aptitude for stringed instruments. He accompanied [end of preserved text]."*

A music book once owned by Niemetschek's daughter ("Lieder-Sammlung mit Begleitung der Guitarre N[ummer] II") and now in the archives of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna affords us some idea of her repertory of songs. 6/ And a voluminous folder of copied Mozart scores that the music collection of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin-Preußischer Kulturbesitz was able to acquire from Irma Köhler (Berlin) in 1934 provides eloquent testimony as to the music-making that went on in the Niemetschek home. In a few cases we find ownership notations in it, from Niemetschek's daughter Theresia in the time of her first marriage with Bruno Neuling and from Franz Xaver Niemetschek. Whether in the latter case they relate to the author of the first Mozart biography, as Hans-Günter Klein believes, is something that must await a comparison of handwritings. 7/ Similar musical specimens are also held in the music collection of the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek. A two-volume piano arrangement of "Il Dissoluto Punito ossia Don Giovanni" carries this note of ownership, "Therese Niemetschek -- Francisci Niemetschek." And "Therese Niemetschek" is written on the title page of a piano reduction of "Così fan tutte." 8/

The musical education of the two children probably had been entrusted to Niemetschek's friend, the pianist Johann Wittasek. This is suggested by a music copybook, now in the music collection of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin-Preußischer Kulturbesitz, containing the inscription, "Generalbass und Harmonie von H. Johann Wittasek gelehrt. Franc. Nemeček m. p." 9/ Wittasek is also the composer of the four-part song, privately owned only in a copy, with the dedicatory inscription, "An Therese und Bruno Neuling nach der Trauung am 25.May 1812"(recte 1820).

In addition, the Berlin archives contain music pieces composed in the Niemetschek household for specific occasions. They are of course inventoried under the name of Franz Xaver senior, but it is clear from the dedications that they are the work of the younger Niemetschek. 10/

Niemetschek's association with the Mozart family

Mozart literature generally attributes upbringing of the two Mozart sons to the Niemetschek family. Carl Thomas had been brought to Prague by his mother early in 1794. Accompanying them (something not given much attention up to now) was Franz Xaver Süssmayr, whose opera, "L'incanto superato oder Die besiegte Zauberei," had been playing at the Nationaltheater since 1793 and whose newest work, "Il Turco in Italia," had been accepted for its premiere performance at this theater. For Prague University, he composed a cantata to a text by Niemetschek, which was performed on 12 February 1794 in honor of the birthday of Emperor Francis II. 11/ The friendship between the two young men -- if that is the proper term for so short an acquaintance -- evidently did not last long, for in late fall Niemetschek was already characterizing Süssmayr in a contribution to the "Allgemeines europäisches Journal," published in Brünn, as one ". . .who grumbles about his faithful teacher Mozart, but then goes on to plagiarize him nevertheless." 12/

In November 1795, the Widow Mozart also brought the four-year-old Franz Xaver Wolfgang Mozart to Prague to stay half a year, until she picked him up at the end of her concert tour. By his own account, Carl Thomas remained in Prague until the end of 1797. When Constanze Mozart came to take him home, she took advantage of being in Prague to give a concert, which took place in the Nationaltheater on 15 November 1797. Six months later Carl Thomas is to be found in Vienna among the students listed at the school run by the Piaristen monks.

Up to now, little note has been given to the fact that Niemetschek did not marry until 1798 and therefore, during the years from 1794 to 1797, he was still single, leading a bachelor's life in Prague without a household of his own and far removed from his family living in Sadská. According to the "Schematismus [personnel register] für das Königreich Böhme" of 1797, he lived in the Liechtenstein Haus on Welschen Platz (Kleinseite I 70 and 71, II 258; today: Malostranské náměstí 13). In this city palais, the Duscheks, Josephine and Franz Xaver, also maintained their city quarters, according to the testimony of the elder Mozart son, Carl Thomas: "I received instruction and lodging from Herr Franz Niemetschek. . . .From Herr Duschek, also living as we did in the Lichtenstein [sic] palais across from the Nikolas church. . . .I received food and some instruction in piano playing." Carl Thomas spent his holidays and vacations with Niemetschek at the parental home in Sadská, beginning right away with Easter 1794. 13/ According to Niemetschek's account to be found in a letter of 21 May 1800 to the Breitkopf & Härtel publishing house, when the younger brother, Franz Xaver Wolfgang, came to Prague, he was taken to live at the home of Niemetschek's future wife.

Who was it then that was able to persuade Constanze Mozart to entrust first her older son and then her younger son as well to a bachelor and his girl friend? This question is answered by a passage from one of Niemetschek's letters 14/: "I did everything without the slightest recompense, although Baron van Swieten was not sparing with pretty promises and charming letters. . . ." Following Mozart's death, van Swieten apparently played a considerable role in the life of the composer's widow. 15/ Although he was not the officially appointed guardian for the two Mozart sons (this duty fell to the magistrat's official Franz Xaver Flamm after the textile merchant Michael Puchberg turned it down), nevertheless one could read in the Viennese newspaper "Auszug aller europäischen Zeitungen" of 13 December 1791 "that Baron v. S** had taken responsibility for the care and rearing of one of his children." Another journal, "Der heimliche Botschafter," reported on 16 December 1791 concerning van Swieten as godfather or sponsor. On the very next day, the "Prager Oberpostamtszeitung" contained the news that "the well-known and highly

regarded former president of the court commission" had declared his readiness "to act as a father to the orphaned children and look after them." In the Mozart obituary published in the "Musikalische Korrespondenz der teutschen Filarmonischen Gesellschaft" (Speyer), van Swieten's generosity to the widow and the two sons was praised in similar words. And in the first (1798) edition of his Mozart biography (but not in the second from 1808), Niemetschek himself had this to say: "This excellent gentleman, one beyond all praise, remained a true friend of Mozart's and is now father to the orphans he left behind." And in still another passage he spoke "of the magnanimous friendship of a B. v. S.++," which this person, like the businessman "B.++ [Giuseppe Antonio Bridi]", had shown for Mozart himself.

But who was it in Prague that Constanze Mozart could have turned to in the matter of someone to care for her two sons? Perhaps the answer to this is to be found in the obituary of the highly regarded school administrator and pedagogue Franz Xaver Noe that Friedrich Schlichtegroll published in his "Nekrolog" series 16/: "After Mozart's death, [Noe] remained a friend and advisor to his widow and older son, the latter being most generously taken in and brought up for several years by Prof. Niemetschek -- Mozart's excellent biographer -- out of a like enthusiasm for his father's enchanting talent, but also as an accommodation to Noe."

So far as Mozart research is concerned, this former Jesuit priest and member of the Masons, Franz Xaver Noe, is an unknown quantity. In the personnel register of 1789, he is identified as "doctor of philosophy, teacher of literature at the Kleinseitner Gymnasium, historiographer of the Prague University, and notary of the philosophy faculty" and a senior clergyman as well. This friend of Constanze's from earlier days in Prague could well have been the intermediary. Niemetschek did not mention Noe in the sources listed in his biography of Mozart, but in something he wrote in 1799 he expressly called him his informant 17/: "But I heard most from his [Mozart's] closest friend, who was my friend and teacher as well, Franz Noe, canon and school official."

Niemetschek appears to have experienced Noe's unexpected death on 25 August 1796 as a kind of liberation from an all-pervading, authoritarian tie. Otherwise, how else should we interpret what he later had to say: that this day was one of the three most hallowed events in his life: "*The first was our rendezvous [i. e., between Niemetschek and his future wife Theresia Schnell] after the calamity with Noe.*" 18/ His acquaintance with her had, as Niemetschek wrote, already taken "*a warm and familiar form in the fall of 1793,*" but it was only "*after a brief separation in 1794 that they fell into each other's arms and declared their love for one another.*" Evidently Niemetschek either did not want to confide in his clerical mentor or could not bring himself to do so, and only the death of the venerated friend and teacher made the way free for the lovers. Until then, Niemetschek, who spoke of himself as a "gloomy philosopher," had had nothing to do with the fair sex: "*What is more I was too serious and, in my dealings with others, foolish, shy, and gauche.*" Later he would be comforted by the thought that he would "*offer [his wife] the lovely gift of my unimpaired bachelorhood: up to this moment, I had never touched another woman.*"

The wedding took place in St. Thomas Church of the Carmelites on the Kleinseite on 10 January 1798. 19/ At 35, Theresia Schnell was well along in age for a first marriage, given the customs of the times, but for her husband who was younger by two years, still a good catch. Her father ran a successful store in imported specialty goods in the Haus "Zur hilfreichen Jungfrau Maria" (U Panny Marie Pomocné) in the Thomasmgasse; in 1787 he had added to it the building next door ("Zum goldenen Storch"--U zlatého cápa). In passing, it is also

interesting to note that the ages of the bride and bridegroom were flatteringly altered in the marriage register: Theresia Schnell's age was given as 26, Niemetschek's, as 28.

Even before the marriage, Niemetschek had moved from his bachelor quarters in the Liechtenstein palais to the Haus "Zum goldenen Pferdchen" (U zlatého konicka) in the Brückengasse (Kleinseite I 19, II 51; today, Mostecká 8). Now he was located diagonally opposite his bride's mother, who lived in the Haus "Zum Mohren" (U mourenia) in the Brückengasse (Kleinseite I 41, II 282; today, Mostecká 5). Here is where daughter Theresia was born on 26 May 1799; she was baptized the next day in St. Thomas church. 20/ The cramped living conditions ("very small and uncomfortable"; and in another passage, "the crowded apartment with such dark stairs") led Niemetschek to move in February 1801 into the former Palais Wrtba in the Karmelitergasse (Kleinseite I 463, II 373; today Karmelitská 25), where he had rented "an apartment with four rooms for 100 florin". Further: "Because the apartment only looked out onto an inner court, my good Therese was quite unhappy at first; but she soon became accustomed to it because she was more comfortable there than in the former one". They were living here when, on 2 January 1802, their son Franz Xaver was born and baptized in the Maria vom Siege church. 21/

Together with his future wife, Niemetschek had proved his worth to Constanze Mozart as a dependable guardian for the Mozart sons. Why shouldn't she make use of his literary skills as well? Writing under the rubric "++k.," Niemetschek had published an article, "Report on the state of the theater in Prague," in the "Allgemeines europäisches Journal" in December 1794, followed by a supplement on the same subject appearing under "N.k." in March 1795. 22/ In these two contributions, Niemetschek showed how much he admired Mozart: "Actually since operas by Mozart have come into being, no other opera has made its fortune, in the true sense of the word; and the two by the Viennese composer Herr Süßmayr are no exception." And Niemetschek made light of Peter Winter's opera, "Fratelli rivali", saying Winter "had chosen Mozart as his model, and with the present piece turned out an ingratiating copy along the lines of Mozart." In addition, Niemetschek had demonstrated his ability as the author of texts for short festive songs that came to be presented in the Teynkirche as part of Prague University's observance of Emperor Francis II's birthday. 23/

Tradition has it that "Mozarts Biographie in Musikalischer Hinsicht von N**" ("Mozart's Biography from a Musical Point of View by N**") was published in 1797 by the Prague bookprinting firm with the name of Kasper Widtmann located in the Brückengasse (Kleinseite I 14, II 46; today Mostecká 18), a few steps away from Niemetschek's apartment. The 31-year-old Prague school teacher can readily be discerned behind the enciphered name. But interestingly enough, despite all efforts, up to now it has not been possible to verify the existence of a single copy of this issue. One cannot avoid the suspicion that Constanze Mozart could have had all copies of this very first of Mozart biographies bought up just as she had done some time before with the reprint of Mozart's obituary from Schlichtegroll's "Nekrolog" that was published in Graz in 1794. Or perhaps she caused the printing never to take place at all and persuaded Niemetschek instead to publish a version revised according to her ideas. Whatever the case, the actual first edition of Niemetschek's biography of Mozart was published one year later -- this time by Johann Herrl in Prague's inner city -- under the title, "Leben des K. K. Kapellmeisters Wolfgang Gottlieb Mozart, nach Originalquellen beschrieben" ("The Life of the K. K. Kapellmeister Wolfgang Gottlieb Mozart, according to original sources").

This Mozart biography appeared, it should be noted, at the very time that Constanze Mozart was beginning her dealings with Gottfried Christoph

Härtel over the first edition of the Requiem KV 626. Härtel informed her that the Leipzig music publishing house would be ready to bring out the Requiem in connection with the planned issue of Mozart's complete works only when ownership rights to the composition were not in question. In order not to jeopardize the printing (and the not inconsiderable penalty payments that would result therefrom), Constanze Mozart admitted that the proprietary rights were vested in a third party, but that this "Anonymous . . . after a passage of more than 7 years still has not made this work publicly known." As if intent on validating her account, she led Niemetschek to set down in print the tale of the unknown person offering the commission and his mysterious messenger. Some thirty years later these passages concerning the origin of the Requiem would show up in virtually the same words in the Mozart biography of Constanze's second husband, Georg Nikolaus Nissen. This may also have been the reason why she undertook with some determination to kill the Mozart biography planned by Breitkopf & Härtel with the notice that she had "already delivered all the information and documentary materials" to Niemetschek. He had in effect become an unwitting accomplice in the Widow Mozart's contrived game of mirrors. When he realized his situation, it was already too late: "I couldn't use everything [from Constanze Mozart], in part because of persons still living, but partly too because I did not believe everything Mme. Mozart told and showed me."

At the same time, Niemetschek had been engaged by Constanze Mozart to help her in yet another matter 24/: in a public appeal published in the 4 May 1799 issue of the "Prager Oberpostamtszeitung," Mozart's widow asked to be informed about "original scores of unpublished Mozart compositions." Niemetschek's name was given as the point of contact. It is hard to gauge just how successful this public appeal was, but it did provide the way by which the Prague flautist Franz Leitl made two divertimenti for winds (KV Anh. 226[196e] and KV Anh. 227[196f]) available for printing in the Breitkopf & Härtel *Oeuvres complètes*.

Mozart's widow, now Constanze Nissen since she remarried in 1809, continued to maintain friendly relations with Niemetschek. After she had passed through Prague on her way to Copenhagen a year and a half later, she wrote her son Carl Thomas in Milan on 13 November 1810: "I was in Prague for three days not because of Madame Duschek (no, for I didn't see her and didn't want to see her) but because of our dear friend Niemetschek. I . . .wrote him. . .when I expected to be in Prague and told him I will stay only one day for his sake so he could meet my husband. As it turned out, one day became three, and even then we could tear ourselves away only with difficulty."

The younger Mozart son, Franz Xaver Wolfgang, also remained faithful to the Niemetschek family. When he stopped briefly in Prague during a trip in the spring of 1820, he hurried right away to see his former guardian, only to note, disappointedly 25/: "I did not find Prof. Niemetschek at home." In Vienna, invitations to the chamber music evenings at the home of Wolfgang Amadeus junior -- as he was now called -- were highly prized. Niemetschek's daughter had married a second time in 1830, with Franz Joseph Richter; she wrote that in Vienna it was difficult "to bring together a true musically minded circle. Only at Mozart's are quartets of quality given in the wintertime." And when the Mozart monument in Salzburg was unveiled in 1842, it was Franz Joseph Richter, together with his brother Vinzenz, who accompanied the younger Mozart son on his trip there. Writing to his wife Theresia, he said: "I send many warm compliments to you and your father from our good friend Wolfgang Mozart, as well as from his brother Carl." 26/ The family also owned the autograph of the lied, "Lust am Weine," presented by him as a souvenir on 2 December 1843. 27/

The Niemetschek family apparently did not possess any personal souvenirs from Mozart's visits to Prague, for the two Mozart autographs -- a fragment from the second movement of a piano concerto (KV Anh. 65[452c]) and the sketch of an uncompleted aria for Susanna in "Figaro" -- had been purchased by Niemetschek (whether father or son is uncertain) from the collection of Aloys Fuchs in the late 1830s. On the other hand, an unadorned ring, a gift from Mozart's son to Niemetschek's daughter, was held by the Niemetschek family to be a "ring of the late Mozart." 28/ And expressly dedicated to Niemetschek's son were a small portrait of Mozart en profil embossed in wax, and a lock of hair. Both were loaned by the Richter estate located in Niederösterreich to the Mozart museum in the Villa Bertramka in Prague in 1941. Wartime confusion prevented their return and in the years following the war all questions of ownership were rendered moot.

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Addendum

The music collection of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin-Preußischer Kulturbesitz includes, under the signature *Mus.ep. Nissen Varia 1*, a four-page list of questions drawn up by Georg Nikolaus Nissen in connection with the preparations for writing a biography of Mozart. 29/ It is addressed to "Herr von Niemetschek, former Prague university professor, who with his biography of Mozart erected a most honorable memorial to him and, at the same time, to himself as well."

Because the questionnaire was never filled in, it must remain open whether in fact Nissen ever sent it or whether Niemetschek simply never answered it. There is no question, however, that Niemetschek had made a collection of "Anecdotes and personal sketches of Mozart during his frequent visits to Prague" and that these were subsequently inserted word for word into the galley proofs of Nissen's manuscript now held by the International Stiftung Mozarteum in Salzburg.

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FOOTNOTES [Citations are in the original German, with occasional gists in English]

1. Tomislav Volek, *Meznama tvar F.X. Nemecka / Das unbekannte Angesicht von F.X. Niemetschek*, in: *Hudebni rozhledy* 19.Praha 1966, Nr.14, S.427 ff.
2. Wenzel Nowak, *Rückblick auf das erste Saeculum des k.k. deutschen Obergymnasiums in Pilsen (1776-1891)*, in: *Programm des k.k. deutschen Obergymnasiums zu Pilsen in Böhman für das Schuljahr 1891*. Pilsen 1891, S.7, 19, 24.
3. Gottlieb Biermann, *Geschichte des Gymnasiums der Kleinseite in Prag*, in: *Programm des k.k. Deutschen Obergymnasiums der Kleinseite am Schlusse des Schuljahres 1880*. Prag 1880, S.46.
4. Katalog der *Autographen-Sonderauktion* des Wiener Dorotheums am 7.April 1992, Kat.Nr.79,80.
5. The Prague National Museum holds an arrangement of Mozart's motet "Ave verum corpus" KV 618 as a gradual with parts written in the hand of J[akob Johann] Niemetschek (Sig. Mus. XIX F 533); information kindly provided by Dr. T. Volek, Prague.

6. Freundliche Mitteilung von Dr. Otto Biba.

7. *Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart - Autograph und Abschriften*. Katalog bearbeitet von Hans-Günter Klein (Staatsbibliothek Berlin-Preußischer Kulturbesitz. Kataloge der Musikabteilung I: Handschriften 6). Kassel 1982.

8. Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Musiksammlung, Mus.Hs. 22.142 (erworben 1940 von Dr. Collins); Mus.Hs. 40.967 (erworben 1991 von Maria Richter, Wien).

9. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin-Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Musikabteilung, Mus.ms.theor. 967 (freundlicher Hinweis von Dr. T. Volek, Prag). Wittasek is named as participating as soloist in a Mozart piano concerto both at the memorial concert on 13 January 1792 and at Constanze Mozart's benefit concert of 15 November 1797.

10. Jana Vysohlidova, *Bohemika ve sbirce autografu Statni knihovny v Berline / Die Bohemica in der Autographensammlung der Staatsbibliothek in Berlin*, in: *Miscellanea musicologica* 32. Praha 1988, S.126 f. (Mus.ms.autogr. F. Niemetschek 1N-7N; erworben 1934 von Irma Köhler, Berlin). The attribution of the compositions to the younger Niemetschek follows from the text in one case (3N: "Töne süßer Harmonien wallet zu Theresens Ohr", with the date of 14 October 1822) and from the dedications (7N: "Zum Geburtstag meiner Schwester Therese" und "Dem Vater zum Geburtstage im J. 1822") .

11. Jeri Berkovec, *Musicalia v prazskem periodickém tisku 18.stoleti / Musicalien in der Prager periodischen Presse des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Varia de Musica 6). Praha 1989, Regest 103, sowie S.221 und 235f. (Ankündigung des Liedes der Böhmen: "Tag der Wonne, Tag des Jubels" in der Bearbeitung für Harmoniemusik von Johann August Wittasek.)

12. Tomislav Volek, *Repertoire Nosticovského divadla v Praze let 1794, 1796-8 / Das Repertoire des Nostitz-Theaters in Prag in den Jahren 1794, 1796-98*, in: *Miscellanea Musicologica* 16. Praha 1961, S.8, 31.

13. *Brief Karl Thomas Mozarts an Adolf Popelka vom 4.März 1856*, in: *Briefe vom Bertramhof* (Hrsg. Mozartgemeinde Prag) 1/1944. -- Brief von Franz Xaver Niemetschek an Therese Schnell vom 19.April 1794 (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin-Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Musikabteilung, Mus.ep. F. Niemetschek 6). Regarding Franz Xaver Duschek, see: Vaclav Jan Sykora, *Frantisek Xaver Dusek: zivot a dilo / Das Lebenswerk von Franz Xaver Duschek*. Praha 1958. Soon after 1797, Duschek and his wife must have moved to the Haus "Zum schwarzen Ochsen" ("U cerného orla") diagonally across the street on the corner of the Schloßgasse / Zamecka (Kleinseite I 72, II 203), where he died on 12 February 1799. The two-story gabled house was torn down at the end of the previous century, along with its neighbor, "Zu den zwei weißen Löwen" (U dvou vilych lvu").

14. Wilhelm Hitzig, *Briefe Franz Xaver Niemetscheks und der Marianne Mozart an Breitkopf & Härtel*, in: *Der Bär. Jahrbuch auf das Jahr 1928*. Leipzig 1928, S.110.

15. After Mozart died, van Swieten took care of the funeral arrangements for Constanze Mozart. He also organized the concert for the benefit of Mozart's widow that took place in the Jahn Room on 2 January 1793, at which the first performance of the Requiem in its version as completed by Süssmayr took place.

16. Friedrich Schlichtegroll, *Nekrolog auf das Jahr 1797* 2.Gotha 1801, S.191 ff. (insbesondere S.217f.).

17. Hitzig a.O. S.106. There the name was read as "Franz Etor(?)." Concerning the correct transcription of the name, see the afterword in the reprint of Niemetschek's Mozart biography by Peter Krause, Leipzig 1978.

18. The other two "most hallowed" events were Niemetschek's appointment to the Prague University in 1802 and, in 1827, his wife's reappearance after she had been missing for several days as the result of an attack of depression.

19. Hlavního města Prahy (Stadtarchiv Prag), Trauungsbuch des Pfarramtes St. Thomas auf der Kleinseite (1798 Januar 10).

20. Stadtarchiv Prag, Taufmatriken des Pfarramtes St. Thomas N 8 (Mikrofilm 1293).

21. Stadtarchiv Prag, Geburtsmatriken des Pfarramtes Maria vom Siege (Maria Vitezná) N 1 (Mikrofilm 1310).

22. Volek a.O. S.23, 31, 39.

23. Franz Xaver Niemetschek, *Volkslied - Carmen Precationis*. Mit Notenbeilage gestochen von Johann Berka. Prag 1796 (Wiener Stadt- und Landesbibliothek, Sign. E 112.758). Berkovec a. O. Regest 137 (*Kramériusovy c. k. pražské postovské noviny / Kramerische k.k. Prager Postzeitung*, 17. Februar 1798).

24. Berkovec a.O. Regest 149 (*Prager Oberpostamtszeitung*, 4. Mai 1799).

25. Rudolph Angermüller, *Ein unvollendeter Brief Franz Xaver Wolfgang Mozarts, Dresden, 12. März 1820*, in: *Mitteilungen der Internationalen Stiftung Mozarteum* 38 (1990) S.152.

26. [Ernst Richter], *Eine Biedermeierreise zur Enthüllung des Mozart-Denkmal in Salzburg im Jahre 1842*, in: *Bergland -- Illustrierte alpenländische Monatsschrift* 1926, Nr.5, S.11ff. From 1847 on, Vinzenz Richter was married to Theresia Neuling, the daughter of his sister-in-law Theresia from her first marriage with Bruno Neuling.

27. Österreichische Nationalbibliothek -- Musiksammlung, Mus. Hs. 40.966 (erworben 1991 von Maria Richter, Wien).

28. Walter Hummel, *W.A. Mozarts Söhne*, Kassel 1956, S.253 (Anm. 18).

29. I want to thank Herr Frank Ziegler of the music department of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preußischer Kulturbesitz (Haus 1) for his helpful advice concerning the inventory of Niemetschek autographs in the Berlin archives.

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