

We have a letter to his publisher from 1799, telling us about his composing in this period: "Unfortunately my affairs multiply with my years, *and yet it is almost as if with the decrease in my spiritual powers, my desire and the urgency to work increase. O God, how much is still to be done in this splendid art, even by such a man as I have been!* The world, to be sure, compliments me many times a day, even on the fire of my last works; no one, however, will believe with what toil and exertion I have to search it out, while on many a day my weak memory and flagging nerves so wear me down that I sink into the dreariest state and am thus in no condition for many days afterwards to find even a single idea, until finally, encouraged by Providence, I can sit down again at the clavier and there begin to hammer away. *Then everything is all right again, God be praised!*"

After 1802 Haydn composed little, but lived comfortably in Vienna, honored by all. His death came May 31, 1809; his last words are supposed to have been, "Children, be comforted, I am well."

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756-1791)

Mozart's fate shows how fortunate Haydn was in having such intelligent patrons as the Esterhazys. A composer needed a reliable source of income to survive, as Wolfgang's father Leopold was always telling him.

In many ways a child prodigy could hardly have found a better father than Leopold Mozart. A musician and a composer, Leopold provided a musical background for baby Wolfgang (who was born in Salzburg, January 17, 1756), recognized the early indications of his musical talent, and gave him lessons early. Wolfgang watched papa teach older sister Marianne ("Nannerl") when she was seven, and begged for lessons too. He started at four.

Leopold realized that his son was miraculously talented, and described him as "this marvel of nature, placed in the world by God." He trained the boy well, disciplined him, and taught him to make his manuscripts tidy. He wrote down Wolfgang's first compositions, since the boy was too young to write legibly yet, and tried to advance Wolfgang's interests by taking him about Europe, so that he could hear the music of many composers, become known by displaying his talents, and perhaps earn a lot of money for himself and the family.

When Wolfgang was 6, the family went to Munich; next year Wolferl and Nannerl played in Vienna for the Empress Maria Theresa, who let Wolferl climb into her lap and kiss her. They were admired, but they did not become rich. In 1763, in spite of the displeasure of Leopold's employer, the Archbishop of Salzburg, who wanted his assistant *kapellmeister* to stay home and work, they were off again. In Mannheim they heard the greatest orchestra of the period, and Wolfgang was overwhelmed to hear what orchestral playing could be. In Paris he and Nannerl played for the royal family, and he wrote his first published works—4 piano sonatas—wearing a pinafore to help keep ink off his clothes. In London, Wolfgang, now 8, wrote his first 4 symphonies, and took some lessons from J.C. Bach. Daines Barrington, an amateur scientist, came to find out whether Wolfgang was as talented and as young as was claimed: "whilst he was playing to me, a favorite cat came in, on which he left his harpsichord, nor could we bring him back for a considerable time." Despite his genius, Wolfgang was still a child!

The Mozarts, no richer than before, had to return to Salzburg after three and a half years. When a stingy and mean-spirited new Archbishop took the throne in



MOZART when he was six,
after an unknown artist.
Mozart-Museum,
Salzburg.

Salzburg, he objected to the Mozarts making efforts to get jobs elsewhere, or traveling, but gave his own best jobs to Italian musicians. When Wolfgang was 21, Leopold decided he must find a good position. The Archbishop refused to grant them leave, so Wolfgang quit, and Leopold sent him off with mama to take care of him.

Perhaps Leopold had been too good a father: Wolfgang had never had to plan for himself, and never got to be good at the practical jobs papa had done—publicizing himself, being polite to powerful but tasteless people, planning ahead, budgeting. Like many prodigies, he remained immature in many ways outside his own profession. He infuriated Leopold by his fecklessness, and the way in which he preferred making music to making a career.

The first place he went on this important tour was Mannheim, to hear that marvellous orchestra again. And the first thing he did there was to fall in love with Aloysia Weber, the daughter of a poor copyist, prompter, and singer—not at all the sort of girl papa wanted for him. Aloysia was only 15, but had a splendid voice, not yet trained: Mozart wanted to stay there and help her become a great opera singer. Papa wrote him a ten-page letter of protest: you are too ready to let others make use of you; you must go to Paris and find a place in the world.

Paris was a disaster: The Parisians did not care about another young piano virtuoso. A friend wrote papa, “He is too *sincere*, not active enough, too susceptible to illusions, too little aware of the means of achieving success. Here in order to succeed, one must be artful, enterprising, and bold.” The short, rather ugly Mozart didn’t impress people, and he had a talent for making enemies by casually dismissing as negligible the music of lesser composers—which was.

Worse followed: mama fell sick, and despite Mozart’s nursing, died July 3, 1778. He tried to break the news gently to papa and Nannerl. On his way back to Salzburg, when he stopped to see Aloysia, she had no use for him: she had taken the short cut to success of becoming a nobleman’s mistress.

He returned to Salzburg with confused and tired emotions, took a job as organist with the Archbishop, and kept composing. In 1781 the Archbishop took him along to Vienna, but wouldn’t use him, or let him play for others. They quarreled and Mozart quit, his parting speeded by a kick in the rump from his offensive employer’s secretary. He went off to lodge with his friends the Webers, and became interested in Aloysia’s younger sister Constanze. Despite Papa’s strong opposition he married her in 1782.

Constanze was cheerful and affectionate, but scatter-brained and no more economical than Wolfgang, who was always ready to spend money he didn’t have on something he really wanted, such as “that beautiful red coat which took my fancy so vastly.” They lived together happily, always with a pet—Mozart loved dogs, cats, and birds. On Sunday mornings they gave quartet parties. Mozart became friendly with Haydn, and wrote six quartets dedicated to him—“It was from Haydn that I learned to write quartets,” he explained. Otherwise he worked busily, either writing music or playing it, so that his fingers were often cramped. For exercise he would go off to play bowls or billiards with friends. For money he would organize a concert and write a new concerto for it. He was perhaps the greatest pianist in Europe. If he did not finish writing out the concerto in time, he would play his part from memory, with a blank sheet of paper in front of him.

We have a letter in which Mozart talks about how he composed. “When I am . . . completely myself, entirely alone, and of good cheer—say, traveling in a carriage, or walking after a good meal, or during the night, when I cannot sleep— . . . on such

occasions my ideas flow best and most abundantly. *Whence* and *how* they come, I know not; nor can I force them. Those ideas that please me I retain in memory, and am accustomed, as I have been told, to hum them to myself. If I continue in this way, it soon occurs to me how I may turn this or that morsel to account, so as to make a good dish of it, that is to say, agreeably to the rules of counterpoint, to the peculiarities of the various instruments, etc.

All this fires my soul, and, provided I am not disturbed, my subject enlarges itself, becomes methodized and defined, and the whole, though it be long, stands almost complete and finished in my mind, so that I can survey it, like a fine picture or a beautiful statue, at a glance. Nor do I hear in my imagination the parts *successively*, but I hear them, as it were, all at once. What a delight this is I cannot tell! All this inventing, this producing, takes place in a pleasing lively dream. Still, the actual hearing of the *tout ensemble* is after all the best. What has been thus produced I do not easily forget, and this is perhaps the best gift I have my divine maker to thank for."

After having a composition completed in his mind, Mozart could write it down quickly, while talking with people around him. He even wrote one piece while sitting by Constanze, who was in labor.

All his brilliance did not bring him what he really wanted in Vienna—the chance to write operas. The chief Court Composer Antonio Salieri had no intention of sharing his advantages with others, and he had control of musical patronage. But a new friend, the new Court Opera Poet, the engaging Venetian ex-priest Lorenzo Da Ponte (1749-1838), who had all the political skills Mozart lacked, provided the opportunity Mozart wanted. They made an opera out of the new French comedy, *The Marriage of Figaro*. "As fast as I wrote the words, he set them to music." Da Ponte outmaneuvered rival composers, and protected the opera from the intrigues of the Italian singers, and it succeeded.

In Prague it played steadily for nearly six months, after the Viennese had forgotten it; the manager of the local opera, which had been saved from bankruptcy by its success, commissioned Mozart and Da Ponte to write him another. Da Ponte was working on three librettos at once, sustained by a decanter of Tokay, a box of snuff, and a sixteen-year-old girl who came whenever he rang.

Mozart took the libretto for *Don Giovanni* to Prague, and worked busily composing, but the overture was not yet written down the night before the premiere, October 19, 1787. He sat up most of the night, with Constanze telling him fairy stories to keep him awake. The orchestra parts came to the theatre from the copyist twenty minutes late, and the orchestra played an overture it had never seen. "A good many notes fell under the desks, to be sure," said Mozart, "but it went off quite well, just the same." The opera triumphed: "My Praguers understand me," he said.

But back in Vienna matters went poorly. Constanze was often ill, and debts increased faster than they could be paid. A new emperor fired Da Ponte in 1790, and he went off to London. Mozart wrote desperately for money; bill collectors hounded him. His fellow-Mason Michael Puchberg generously loaned him money whenever Mozart asked, but this was not enough. Mozart worked very hard setting a German libretto written by Emmanuel Schikaneder, a shady entrepreneur who ran a theatre for common people in a wooden shack in the suburbs.

Mozart's health began to fail with fatigue. A gaunt stranger appeared and commissioned him to write a requiem mass, but refused to give his name. Mozart saw this as a visit from death, and believed the requiem would be for himself.

The Magic Flute opened successfully. Mozart was increasingly ill, fainting and having severe headaches, but he hung about backstage during performances to hear the audience love his opera. He kept working on the *Requiem*: "Here is my deathsong; I must not leave it incomplete."

Soon he could no longer leave his bed; they took away the *Requiem* score to keep him from working on it. He would look at his watch in the evening, to hear in his mind the aria of *The Magic Flute* that was sung at that point. The day before he died his friends came and sang for him the parts of the *Requiem* which were finished, so he could hear it.

He died December 5, 1791 of kidney disease, nervous exhaustion, and malnutrition. He was given a pauper's funeral in a storm; his grave is lost. The Emperor gave his widow a pension for life—about \$10 a month.

If Mozart had lived twice as long—as long as Haydn—he would have heard all Beethoven's works, and what other composers wrote up to the early works of Berlioz. Who can begin to guess what he would have written?

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)

Beethoven was one of those rare men whose contemporaries quickly realize that they are great. Mozart heard him play as a teenager, and said, "He will make a noise in the world some day." Haydn recommended young Beethoven for a job, saying, "Beethoven will in time fill the position of one of Europe's greatest composers." People kept notes of their meetings with Beethoven, knowing that posterity would be interested. In his own lifetime he was recognized as the greatest living musician: when he died, between fifteen and twenty thousand Viennese came to honor him as his body was taken to the cemetery.

I suppose that even in the musical city of Vienna, where citizens were willing to sign a petition urging Beethoven not to disgrace the city by allowing any place else to have the premieres of his new Ninth Symphony and *Missa Solemnis*, there were not twenty thousand people who understood his music. Perhaps what they recognized in him was the personality which is reflected in the music, with its great strength and power to win tremendous battles. People writing about Beethoven compared him to a lion or a bear.

Beethoven's life was always a struggle. He was born December 16, 1770, in the small city of Bonn, where his grandfather and his father were both musicians for the reigning Elector. Grandfather was a bass singer and *kapellmeister*—a successful man whose portrait Ludwig kept and prized all his life. Father was a singer—an inventory of the Elector's musicians describes him as having "a rather stale voice"—and gave music lessons. He quickly recognized his son's musical talents, and trained him, hoping to make money, as Leopold Mozart had. But Johann van Beethoven lacked Leopold Mozart's showmanship, and Ludwig lacked Wolfgang's charm. Local well-to-do music lovers gave him financial help, cultural training, and friendship. When he was seventeen, they sent him to Vienna for further training. He went to Mozart for lessons, but within two weeks the news that his mother was dying called him back to Bonn. After her death Ludwig's father fell apart. He took to drink, and his salary had to be given to his son so that his family could survive. Ludwig became responsible for his two brothers.

In 1792 a grant from the Elector helped him return to Vienna, where he remained for the rest of his life. He took a few lessons from Haydn, who recom-