

*A note of introduction: Symphony composition was a lifelong pursuit of Wolfgang Mozart, from his childhood days in London to the last years in Vienna. His audiences expected new ones all the time and he aimed to please. Neal Zaslaw's survey of Mozart's symphonic output for the pleasure of the many audiences in many lands is a pendant to his article on "Mozart as a working stiff." Thanks to Prof. Zaslaw for making both available on the *Apropos Mozart* website. -- BCC*

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## AUDIENCES FOR MOZART'S SYMPHONIES DURING HIS LIFETIME\*

Unlike Mozart's operas, whose commissioning, composition, rehearsals, premières, revivals and subsequent reception are often documented in considerable detail, his symphonies are for the most part difficult to trace. The more-than-fifty extant, authentic symphonies were written to be performed in the church, chamber, theater and even open air, for a variety of middle- and upper-class audiences. Their functions were, generally speaking, formal: that is, they served to open various artistic, cultural or social events, sometimes to close those events, and occasionally to articulate or punctuate them as entr'actes. These "framing" or articulative functions remained the same whether the event in question was a Lenten or Advent concert, a play, an opera or operetta, an oratorio or cantata, a mass or vespers, an evening at court, a party celebrating a name day, birthday or promotion, a serenade in the piazza, or *Tafelmusik* in a monastery.<sup>1</sup>

Because symphonies were ubiquitous and eighteenth-century audiences and patrons expected a steady supply of musical novelties rather than a handful of "classics" often repeated, the demand for new symphonies was unremitting. Jan LaRue's *A Catalogue of 18th-Century Symphonies*<sup>2</sup> identified more than 16,000 symphonies—and of course even this vast coverage cannot be complete. Precisely because of their universality, interchangeability and formal functions, symphonies tended to be anonymous compared to operas. An opera libretto had to be chosen with care, the censor satisfied, a composer commissioned, considerable resources expended in bringing it to the stage, and then all of society came to witness it, discuss it and, often, to comment on it publicly or privately. A symphony was simply part of musical daily life.<sup>3</sup> This explains why a Parisian periodical notified its readers concerning its editorial policy for reviewing concerts that, "Pour éviter les répétitions inutiles, nous ne sommes point dans l'usage de faire mention des symphonies par lesquelles commencent tous les Concerts, à moins que quelques circonstances particulières n'y engagent."<sup>4</sup> ("In order to avoid useless repetition, we are not in the habit of making mention of the symphonies with which all concerts begin, unless some special circumstances are involved.") This was also why the Viennese music-copying firm of Johann Traeg assumed in 1784 that a music-loving household might wish to rent six new

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--The endnotes begin on page 12.

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symphonies each week.<sup>5</sup> And when symphonies were commented upon, it was most often in stereotypical phraseology that reveals little. These circumstances create difficulties for the historian of the eighteenth-century symphony, but let us see nonetheless how far we can penetrate the resulting anonymity surrounding Mozart's symphonies.

Mozart's earliest symphonies were written in and for London and the Hague, and then performed in Amsterdam, Utrecht, Paris, Dijon, Lyons, Zürich and Donaueschingen during the Mozarts' grand tour of 1764-66, as well as in Salzburg after their return. These works are K. 16, 19, 19a, 22, 45a, and possibly also the lost K. 19b. Mozart was eight, nine and ten years old when he composed them. In London they seem to have been used exclusively for public concerts, for which the Mozarts garnered high earnings. In Holland there were public orchestral concerts in Amsterdam, the Hague and Utrecht, as well as private orchestral concerts at the Court of Orange at Leeuwarden. In Paris and Zürich the symphonies were played in private concerts, in Dijon and Lyons in public concerts, in Donaueschingen at court, and in Salzburg in the cathedral, at court and in private concerts.<sup>6</sup>

As a part of the child-prodigy act that his father was parading around Europe, young Wolfgang had demonstrated that he could assimilate and reproduce the latest symphonic style, composing attractive symphonies which he led with aplomb from the harpsichord. Yet these remarkable feats attracted no critical response that we know of, aside from a laconic notice in London stating, "One Wolfgang Mozart, a German boy, of about eight years old, is arrived here, who can play upon various sorts of instruments of music, in consort or solo, and can compose music surprizingly; so that he may be reckoned a wonder at his age."<sup>7</sup> The only other measurable response came from patrons in places where Mozart had performed, for in Zürich and Donaueschingen manuscript copies of his earliest symphonies were purchased, and the Salzburg court owned sets of parts for them as well.<sup>8</sup>

When, shortly after returning to Salzburg in December 1766, Mozart performed in the cathedral there, a chronicler recorded that "eine Symphonie gemacht worden, welche nicht allein bey allen Hofmusikanten großen Beyfall gefunden, sondern große Verwunderung erweckte. . . ."<sup>9</sup> ("a symphony was done which not only found great approbation from all the Court musicians, but also caused great astonishment.") The Symphony in G major, K. 45a, was revised in Salzburg during 1767 and given by Mozart to the Lambach Monastery in January 1768, so it was presumably in use during this period.<sup>10</sup> None of the earliest symphonies was published.

The next group of symphonies, K. 43, 45 and 48, was connected with a stay in Vienna lasting from September 1767 to December 1768. They were apparently performed at private concerts there.<sup>11</sup> However, the first of the three, the Symphony in F major, K. 43, was probably given its première not in Vienna but in the Bohemian town of Brno (Brünn), where the Mozarts had fled in a vain attempt to avoid smallpox. The public concert took place in the great room of the town's main pub or inn, with the local waits providing the orchestra.<sup>12</sup>

The Symphony in D major, K. 45, was revised by Mozart as the overture to his comic opera *La finta semplice*, which, kept from the Viennese stage by intrigue, was performed in Salzburg in 1769, after the Mozarts had returned home. Of the occasion for the third Viennese symphony, K. 48, nothing at all is known. None of the three was published, nor did they circulate widely in manuscript. A symphony performed by the Collegium Musicum of the City of Memmingen in 1776, however, may have been one of the three; and according to a report, it “. . . Beifall und Bewunderung erhielt: jenen verdiente sie in Ansehung der schönen Komposition, diese in Betracht, daß Mozard [*sic*], als er sie verfertigt, noch kaum 12 Jahre alt gewesen sein mag.”<sup>13</sup> (“. . .excited applause and amazement: the former on account of its beautiful composition, the latter because Mozard [*sic*], when he wrote it, can scarcely have been twelve years old.”)

In Salzburg too there was a steady demand for symphonies. The most prolific composers of symphonies were Michael Haydn, Leopold Mozart and Wolfgang Mozart, although there were several other local symphonists, including Anton Cajetan Adlgasser, Casper Christelli, Joseph Griner, Joseph Hafeneder, Wenzel Hebelt, Joseph Nikolaus Meissner, Anton Ferdinand Paris and Georg Scheicher.<sup>14</sup> Symphonies formed part of many private occasions, and were essential as well to theatrical presentations, public concerts, religious ceremonies, and occasions of state. During “the season” there were frequent concerts at the archbishop's court. One such evening in 1778 was tartly described by Leopold Mozart:

Gestern war ich daß erste mahl bey der grossen Musik bey Hof als Commendant. Itzt hören die Musiken *um viertl nach 8 uhr* auf. gestern fiengs um 7 uhr an, und als ich herausgieng schlungs *ein viertl nach 8 uhr*, also 5 viertlstund. meistens werden nur 4 Stuck gemacht. *eine Synfonie. eine Arie. eine Synfonie oder Concert.* dann *eine Arie* und hiemit addio!<sup>15</sup>

(Yesterday I was for the first time [this season] the director of the great [orchestral] concert at court. At present the music ends at around a quarter past eight. Yesterday it began around seven o'clock and, as I left, a quarter past eight struck—thus an hour and a quarter. Generally only four pieces are done: a symphony, an aria, a symphony or concerto, then an aria, and with this, “Addio.”)

For his contribution to satisfying Salzburg's symphonic demands, Wolfgang Mozart could of course re-use works he composed while traveling elsewhere in Europe, and he also wrote a striking number of symphonies in his home town. I count twenty-three fully authenticated symphonies written in Salzburg. Mozart also extracted excellent symphonies from his six Salzburg orchestral serenades. In addition, he composed finales for three of his two-movement overtures to turn them into autonomous three-movement symphonies; and to the overture of *Lucio Silla*, which already had three movements, he apparently added a newly composed minuet and trio.<sup>16</sup> Finally, in 1781 he composed the first version of the “Haffner” Symphony, K. 385, to send to Salzburg from Vienna. Hence, between 1767 and 1780 Mozart created approximately thirty-four symphonies for the local repertory (these are listed below in Table 1, page 14).<sup>17</sup> And as during these fourteen years he was away from Salzburg for something more than three years, his average rate of production was three symphonies per year.

The "Haffner" Symphony aside, none of the Salzburg symphonies was published during Mozart's lifetime, and surprisingly few copies circulated in manuscript. Leopold Mozart offered two contradictory explanations. On 24 September 1778 he wrote to Wolfgang: ". . . habe von deinen Sinfonien nichts hergegeben, weil ich vorauswuste, daß du mit reiffen Jahren, wo die Einsicht wächst, frohe seyn wirst, daß sie niemand hat, wenn du gleich damals, als du sie schriebst, damit zufrieden warest. man wird immer heickler." ("I have not given any of your symphonies to be copied, because I knew in advance that when you were older and had more insight, you would be glad that no one had got hold of them, though at the time you composed them you were quite pleased with them. One gradually becomes more and more fastidious.") On the other hand, Leopold claimed to the Leipzig music dealer and publisher Breitkopf that he and his son deliberately controlled Wolfgang's works closely, not letting manuscript copies circulate widely, but this remark may have been defensiveness or sour grapes, since Leopold tried unsuccessfully three times (in 1772, 1775 and 1781) to interest Breitkopf in handling Wolfgang's symphonies and other works.<sup>18</sup> No critical response to Mozart's Salzburg symphonies comes down to us, although when he sent his father the "Haffner" Symphony, Leopold informed his son that it pleased him.<sup>19</sup>

Between 1769 and 1773 Mozart was active as a symphonist in Italy, where he spent a total of twenty-two months. It appears from his and his father's correspondence and other documents that they were involved in orchestral concerts that would most likely have involved symphonies in Verona, Mantua, Bologna, Milan, Florence, Rome and Naples, and perhaps in other cities as well. According to a letter of 4 August 1770 Wolfgang had by then completed four symphonies in Italy. But most of the symphonies attributed to this period in the Köchel *Verzeichnis* lack autograph manuscripts or other reliable sources and are of questionable authenticity. Of the genuine symphonies, the Symphony in C major, K. 73 (75a), may have been written in Italy but the place and date are uncertain; the Symphony in G major, K. 74, was almost certainly composed in Rome in 1770; the three-movement overture to *Mitridate, re di Ponto*, K. 87 (74a), composed in Milan in the same year, circulated as an autonomous symphony; the two-movement overture to *Ascanio in Alba* (Milan, 1771) had a new finale added to create a symphony (K. 120 [111a]); the Symphony in F major, K. 112, also comes from Milan in 1771; and the three-movement overture to *Lucio Silla*, K. 135 (Milan, 1773), likewise circulated as an autonomous symphony without the added minuet and trio mentioned above. This makes a total of five or six Italian symphonies, and there may have been others, some of which may be lurking among eight questionable symphonies, K. 45b, 81 (71l), 97 (73m), 95 (73n), 84 (73q), 75, 96 (111b), and 74g (Anh. C 11.03), or among four lost symphonies, K. 66c, 66d, 66e and Anh. C 11.08.

Mozart's Italian symphonies were composed for performances in the *palazzi* of aristocrats, who especially in Advent and Lent gave concerts for invited guests, or for semi-public concerts before the members and guests of certain learned academies. A newspaper account of Wolfgang's concert in the Teatrino of the Accademia Filarmonica in Verona on 5 January 1770 provides the only critical response to dozens of Italian concerts spread over many cities and many

months. The writer remarked upon Mozart's ". . . bellissima sinfonia d'introduzione di composizione sua, che ha meritata tutto l'applauso."<sup>20</sup> ("most beautiful introductory symphony of his own composition, which deserved all its applause.") None of Mozart's Italian symphonies was published during his lifetime and manuscript copies can hardly be documented either.<sup>21</sup>

The first of Mozart's symphonies to be published may have been his "Paris" Symphony, K. 297 (300a), from the year 1778 when Mozart spent six months in the French capital. (Publication perhaps had less to do with advances in this symphony over earlier ones – although it is a splendid work – than with the fact that, whereas in central Europe symphonies circulated primarily in manuscript, in Paris, where music engraving was common, publication was the principal means of dissemination.) The story is a bit unclear, however: the Parisian publisher Sieber announced two symphonies by Mozart in 1779, but the earliest surviving copies of Sieber's edition of K. 297 apparently date from 1788, when Sieber made a new announcement – so the 1779 publication may have been aborted.<sup>22</sup> (If that was the case, then the first of Mozart's symphonies to be published was the "Haffner" Symphony, K. 385, which Artaria brought out in Vienna in 1785.)

The "Paris" Symphony was given its première at the Concert spirituel on 18 June 1778, and according to Mozart's letter to his father of 3 July it pleased the audience so much that they clapped not only at the ends of the movements but during the first movement, apparently at a passage where Mozart had introduced a brilliantly orchestrated passage in triple octaves.<sup>23</sup> Joseph Legros, the director of the Concert spirituel, told Mozart that it was one of his best symphonies and that he would perform it again, although he demanded a different Andante, claiming that the original one "seye zu viell modulation darin - und zu lang" ("has too many modulations and is too long"). Although Mozart disagreed with Legros's critique of his Andante, he complied by composing a new one. As we have both of these middle movements, one in 3/4, the other in 6/8, we would love to be able to evaluate Legros's reception of the first Andante and Mozart's response in the second; but despite the mass of documentary, circumstantial and stylistic evidence, great confusion remains about which Andante is which.<sup>24</sup>

Even though fifteen Parisian performances of Mozart's symphonies were chronicled in no fewer than five periodicals between 1778 and 1789, critical response was sparse, consisting of only three comments. The first of these merely remarked that Mozart, "qui, dès l'âge le plus tendre, s'était un nom parmi les Clavecinistes, peut être placé aujourd'hui parmi les plus habiles Compositeurs."<sup>25</sup> ("who from the tenderest age had made a name for himself among harpsichordists, can today be placed among the ablest composers.") The second, comparing a symphony by Sterkel to one by Mozart heard at the same concert, asserted of the latter that "Peut-être est-il aussi savant & aussi majestueux que le premier, mais il n'a pas excité le même intérêt."<sup>26</sup> ("perhaps it is as learned and as majestic as the first but it did not excite the same interest")

The third comment is an important document in this reception history, stating of what must almost certainly have been the "Paris" Symphony:

On a remarqué dans les deux premiers morceaux un grand caractère, une grand richesse d'idées, & des motifs bien suivis. A l'égard du troisieme, où brille toute la science du contrepoint, l'Auteur a obtenu les suffrages des Amateurs d'un genre de musique qui peut intéresser l'esprit, sans jamais aller au coeur.<sup>27</sup>

(In the first two movements one remarked great assurance, a great richness of ideas & well-developed themes. As regards the third, in which all the science of counterpoint shines forth, the composer obtained the commendation of lovers of the kind of music that interests the mind without touching the heart.)

This, the earliest meaningful critique of Mozart's symphonic style, especially when combined with the nature of Legros's rejection of the first Andante, foretells virtually the entire story of the reception of Mozart's symphonies during the rest of his lifetime: in certain quarters listeners who could recognize and admire the brilliance of Mozart's musical thought were nonetheless sometimes overwhelmed by the number of ideas introduced, by the relatively elaborate orchestration, by the chromaticism, and by the contrapuntally conceived part-writing. In the finale of the "Paris" Symphony the critic was doubtless responding not only to the opening two-part counterpoint, but especially to the fugato, which appears briefly in the exposition and then serves as the material for the entire development section (mm. 44-55, 117-50). The response might have been the same for any music in the *streng* or *gearbeitet Stil* if it was intended for a public forum other than a church. The critique is clear: the contrapuntal and chromatic aspects of Mozart's style are clever, but they merely "interest the mind without touching the heart." *O tempora! O mores!* Is it not marvelous that what a modern listener might regard as a highpoint of Mozart's finale seemed a fatal weakness to a listener of 1779 imbued with the galant aesthetic?

From 1784 symphonies by Mozart began to be heard at public concerts in London. On some twenty occasions over the next eight years his symphonies were listed in press notices, but as elsewhere, critical comment was sparse: none of the symphonies can be positively identified, but on 18 February 1784 "a grand, beautiful symphony, varied in all its parts" was heard, and on 28 April of the same year a symphony "pleased us by many brilliant Passages, not wandering from the Line of either Taste or Judgement."<sup>28</sup>

The "Haffner" Symphony, K. 385, had its première in Salzburg in August 1782 under Leopold Mozart's auspices at a celebration of the ennoblement of Wolfgang's childhood friend, Sigmund Haffner the younger. Wolfgang led a performance in Vienna on 22 March 1783 at his benefit concert in the Hofburgtheater with the Emperor in attendance. From the program it appears that the first three movements served as an overture and the fourth movement as a finale to the evening, with arias, piano concertos, piano variations, a sinfonia concertante and an improvisation in between. K. 385 was published in Vienna in its first version (Artaria, 1785) and in Paris in its second version (Sieber, 1789); it circulated in manuscript in both versions.<sup>29</sup> What was apparently a performance of this work in Frankfurt in 1786 elicited an enthusiastic report:

Das Concert nahm also seinen Anfang mit einer neuen Synfonie von **Mozart** in D, die mir um so willkommener war, weil ich schon lange begierig gewesen, sie zu hören. Hr. Kammermusikus **Lehritter**, ein Steifbruder des Abbé **Sterkel**, führte das Orchester, welches ohngefähr aus fünf bis sechs und vierzig meist jungen

Künstlern bestand, mit so viel Feuer und Tüchtigkeit an, daß ich voll Verwunderung da stand. Alles hing so Schlag auf Schlag an einander; Tempo, Execution, Forte, Piano und Crescendo war im äußersten Punct der vollkommenheit, und ich hätte nichts zu wünschen übrig gehabt, wenn Sie bey mir gewesen wären. Die Synfonie von Mozart selbst, halte ich für ein Meisterstück der Harmonie. . . .<sup>30</sup>

(The concert began with a new Symphony in D major by Mozart, which was all the more welcome to me because I had already long been eager to hear it. Herr Chamber-Musician Lehritter . . . led the orchestra – which consisted of approximately 45 or 46 mostly young artists – with so much fire and solidity that I stood there full of astonishment. Everything hung together from one beat to the next: tempo, execution, forte, piano and crescendo were in every respect perfect, and I had nothing more to wish for, except that you were here with me. I consider Mozart's symphony itself a masterpiece of harmony. . . .)

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WE HAVE NOW ACCOUNTED for all of Mozart's symphonies save the famous last five, that is, the "Linz" of 1783 (K. 425), the "Prague" of 1785-86 (K. 504), and the final trilogy of 1788 (K. 543, 550 and 551). According to Mozart's letter of 31 October 1783, the "Linz" symphony was written in four or five days so that a concert could be given on short notice; and a recently published document reveals that the symphony's first performance was on 3 November in the context of the private "Winter Conzerte" that Count Johann Joseph Anton Thun-Hohenstein held in his "Freihaus." The work was probably repeated the next day, when Mozart gave a public concert at the so-called "Wassertheater."<sup>31</sup> Mozart sent the autograph manuscript of the "Linz" Symphony to his father, who had parts copied and performed it in Salzburg. These Salzburg parts survive, but the autograph manuscript vanished at an early date. Mozart had kept a copy (probably a set of parts), which he eventually edited, presumably for performances in Vienna and perhaps elsewhere as well, so the work survives in two authentic versions. In 1786 Mozart sold a copy of K. 425 to the court at Donaueschingen along with copies of two other symphonies (K. 319 and 338) and three piano concertos.<sup>32</sup> There are no reception documents for the "Linz" Symphony, which was not published until 1793, except that Count Thun for whom it was written was later an enthusiastic patron of Mozart's in Prague.

Mozart entered K. 504 into his *Verzeichnüß* on 6 December 1786 in Vienna. The work probably had its première at one of four Advent subscription concerts that, according to Leopold Mozart's letter of 6 December, Mozart gave that month at the Trattner Casino. Mozart left for Prague on 8 January 1787, invited there by "the orchestra and a society of great connoisseurs and amateurs" (Leopold Mozart's letter of 12 January). The success in Prague of the eponymous symphony was described twelve years after the fact by Niemetschek, who claimed to have attended its first performance there on 19 January 1786:

. . . in eben dem Jahre [1782] hörte man schon in allen bessern Musikalischen Akademien, Mozarts Klavierstücke und Sinfonien. . . [19 Januar 1787] Er ließ sich dann auf allgemeines Verlangen in einer großen musikalischen Akademie im Operntheater auf dem Pianoforte hören. Nie sah man noch das Theater so voll Menschen, als bey dieser Gelegenheit; nie ein stärkeres, einstimmiges Entzücken, als sein göttliches Spiel erweckte. Wir wußten in der That nicht, was wir mehr bewundern sollten, ob die ausserordentliche Komposition, oder das ausserordentliche Spiel. . . Die Sinfonien, die er für diese Gelegenheit setzte, sind

wahre Meisterstücke des Instrumentalsatzes, voll überraschender Uebergänge und haben einen raschen, feurigen Gang, so, daß sie alsogleich die Seele zur Erwartung irgend etwas Erhabenen stimmen. Dieß gilt besonders von der großen *Sinfonie in D dur*, die noch immer ein Lieblingsstück des Prager Publikums ist, obschon sie wohl hundertmal gehört ward.<sup>33</sup>

(. . . in the same year [1782] Mozart's symphonies . . . were to be heard at all the best concerts. . . . [On January 19, 1787] in answer to a universal request, he gave a piano recital at a large concert in the opera house. The theater had never been so full as on this occasion. . . . The concert was quite a unique occasion for the people of Prague. Mozart likewise counted this day as one of the happiest of his life. The symphonies [*sic*] that he composed for this occasion are real masterpieces of instrumental composition . . . the very soul is carried to sublime heights. . . . [T]he grand Symphony in D major . . . is still always a favorite in Prague, although it has no doubt been heard a hundred times.)

This is certainly hagiographical, but not necessarily therefore untruthful.

Even less is known about the famous last three symphonies, which however has not prevented generations of Romantic writers from pretending that they knew certain things. These remarkable works suffer from what might be called "absences." (1) They were never mentioned in Mozart's correspondence, although he duly entered them in his *Verzeichnüb*. (2) They were not published during the three-and-a-half years left to Mozart after their composition. (3) They cannot be positively identified as having been composed for or performed on particular occasions during his lifetime, and nothing seems to have been written about them during that period either. From these "absences" generations of biographers and program annotators have allowed themselves to conclude that Mozart wrote the works out of some urgent internal need of his own – out of so-called "pure" inspiration – rather than for a specific function in the society in which he lived and worked. These symphonies must then have been written for posterity. And Mozart's apparent inability to bring the symphonies out into the world is adduced as another instance of society's indifference to his fate and lack of appreciation for his genius. To my way of thinking, this is bathetic nonsense.

Let us examine each "absence" in the light of what we have just learned about Mozart's fifty-odd other symphonies.

(1) *Correspondence*. In general, Mozart rarely discussed symphonies in his correspondence. Furthermore, after 1787 when his father died, the correspondence thinned out and its character changed: the detailed reports of professional activities which previously filled the letters largely ceased.

(2) *Publication*. As we have seen, most of Mozart's symphonies were not published during his lifetime, but circulated in manuscript parts, so there is nothing special about this circumstance. Had he worked in Paris or London, this might have been otherwise.

(3) *Performances and commentary*. As already mentioned, it is impossible to document most private concerts and, at least in Vienna, there were dozens of private concerts for each public concert. Then, symphonies were seldom mentioned in the reviews or other commentaries that come down to us, and even when they are mentioned, they were only occasionally described in sufficient detail to permit their certain identification. This article contains the known reviews or other reactions to Mozart's symphonies in his lifetime; there are barely more than a dozen of these in response to probably hundreds of performances of more than 50 symphonies over a period of 28 years.

There are additional reasons to question the interpretation commonly built upon these "absences." From what we know of Mozart's habits, he usually composed only when he had a commission or some other concrete project in mind. While there was frequently a need for new symphonies, in his early Viennese years Mozart had poured his energies mainly into piano concertos, in which he himself or one of his pupils starred as soloist, making use in his concerts of either symphonies by other composers or earlier symphonies of his own. In Mozart's later Viennese years opera often occupied his best creative energies. In 1787-88, however, Mozart's thoughts must have returned to symphonies for he produced his own symphonies at three public concerts in Vienna (14 and 21 March 1787 and 15 February 1788).<sup>34</sup>

Then in the spring and summer of 1788 Mozart had in mind projects that would require new symphonies. He was planning a series of three subscription concerts for Vienna in the autumn of that year, and since 1786 he had been trying to arrange a tour to England. The visit to England had been proposed by Mozart's British friends in Vienna, Michael Kelly, Thomas Attwood, and Stephen and Nancy Storace, and it continued to be mooted until at least 1790.<sup>35</sup> In the end it never materialized. The projected subscription series has usually been said to have fallen through as well. We know about it solely from an undated letter to Mozart's patron and brother Mason, Michael Puchberg, which reads:

Liebster Bruder!

Ihre wahre Freundschaft und Bruderliebe macht mich so kühn, Sie um eine große Gefälligkeit zu bitten;—ich bin ihnen noch 8 *Dukaten* schuldig—überdies daß ich dermalen außer Stand bin, Sie Ihnen zurück zu bezahlen, so geht mein Vertrauen gegen Sie so weit, daß ich Sie zu bitten wage, mir nur bis künftige Woche (wo meine Academien im Casino anfangen) mit 100 fl. auszuhelfen; — bis dahin muß ich nothwendigerweise mein Subscriptions-Geld in Händen haben und kann Ihnen dann ganz leicht 136 fl. mit dem wärmsten Dank zurück bezahlen. Ich nehme mir die Freyheit Ihnen hier mit 2 Billets aufzuwarten, welche ich Sie (als Bruder) bitte, ohne alle Bezahlung anzunehmen, da ich ohnehin nie im Stande seyn werde, Ihnen Ihre mir bezeugte Freundschaft genugsam zu erwiedern. Ich bitte Sie noch einmal meiner Zudringlichkeit wegen um Vergebung und verharre nebst Empfehlung an Ihre würdige Frau Gemahlin mit aller Freundschaft und Bruderliebe

Ihr ganz ergebenster Br.  
W. A. Mozart<sup>36</sup>

Dearest Brother!

Your true friendship and brotherly love embolden me to ask a great favor of you. I still owe you eight ducats. Apart from the fact that at the moment I am not in a position to pay you back this sum, my confidence in you is so boundless that I dare to implore you to help me out with a hundred gulden until next week, when my concerts in the Casino [the Trattnerhof am Graben] are to begin. By that time I shall certainly have received my subscription money and shall then be able quite easily to pay you back 136 gulden with my warmest thanks. I take the liberty of sending you two tickets which, as a brother, I beg you to accept without any payment, seeing that, as it is, I shall never be able adequately to return the friendship which you have shown me. Once more I ask your forgiveness for my importunity and with greetings to your esteemed wife, I remain in true friendship and fraternal love,

your most devoted Brother.  
W. A. Mozart)

Ever since an article about Mozart's letters by Phillip Spitta in 1880,<sup>37</sup> this letter has been accepted as dating from June 1788, as the first of the long series of begging letters to Puchberg – and June 1788 is the date assigned it in all editions of Mozart's correspondence. But that is almost certainly wrong, for three internal reasons: (1) Mozart's letter to Puchberg dated 17 June 1788, also asking for money, is, by its introductory nature and formal tone, more likely to be the first of the series, whereas the undated letter, while certainly polite, takes a more perfunctory approach. (2) Mozart already owed Puchberg 8 ducats (or 36 gulden) before writing the undated letter, so it cannot have been the first solicitation for money. (3) The letter reveals that Mozart's subscription concerts were to begin the following week, but subscription concerts could not be given in Vienna in the summer, when the nobility were on their estates. They had to be given during the "season," that is, in autumn, Advent, carnival, Lent or the spring, when potential subscribers were in town. And if the tickets had already been printed and were being distributed, as must have been the case for if Mozart could enclose complimentary tickets for Puchberg and his wife, then the subscription concerts most likely had not been cancelled and probably did take place. Taking note of this last point, H. C. Robbins Landon has recently proposed that the undated letter must have been written in August 1788.<sup>38</sup> But that may still be too early. Subscription concerts were private and exclusive and not publicly advertised; Mozart could not send the subscription list around to Vienna's grand houses (which is how it was done) until the owners were in town, perhaps in September or October.

Recall that in his *Verzeichnüss* Mozart dated the last three symphonies 26 June, 25 July and 10 August, thus in time for parts to be copied for concerts in September or thereafter. And, quite remarkably, we have a witness to the activities chez Mozart at about that time, for on Sunday afternoon, 24 August 1788, a Danish traveler, Joachim Daniel Preissler, paid Mozart a visit and recorded in his diary:

. . . til Kapellmester *Mozardt* [sic]. Her havde jeg den glædste Time, Musikken nogentid har skienket mig. Denne lille Mand og stoere Mester *phantaseerte* To Gange paa et *Pedal-Clavecin*, saaledes! saaledes! at jeg ikke vidste hvor jeg var. De sværeste Ting, og de behageligste *Themata* imellem hinanden. - Konen [Constanze Mozart] skar Penne til Nodeskriveren; en Eleve [J. N. Hummel] componeerte, en lille Dreng paa Fiire Aar [Karl Thomas Mozart] gik omkring i Haven og sang Recitativer; kort sagt: Alting has denne fortreffelig Mand var *musikalsk!*<sup>39</sup>

(. . . to Kapellmeister Mozart's . . . [where] I had the happiest hour of music that has ever fallen to my lot. This small man and great master twice extemporized on a pedal pianoforte, so wonderfully!—so wonderfully that I quite lost myself. He intertwined the most difficult passages with the most lovely themes.—His wife cut quill-pens for the copyist, a pupil [J. N. Hummel] composed, a little boy aged four [Karl Thomas Mozart] ran about in the garden and sang recitatives—in short, everything that surrounded this splendid man was musical!)

The G minor symphony was certainly performed soon after its completion, because (as has long been known) Mozart prepared new versions of a passage in the Andante and of the woodwind orchestration of all four movements, which would only have been created for a specific purpose; and those new versions are on paper of the same date as the paper of the original manuscript. And Mozart's own set of parts for K. 550 survives, with the second version pasted over the first; these parts are the subject of an important article by Cliff Eisen.<sup>40</sup>

Mozart may have had in mind to create an "opus" of three symphonies, or, at least, the three were listed together in Johann Traeg's catalogue of symphonies available in manuscript from his Viennese scriptorium, and they were also listed together in the manuscript catalogue of Mozart's works owned by the Leipzig firm of Breitkopf & Härtel. But both these catalogues date from after Mozart's death, and when the three symphonies were posthumously published, they appeared separately.<sup>41</sup>

When Mozart went on tour, he characteristically took recent symphonies and piano concertos with him to use in his concerts. Although the English tour fell through, Mozart did travel in Germany, giving public orchestral concerts in Dresden and Leipzig in 1789 and in Frankfurt and Mainz in 1790. Finally, a symphony by Mozart was included in a public Viennese concert on 16 April 1791 and repeated the next day.<sup>42</sup> I can see no reason for supposing that Mozart did not perform his last three symphonies at these six concerts, and the same would apply to such undocumented private orchestral concerts as may have occurred during this period.

The evidence for the dissemination of these symphonies is slender but concrete: a piano reduction of the Symphony in E flat major, K. 543, was being planned by Johann Wenzel in Prague prior to November 1789, although it was not published until after Mozart's death.<sup>43</sup> When Mozart was in Berlin in April and May 1789, he apparently made a deal with the music seller J. F. K. Rellstab, who then advertised the "sämmtliche Kompositionen von Mozart" for sale. This offering of course may or may not have included the last three symphonies, yet in April 1790 the Hamburg publisher J. C. Westphal offered K. 550 and 551 for sale in manuscript, and Westphal most likely got these symphonies from Rellstab.<sup>44</sup> And a very few sets of manuscript parts do survive in European libraries and archives for each of the three symphonies, some of which may date from the last years of Mozart's life, although these have yet to be examined with sufficient rigor to ascertain their dates with certainty.<sup>45</sup>

The very idea that Mozart would have written three such symphonies, unprecedented in length, complexity and seriousness, only to please himself or because he was "inspired," flies in the face of his known attitudes to music and life, and the financial straits in which he then found himself. He did not compose because he was inspired (although that may have been why he composed well). While he may often have found great enjoyment in composing (it was probably not merely to please his father that he called composing "meine einzige freude und Passion" – "my sole delight and passion"), he composed to pay his rent, to support his family, and to be a useful member of society, providing needed new music for private and public functions. Nothing, it seems, inspired him more than a prestigious or challenging commission to which he could turn his formidable musical imagination. When commissions or performance opportunities defaulted, however, he did not hesitate to put aside the fully inspired torsos of works that had suddenly become "useless." The audiences for Mozart's last three symphonies were the same as the audiences for the hundreds or thousands of other symphonies written in the 1780s. As far as Mozart and his audiences were concerned, his symphonies were not art for art's sake, but music for immediate practical use.<sup>46</sup>

## Endnotes

1. Neal Zaslaw, *Mozart's Symphonies: Context, Performance Practice, Reception* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 517-25.
2. Jan LaRue *A Catalogue of 18th-Century Symphonies*, vol. I: *A Thematic Identifier* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988). See also Jan LaRue and David Cannata, "An Ancient Crisis in Music Bibliography: the Need for Incipits," *Notes*, 50 (1993), 502-18.
3. Zaslaw, *Mozart's Symphonies*, 510-11.
4. *Le Mercure de France* (June 1765), 192, n. 1.
5. *Wiener Zeitung* (16-25 February 1784), 395-96. Traeg's notice is reprinted in Alexander Weinmann, *Die Anzeigen des Kopsiaturbetriebes Johann Traeg in der Wiener Zeitung zwischen 1782 und 1805* (Vienna: Ludwig Kenn, 1981), 16-17.
6. Zaslaw, *Mozart's Symphonies*, 17-25, 44-70.
7. *London Evening Post* (21 January-3 February 1765), 183.
8. Zaslaw, *Mozart's Symphonies*, 68-70, 132-33.
9. Zaslaw, *Mozart's Symphonies*, 70; Otto Erich Deutsch, *Mozart: Die Dokumente seine Lebens* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1961), 65-66.
10. Zaslaw, *Mozart's Symphonies*, 139.
11. Vienna's numerous private concerts are extraordinarily difficult to document. See Otto Biba, "Grundzüge des Konzertwesens in Wien zu Mozarts Zeit," *Mozart-Jahrbuch* (1978-79), 132-43; Mary Sue Morrow, *Concert Life in Haydn's Vienna: Aspects of a Developing Musical and Social Institution* (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1989); and Dexter Edge's review-essay of Morrow's book in the *Haydn Yearbook*, 17 (1992), 108-66; Dorothea Link, *The National Court Theatre in Mozart's Vienna: Sources and Documents 1783-1792* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); and her "Vienna's Private Theatrical and Music Life, 1783-92, as Reported by Count Karl Zinzendorf," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 122 (1997), 205-57.
12. Zaslaw, *Mozart's Symphonies*, 109-12.
13. Zaslaw, *Mozart's Symphonies*, 124-26; Deutsch, *Dokumente*, 521.
14. Cliff Eisen, *Orchestral Music in Salzburg 1750-1780* (Madison, WI: A-R Editions, 1994) (*Recent Researches in the Music of the Classical Era*, 40), ix-xviii; and also his "The Salzburg Symphonies: A Biographical Interpretation," *Wolfgang Amadè Mozart: Essays on His Life and His Music*, ed. Stanley Sadie (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 178-212.
15. Letter of 17 September 1778; Zaslaw, *Mozart's Symphonies*, 337-42; Wilhelm A. Bauer and Otto Erich Deutsch, *Mozart: Briefe und Aufzeichnungen*, 2 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1962), 482.
16. Ernst Hintermaier, "Eine vermutlich authentische Sinfonie-Fassung der Ouvertüre zu Mozarts Lucio Silla KV 135," *Mozart-Studien*, 1 (1992), 125-33.
17. See Table 1, *Mozart's Authentic Symphonies Arranged Geographically*, page 14.
18. Neal Zaslaw, "The Breitkopf Firm's Relations with Leopold and Wolfgang Mozart," *Bach Perspectives*, 2 (1996), 85-103; *Briefe*, 1:455-56, 527-28; 2:485; 3:92-93; Richard Schaal, "Ein angeblich verschollener Brief von Leopold Mozart," *Acta Mozartiana*, 26 (1979), 50-51.
19. Zaslaw, *Mozart's Symphonies*, 378-79.
20. *Gazzetta di Mantova* (12 January 1770); Deutsch, *Dokumente*, 95.
21. Zaslaw, *Mozart's Symphonies*, 156-93.
22. Zaslaw, *Mozart's Symphonies*, 330-31.
23. Zaslaw, *Mozart's Symphonies*, 310-14; see also Eugene K. Wolf, "Mannheimer Symphonik um 1777/1778 und ihr Einfluß auf Mozarts symphonischen Stil," *Mozart und Mannheim: Kongreßbericht Mannheim 1991*, ed. Ludwig Finscher (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1994), 309-30.

24. Zaslaw, *Mozart's Symphonies*, 323-29. Hideo Noguchi has identified a feature of a sketch for the 3/4 Andante which may establish it as the later of the two. See his article (in Japanese) "[The Autograph Manuscripts and Early Performances of Mozart's 'Paris' Symphony, K. 297 (300a)]," 1991 *Kokusai Motsaruto Shinpojumu hokoku: Motsaruto kenkyu no genzai* ed. Bin Ebisawa (Tachikawa: Kunitachi College of Music, 1993), 382-92. See also his, "[The Truth about a Letter by Mozart Concerning the Symphony in D major, 'Paris,' K. 297 (300a)]," *Ongaku-Gendai* (January 1990).
25. *Courrier de l'Europe* (26 June 1778).
26. *Mercure de France* (5 June 1779).
27. *Mercure de France* (15 June 1779). See Neal Zaslaw, "Mozart's Paris Symphonies," *The Musical Times*, 119 (1978), 753-57.
28. Zaslaw, *Mozart's Symphonies*, 351-54.
29. Zaslaw, *Mozart's Symphonies*, 376-82.
30. Anton Voigt, "Biographien eines Zeitgenossen: Franz Xaver Glöggel (1764-1839) über Leopold Mozart, Wolfgang Amadé Mozart und Franz Xaver Süssmayr," *Die Klangwelt Mozarts* (Vienna: Kunsthistorisches Museum, 1991), 149-57.
31. Letter dated 21 February 1786 in the *Magazin der Musik* (21 November 1786), 954.
32. Cliff Eisen, "New Light on Mozart's 'Linz' Symphony, K. 425," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 113 (1988), 81-96; Zaslaw, 382-87.
33. Franz Niemetschek, *Leben des k. k. Kapellmeisters Wolfgang Gottlieb Mozart, nach Originalquellen beschrieben* (Prague: In der Herrlichen Buchhandlung, 1798), 23, 27.
34. Deutsch, *Dokumente*, 252, 273.
35. See Leopold Mozart's letters of 17-18 November 1786 and 1-2 March 1787; Deutsch, *Dokumente*, 248, 324, 332; Cliff Eisen, *New Mozart Documents: A Supplement to O. E. Deutsch's Documentary Biography* (London: Macmillan, 1991), 47, 143-44.
36. *Briefe*, 4: 65.
37. Phillip Spitta, "Zur Herausgabe der Briefe Mozarts," *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, 15 (1880), cols. 401-05, 417-21, here 417.
38. H. C. Robbins Landon, *1791: Mozart's Last Year*, 2nd ed. (New York: Schirmer Books, 1990), 31-32. Spitta (see note 37) had already suggested in 1880 that the three last symphonies must have been written for the subscription concerts mentioned in the undated letter to Puchberg.
39. Deutsch, *Dokumente*, 285-86, 515.
40. Zaslaw, *Mozart's Symphonies*, 435-40; Cliff Eisen, "Another Look at the 'Corrupt Passage' in Mozart's G minor Symphony: its sources, 'solution' and implications for the composition of the final trilogy," *Early Music* 25 (August 1997), 373-81.
41. Zaslaw, *Mozart's Symphonies*, 374, 422.
42. Zaslaw, *Mozart's Symphonies*, 422-31.
43. Gertraud Haberkamp, *Die Erstdrucke der Werke von Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: Bibliographie* (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1986), 1: 306-07; *Mozart: A Bicentennial Loan Exhibition* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 1991), 45.
44. Cliff Eisen, "Contributions to a New Mozart Documentary Biography," *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 39 (1986): 615-32, here 628-30; Zaslaw, *Mozart's Symphonies*, 269-74; 427-28.
45. H. C. Robbins Landon, ed., *Neue Mozart-Ausgabe*, IV/11/9: *Kritische Bericht*, i/4, i/23, i/45-46.
46. For a fuller exploration of the assertions in this final paragraph, see Neal Zaslaw, "Mozart as a Working Stiff," *On Mozart*, ed. James M. Morris (Washington D.C. and New York: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Cambridge University Press, 1994), 102-12. *This paper is also available elsewhere in the Apropos Mozart website.*

TABLE 1 -- Authentic Symphonies Arranged Geographically

*Symphonies composed in London and Holland, 1764-66*

Symphony in E<sup>b</sup>, K. 16 (No.1)  
 Symphony in D, K. 19 (No.4)  
 Symphony in F, K. 19a  
 Symphony in B<sup>b</sup>, K. 22 (No.5)  
 Symphony in G, K. 45a ("Lambach," 1st version)

*Salzburg symphonies, 1767-82*

Symphony in G, K. 45a ("Lambach," 2nd version)  
 Symphony in G, K. 110 (75b) (No. 12)  
 Symphony in A, K. 114 (No. 14)  
 Symphony in G, K. 124 (No. 15)  
 Symphony in C, K. 128 (No. 16)  
 Symphony in G, K. 129 (No. 17)  
 Symphony in F, K. 130 (No. 18)  
 Symphony in E<sup>b</sup>, K. 132 (No. 19)  
 Symphony in D, K. 133 (No. 20)  
 Symphony in A, K. 134 (No. 21)  
 Symphony in E<sup>b</sup>, K. 184 (161a) (No. 26)  
 Symphony in G, K. 199 (161b) (No. 27)  
 Symphony in C, K. 162 (No. 22)  
 Symphony in D, K. 181 (162b) (No. 23)  
 Symphony in B<sup>b</sup>, K. 182 (173dA) (No. 24)  
 Symphony in g, K. 183 (173dB) (No. 25)  
 Symphony in A, K. 201 (186a) (No. 29)  
 Symphony in D, K. 202 (186b) (No. 30)  
 Symphony in C, K. 200 (189k) (No. 28)  
 Symphony in G, K. 318 (No. 32)  
 Symphony in B<sup>b</sup>, K. 319 (No. 33)  
 Symphony in C, K. 338 (No. 34)  
 Symphony in D, K. 385 ("Haffner," 1st version) (No. 35)  
 [from orchestral serenades:]  
 Symphony in D, K. 100 (62a)  
 Symphony in D, K. 185 (167a)  
 Symphony in D, K. 203 (189b)  
 Symphony in D, K. 204 (213a)  
 Symphony in D, K. 250 (248b)  
 Symphony in D, K. 320  
 [from overtures:]  
 Symphony in D, K. 161/163 (141a) (*Il sogno di Scipione*)  
 Symphony in D, K. 121 (207a) (*Lucio Silla*)  
 Symphony in D, K. 102 (213c) (*Il re pastore*)

*Italian symphonies 1770-73*

Symphony in C, K. 73 (75a) (No.9)  
 Symphony in G, K. 74 (No. 10)  
 Symphony in D (*Mitridate, re di Ponto*), K. 87 (74a)  
 Symphony in D, K. 111/120 (111a) (*Ascanio in Alba*)  
 Symphony in F, K. 112 (No. 13)  
 Symphony in D (*Lucio Silla*), K. 135

TABLE 1 (continued)

*Paris symphony, 1778*

Symphony in D, K. 297 (300a) (2 versions) (No. 31)

*Viennese symphonies, 1767-68*

Symphony in F, K. 43 (2 versions)  
Symphony in D, K. 45 (No.7)  
Symphony in D, K. 48 (No.8) (No.6)

*Viennese symphonies, 1783-88*

Symphony in D, K. 385 ("Haffner," 2nd version) (No. 35)  
Symphony in C, K. 425 (2 versions) ("Linz") (No. 36)  
Symphony in D, K. 504 ("Prague") (No. 38)  
Symphony in E<sup>b</sup>, K. 543 (No. 39)  
Symphony in g, K. 550 (2 versions) (No. 40)  
Symphony in C, K. 551 ("Jupiter") (No. 41)

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