

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

1756-1956

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MOZART HAD NOW BROKEN irrevocably with the Archbishop and Salzburg, and was faced with the problem of establishing himself in Vienna. Three courses were open to him, none of which excluded the others: he could take pupils; he could make himself a sort of free lance, giving subscription concerts and accepting commissions; or he could maneuver for a court appointment. Actually he tried all three, but the one in which he proved most successful was the giving of subscription concerts.

The notion of so doing may have been suggested to him by the success of his old friend John Christian Bach in establishing a subscription series in London. For many years the Bach-Abel concerts had been one of the most brilliant events of the London musical season, patronized by the wealthy and fashionable; and the fertile John

Christian had kept them going largely by his own compositions. The even more fertile Mozart could feel little doubt of his ability at least to equal Bach.

For a time everything went well. His German opera, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, proved very popular—somewhat ironically, for it is by no means his best. He had several pupils from among the nobility, and his mastery of all departments of music opened to him every circle in which it was valued. A subscription list of his 1784 series which he sent his father reads like a register of Viennese society. True, he had difficulty getting his operas produced in Vienna; but in Prague they became so much the rage that even the organ grinders could not get a hearing unless they had a good part of *Figaro* in their repertoires. The result is that these are the most brilliant years of Mozart's productive activity: the years of the great piano concertos, written mainly for himself to play at his subscription concerts; of two of his greatest operas; of the great string quartets and quintets; and, at its very end, the three most famous of his many symphonies.

Mozart thus depended for support mainly upon the noble, wealthy, and fashionable of Vienna. It might be asked whether this contradicts what has been said before about his equalitarian, almost revolutionary principles, or indicates a change of attitude, a denial of earlier standards. I do not think so. For, certainly as shown by his music, Mozart's attitude toward his noble subscribers was that of an equal among equals. This can best be seen in the great series of piano concertos. After the first three, which are somewhat tentative and ingratiating—Mozart is feeling his way, trying out his audience—he launches into hitherto unexplored regions, exploiting to the full not only his tremendous technical mastery, but his powers of expression. As the series advances he becomes more and more daring, until near the end he steps entirely outside the bounds of the eighteenth century social conception of music. In the earlier

works there are occasions when he is obviously afraid that he has gone too far, and after a particularly daring beginning will in his finale make a concession to his audience; as the series progresses, however, such concessions become more rare, until in several of these works he seems to make none at all. The most notable examples of this uncompromising attitude are the great works in D minor, C minor, and C major, K. 503.

MANY COMMENTATORS have spoken of the aristocratic character of this music; and this is, indeed, one of its most striking traits. Mozart as we have seen will sometimes unbend with his audience; but he will never descend to the buffoonery in which Joseph Haydn, and sometimes Beethoven, will indulge; the lighter effects he achieves remain within the limits of aristocratic wit. This is not the place to discuss in detail musical wit in Mozart's sense; in brief, it consists in trifling with recognized forms in such a way that the expectation of the hearer is deceived, so that his response is, "This is right, but I should never have expected it."¹ This is altogether different from some of Haydn's surprises, in which one is amused rather by the complete willfulness with which they are introduced than by any concealed logic which justifies them. A remark of Geoffrey Tilotson's comparing Pope's procedures with those of Dryden may help explain my meaning—Dryden, he says, proceeds by surprise and Pope by expectation, but in Pope it is the expectation of surprise. Tilotson's comment serves very well to point the distinction between Haydn's broad comedy and Mozart's aristocratic wit.

One final point about the concertos—in spite of their size and formal structure, they are intensely personal works. It must be remembered that they were written mostly for the composer himself, and in the piano part he himself is speaking. The relation between piano and orchestra is then the same as the relation between singer and

*In the first part of this article, which appeared in the January, 1956, issue of *The Quarterly*, I attempted to sum up a few of the many advances that have been made during the last fifty years in understanding Mozart the man, his milieu, and his artistic ideals and accomplishments. I take this opportunity to supplement and correct some statements made in the first installment of this paper. First, it is pleasant to have to modify the assertion that the amount of critical attention devoted to Mozart is comparatively small; works about him are pouring from the presses so fast that he may soon be the most written about of all composers. Secondly, in an interesting article in *High Fidelity* (January, 1956), pp. 65-66, 146-152, Nathan Broder makes the surprising assertion that Mozart's popularity never diminished. I have read this article with attention and see no reason to modify the statement in my first paper, that in the nineteenth century Mozart was on the whole neglected and misunderstood. Broder seems to me to show that the nineteenth century when it admired Mozart did not admire the eighteenth-century musician but another man of the same name, whom it had created in the form which it regarded as appropriate for that century, much as it felt it had to revise his portrait. Exceptions to this generalization are few, and I am pleased to find that George Eliot is one of them. I will risk the assertion that with the exception of Beethoven among nineteenth century musicians only Chopin and Brahms understood Mozart's principles of construction well enough to put them to creative use—and Beethoven is only partly of the nineteenth century. Finally, in my first paper, the dates of Abert's revision of Jahn are wrong; they should be 1919-1921.

orchestra in one of Mozart's big arias: the orchestra sketches in the broad background of effects, against which the piano raises its individual voice, now rhetorically declaiming, now in poetic reverie. This is most obvious in the slow movements, notably those of the G major (K. 453) and of the C major (K. 467), but it is generally true in all the movements, in which Mozart in the piano part amplifies, expands, and comments upon the materials presented by the orchestra in such a way as to personalize them completely. Mozart's conception of the piano part is beautifully confirmed by the aria (K. 505), which he wrote for himself and Nancy Storace, the charming English singer who created the role of Susanna in *Figaro*, in which over the orchestral accompaniment piano and voice carry on a duet like two singers; and in which, if Einstein's conjecture is right, Mozart is in the piano part expressing his deepest personal feelings.²

Mozart, then, speaks to his aristocratic audience as an equal, or even as a superior, insisting that they raise themselves to him. And his operas are further evidence that he remained unchanged in his equalitarian principles. In Mozart's and Da Ponte's *Figaro* one may not, indeed, "hear the flash and snap of the guillotine," as Strachey says of Beaumarchais' original, but its shadow can be detected reaching out from the background. And in *Don Giovanni* the implications of the Don's dealings with the peasants Masetto and Zerlina are clear enough. Can it be that the very brief popularity of *Figaro* in Vienna had something to do with its dangerous content as well as intrigues by Italian musicians? At any rate, let us remember that Mozart himself selected the subject when the play was still considered subversive enough to be forbidden in Vienna.³

NO LESS UNCOMPROMISING WAS Mozart's attitude toward his fellow musicians. With the exception of the great Joseph Haydn, whom he apparently admitted as an equal, few of his contemporaries escape his censure, some of it just, some unjust. His criticism is summed up in practical form in one of his most remarkable pieces, the *Musical Joke*. Of all the commentators on this work known to me, Abert alone has given it adequate attention, pointing out that it is actually a keystone of the Mozartian aesthetic. No respectable critic of Mozart now believes that we have here a satire on rustic musicians, although this stupidity can still be read on record jackets; we have rather a satire of which the major part is directed at an ambitious bungler

who tries to write a symphony, and the lesser at the inept performers who attempt to interpret it. Every ghastly thing that happens in the piece can be explicated from Mozart's letters: the emptiness of the themes, their lack of connection, the developments that do not develop, the modulations which the imaginary composer flatters himself are "bold" and are actually only shocking, together with the various and ear-splitting disasters that befall the performers—all have their counterpart in the vitriolic descriptions of his contemporaries with which Mozart entertains his father. For example, Mozart has this to say of the learned Abbé Vogler, the hero of Brownings' "Abt Vogler" and a musician of some importance in his day:

I have never in my life heard such stuff. In many places the parts simply do not harmonize. He modulates in such a violent way as to make you think that he is resolved to drag you with him by the scruff of the neck; not that there is anything remarkable about it all to make it worth the trouble; no, it is all clumsy plunging. I will not say anything about the way in which the ideas are worked out. . . . To put it briefly, if I hear an idea which is not at all bad—well—it will certainly not remain *not at all* bad for long, but will soon become—beautiful? God forbid!—bad and thoroughly bad; and that in two or three different ways. Either the idea has scarcely been introduced before another comes along and ruins it; or he does not round it off naturally enough to preserve its merit; or it is not in the right place; or, finally, it is ruined by the instrumentation.⁴

This is not pleasant reading; and it says in words precisely what the *Joke* says in music. The work is indeed a jest, but it is not a pleasant one—one fancies that many of Mozart's contemporaries could recognize themselves in it, perhaps in places even Joseph Haydn himself. It is in fact Mozart's greatest achievement in satire, his *Dunciad*: like Pope's at once an unkind practical joke and the statement—in reverse—of his artistic ideal.

The discussion of Mozart's years of triumph, it will be observed, has dealt mainly with his music. This is as it should be, for these are his great years of production. One other event of this period, however, also demands mention—his marriage to Constanze Weber. His father warned him against taking this step, and indeed it caused a permanent estrangement between father and son; his father's forebodings, moreover, proved amply justified: it is hard to see what this marriage brought the composer besides worry and trouble.

Doubtless Mozart was maneuvered into the marriage, and in a singularly disgraceful way—one that did permanent damage to his reputation. It is curious how with all his keen and sometimes cynical insight

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With degrees in both music and literature and a lifelong enthusiasm for Mozart, Professor Raines is particularly well prepared to offer such courses as Studies in Critical Theories of the Arts or Mozart and His Age, and to write this article on the musical genius the bi-centennial of whose birth is being celebrated all over the world this year. Professor Raines's outstanding ability as a teacher was recognized in 1954 when he received one of the \$500 University of Oklahoma Foundation Teaching Awards.

into human motives Mozart could have been victimized in this manner, especially after he had successfully evaded several other designing females. The explanation appears to be twofold: his lingering passion for Constanze's sister Aloysia, and his chivalrous indignation at anything resembling injustice or oppression. We have already seen how this second motive blinded his perceptions in his earlier contact with the Weber family at Mannheim; and it was largely upon this that Madame Weber seems to have played in getting him entangled with Constanze. The letters also leave no doubt of the strong physical attraction he felt for her, an attraction which persisted to the end of his life. And Constanze helped matters along by pretending an interest in music far greater than she actually felt.

The worries and distractions that Constanze caused Mozart can be plainly discerned throughout the later letters. He was constantly concerned about her fidelity, even before the wedding took place; her bad health was a steady drain on his pocket; and perhaps worst of all, she lacked financial sense.⁵ For above all, Mozart needed a business manager; he seems never to have realized the essentially precarious nature of his means of making a living, and although for a time he earned largely he spent largely too. Thus when disaster struck he had no reserve to fall back on. Even his Augsburg cousin, the notorious "Bäsele," would probably have made him a better wife in this respect. Worst of all, the marriage with Constanze precluded his finding a better mate. For, in spite of contemporary gossip to the contrary, Mozart's sense of responsibility to his wife was deep and sincere. He may have been guilty of

occasional infidelities—in eighteenth-century Vienna it would have been amazing if he had not—but he appears never to have contemplated any sort of permanent separation.

For a time, however, the ill-assorted union like everything else appeared to be going well. The letters of Leopold Mozart written during a visit to his son and daughter-in-law in Vienna in 1785 give a vivid picture of the scale on which the young couple were living and the whirl of activity in which they were engaged. A few sentences from one of them serve admirably to sum up the whole:

We never get to bed before one o'clock. . . . Every day there are concerts; and the whole time is given up to teaching, music, composing and so forth. . . . It is impossible for me to describe the rush and bustle.

One should keep this in mind, especially when one is inclined, as older biographers generally were, to sentimentalize over the hardships and privations that Mozart was to endure later, and to project them backward so that they seem to cover his whole career. He had his moment of triumph, and it was total; aristocracy, general public, and critics—all were at his feet.

IV. DEFEAT AND IMMORTALITY

THE CHANGE in Mozart's fortunes can be conveniently marked by a passage in a letter of May 10-11, 1787, from Leopold Mozart to his daughter:

Your brother is now living in the Landstrasse no. 224. He does not say why he has moved. Not a word. But unfortunately, I can guess the reason.

From this time until three months before his death, the record is one of steady decline: of moves from cheap lodgings to lodgings cheaper still; of begging letters to friends, some with promises to repay, others simply cast in a tone of desperation; of journeys in search of commissions and returns from concerts which generally ended, in his own words, "in much glory and little profit"; and of steadily worsening health, undoubtedly caused in part by his concern over Constanze's nearly constant illness.

There is evidence that before the date given above affairs had not been as well as they had been formerly. Some months before the letter from which I have just quoted, Mozart had projected a trip to England that had come to nothing, which he would hardly have done if all had been entirely well in Vienna; and from the scale upon which Leopold had found him living in 1785 it seems probable enough that he had been running into debt. Nor was the disaster total when it struck. During the last

months of 1787 and the first of 1788 he continued to struggle against his fate, and there was an occasional remission in the decline of his fortunes; *Don Giovanni* had great success in Prague, though perhaps not so great as that of *Figaro*; both these operas were given performances in Vienna, where they excited some interest; he received a court appointment, although at an insultingly small salary; and even in 1789, almost his worst year, a successful production of *Figaro* led the emperor to commission a new opera, the *Così Fan Tutte*. In 1790, however, after the only moderate success of this masterpiece, he seems to have virtually abandoned himself to despair. Saint-Foix lists only eighteen works for 1789, most of them quite small, a number being arias intended for insertion into the operas of other composers, and one the re-orchestration of Handel's *Messiah* commissioned by Van Swieten; for 1790, only about nine, one again being a Handelian re-orchestration.

This comparative unproductivity may be in part explained by mere lack of commissions, but not wholly. For in spite of his desperate need for money, Mozart was finding it hard to complete or even execute such commissions as he received. He complains to his wife of his difficulties with one of the most curious of them, writing a piece for the barrel of a musical clock; and although this composition when finally achieved proved to be one of his great masterpieces, it is saddening to think of his having to put his genius to such uses. Still more in point are his commissions from the King of Prussia. During Mozart's visit to Berlin in 1789 Frederick William had commissioned six string quartets for himself and six easy clavier sonatas for his daughter. Mozart, seemingly with great difficulty, produced three of the quartets, and a strange collection they are—remote, detached, sombre, with minuets that reveal not a spark of gaiety. Of the commissioned easy sonatas only one (K. 576) was completed. It begins innocently enough with a simple, conventional phrase, and then immediately launches into difficulties, both technical and interpretative, that make it one of the most formidable of Mozart's keyboard works, calculated to frighten a Princess of Prussia with limited technical attainments out of her musical wits.

To all appearances the career begun so auspiciously in 1782 had ended. Hopelessly in debt, forgotten by both court and public, in failing health, suffering from a manifest decline in invention, Mozart could seemingly expect no more than a few more years of misery and then oblivion.

NOTHING COULD HAVE DAWNED more bleakly for him than 1791, the year which was to be his last. But within the first week of this year was completed a work far different from those of 1790: his last piano concerto, K. 595 in B flat. Although it was one of the very few concertos published during the composer's lifetime, it remained almost unknown for over a hundred years after his death. After its rediscovery a great deal has been written about it, yet because it occupies a key point in the development of Mozart's style, something must be said about it here.

The first movement relates closely to the manner of 1790. Of it Einstein writes:

The mood of resignation no longer expresses itself loudly or emphatically; every stirring of energy is rejected or suppressed; and this fact makes all the more uncanny the depths of sadness that are touched in the shadings and modulations of the harmony.

Lest this judgment be thought impressionistic it can be shown that all the Mozartian symbolism of grief is here; the melodies that end almost before they begin, and then seem to resume only with difficulty; the constant tendency to shift from major to minor, and to engage in long wanderings in that more melancholy mode; the frequent use of hollow, empty-sounding combinations; and above all the downward tendency of everything; whenever in this movement a passage rises it does so only that it may descend again. The slow movement is unmistakably a farewell; its opening melody (one of the loveliest that Mozart ever conceived) suggests the phrase that means "adieu" and has reminded many commentators of the opening of Beethoven's "Farewell" sonata; and at the end there is unmistakable symbolism in the reluctance of the piano to quit the stage so that it finally has to be silenced by the orchestra. With the last movement, however, there comes a change. The melody on which the movement is based announces at once a new spirit; although light and delicate it is full of freshness and vigor; though serene it is strong. This vigor the movement never loses; even in the darker sections that are to follow, the rhythmic strength of the motion does not at any time relax. At the very end appear pyrotechnics that recall the great virtuoso concertos of 1786; they are not, however, as Girdlestone would have it, "virtuosity for its own sake," but rather represent a mood of resolute acceptance—the resignation of the first two movements raised to a positive plane. To the hearer the piece is indeed deeply sad; but it is the kind of sadness that one finds often in the eighteenth century—the sad-

ness of optimism: the kind of sadness that underlies, for instance, Pope's famous assertion of optimism:

Cease, then, nor Order imperfection name;
Our proper bliss depends on what we blame.
Know thy own point: this kind, this due degree
Of blindness, weakness, Heav'n bestows on thee. . . .
All Nature is but Art unknown to thee;
All chance direction, which thou canst not see;
All discord, harmony not understood;
All partial evil, universal good;
And spite of Pride, in erring Reason's spite,
One truth is clear, *Whatever is, is right.*

Mozart has left an eloquent commentary on this concerto, not in words but in the cadenzas he composed for the first and last movements. They bear out in every respect what has been said about the concerto proper. That for the first is full of false starts, fallings away, and turns to the minor, finally fading out almost to inaudibility. That to the last movement, on the contrary, maintains the liveliness of the principal melody almost without a break; when it pauses it does so only to start up again with renewed vigor, leading at last triumphantly though quietly back to the body of the work.

A still more striking departure is the next major work in the canon, the last string quintet (K. 614, in E flat). While there is much weariness and sadness in the concerto, hardly a cloud passes over the radiant landscape of the quintet. One critic has compared the rustling and twittering of the first movement to the awakening of the birds on a spring morning; and indeed if ever a composition deserved the subtitle "Neuer Frühling" (new spring) it is this. The slow movement is serenely cheerful; the minuet full of a sort of out-door freshness, the trio being an idealized bagpipe piece; and the finale, which moves like lightning, of a brusque, almost Haydnish humor. In addition, everything is finished with the most exquisite workmanship, which does not, however, detract in the slightest from the apparent spontaneity of the piece.

WHAT HAS HAPPENED? Obviously, Mozart has succeeded in making a new synthesis: a synthesis which is not only artistic but intellectual and spiritual as well.

The artistic elements that went into this synthesis have been elaborately studied by Saint-Foix, and need not concern us here. We must, however, consider the spiritual element. There is no question that it is connected with Mozart's freemasonry. He had become a Mason before 1787 and remained an active and convinced one until his death. He was not, like his father, widely read or philosophically inclined—how

could he be? he did not have the time—and it was through Freemasonry that he became aware of the leading theological and social ideals of the Enlightenment. He whole-heartedly embraced the mysticism which was a part of the Masonic creed, and he found the symbolism of the Masonic ritual most suggestive for his own symbolic art. Above all, in the Masonic ideal of universal brotherhood, he found for his own equalitarianism a safer grounding than he had known before; a basis not of pride or wrath, but of love. One may with Saint-Foix believe that his freemasonry was only a complement to his Catholic orthodoxy—such an attitude was possible at certain times and in certain places in the eighteenth century—or with Einstein that it became in effect a substitute for his older faith; what cannot be denied is that more than anything else it shaped both the form and the content of his later work.

This later work finds its crowning achievement in *The Magic Flute*. With all the deficiencies of its libretto this opera has to stand among the major artistic achievements of mankind. Its two major themes—the freeing of the human spirit from the darkness of ignorance and repression, and the purification of the individual soul, both through the agency of love, are two of the basic patterns of human thought; and by this time Mozart's art was fully ready to present them. It rides serenely over all difficulties, till one is hardly aware that it is art at all; it cannot be called neo-classic or romantic; in its simplicity, richness, and economy it is truly classic.

Its appeal is fully popular. Rejected by the aristocracy, whom he had vainly tried to take by storm, Mozart appeals for justification to the commonalty—and conquers both. Like Shakespeare he appeals to the people's love of buffoonery, of horseplay; like Shakespeare he weaves this element into his web until it becomes one of the most essential strands of all. Without doubt Schikaneder, the librettist-impresario-actor who composed the role of Papageno for himself, saw in it little more than a fine occasion to exercise his considerable talent for low comedy; in Mozart's hands it becomes an essential part of the philosophic structure. Again, the role of the Queen of the Night was designed chiefly to display the flexible throat of Josefa Hofer; when Mozart has finished with it, it becomes a symbol of those forces of repression, which, at first beneficent, at last become the powers of darkness that must be overcome by the children of light.

In *The Magic Flute*, then, Mozart realizes the ideal for which he had been seek-

ing all his life. In it his spiritual and intellectual aspirations find complete expression in an art that knows no difficulties. There is a sort of symbolism in the fact that of Mozart's last two opera commissions one was royal and specified that the work be in a long-dead genre, the *opera seria*, the resultant work being in consequence, in spite of many beauties, now a museum piece; the other, from the manager of a popular theatre, specified a work unlike any that had been composed before, and resulted in *The Magic Flute*.

Very little more than two months after the first production of *The Magic Flute* Mozart was dead. During these last two months he had the pleasure of seeing his last opera, largely owing to the untiring efforts and unflinching confidence of Schikaneder, become a greater popular success than he had ever known before, and his letters testify to the deep satisfaction he felt. In general, however, the narrative of his last days is painful reading, and has been told so often that I shall say little about it here. I shall only observe that it is remarkable that, oppressed by presentiments of death, frightened by physical symptoms which made him believe he had been poisoned, and generally in a state of extreme depression, he was able to complete the magnificent clarinet concerto and fulfill his last commission, the *Requiem*, in such a way that the fragment of this work, although different from the other compositions of this year, is little below them in beauty and power. Owing to the offices of his friend and patron Van Swieten he was not given a regular burial but was thrown into a pauper's grave; and I should like to ask how far the good baron was motivated in this disposition of Mozart's remains by his well-known parsimony, and how far he was consciously performing a symbolic act.

Saint-Foix finds consolation for Mozart's early death in his vast achievement. Turn where-ever you will, he observes, to whatever department of music you please, and at least one of its greatest masterpieces comes from Mozart's pen. I am unable to console myself in this way. With some of the great artists who died early one can feel that death arrived in good time: Schubert, for instance, although his powers had not diminished, was afflicted by an incurable disease⁶ which probably would soon have destroyed them; John Keats may very well have expended himself in that one marvelous year which immediately preceded his death. With Mozart, on the contrary, there is no reason to believe that he had not just

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or every man. His approach to problems is the result of training and it is to training that we may look to reduce the bias which at best dilutes and, at worst, obverts the intrinsic perfection of scientific method.

"If men can be taught to follow and emulate false prophets, if they can be made to sacrifice their lives for false doctrines and ideals they can also, among free people, be inspired to seek new truths and can be taught the techniques and attitudes which are appropriate for the discovery of truths."¹⁴

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arrived at his full powers. His whole life story is of a struggle to realize an idea of style in which to express fully himself and his century; and by 1791 he had realized it.

It is distressing to remind ourselves that had Mozart lived ten, even five years longer, he would undoubtedly have received a libretto from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Goethe was already interested in Mozart himself and in *The Magic Flute*; great poet and critic that he was, he saw through the many weaknesses of that libretto to the eternal value of the total work. Mozart had already shown what he could do with a text by Goethe in one of the finest of his songs, *Das Veilchen*. What would have been the

result of that collaboration? We can only wish we knew.

V. THE STYLE AND THE MAN

WE HAVE NOW FOLLOWED—sketchily, it is true, but in as much detail as space has permitted—Mozart's career from its beginning to its untimely end. From this sketch we can see that the only significance of the events of his life is as they relate to his genius. After his early travels his career was uneventful, except as any artist's is eventful, in artistic triumphs and failures.

This life was unified and made coherent by a theory of style. More fortunate than many other great geniuses, Mozart early acquired a concept of style from which he was never forced to depart. Even in his one rather brief aberration, under the influence of *Sturm und Drang*, he did not wander far. Although he left no developed aesthetic theory, there is no question that he had one, certainly for music and probably for other arts as well. His musical aesthetics can, with the help of *A Musical Joke*, be readily reconstructed from his letters.

The keynote is the word "natural," which runs like a *leit motif* through his correspondence with his father. The most damning thing he can say of a composer is that he is not "natural"; his greatest praise is the reverse. And fortunately in a century when this word meant many things to many people we have a clear statement of what it meant to him, in one of the most precious of his letters. Describing to his father how he portrays the rage of Osmin in *Die Entführung* he writes:

For just as a man in such a towering rage oversteps all the bounds of order, moderation, and propriety, and completely forgets himself, so must the music too forget itself. But as the passions, whether violent or not, must never be expressed in such a way as to excite disgust, and as music, even in the most terrible situations, must never offend the ear, but must please the hearer, or in other words must never cease to be *music*, I have gone from F (the key in which the aria is written), not into a remote key, but into a related one, not, however, into its nearest relative D minor, but into the more remote A minor.⁷

A great deal can be deduced from this short passage. Very briefly, then the *natural* expresses the emotions with maximum intensity, but always within the bounds of the given art. And that art must remain unobtrusive, so that the hearer may not be shocked or startled in such a way as to distract his attention from what is represented.

This states, briefly but more or less adequately, I believe, the principle of style that Mozart carried with him all his life. The test of any theory of art is whether it will

stand up under long wear; Mozart's did. As he grew older, what he had to convey grew always richer; but his theory of communication required no change. That theory is, as anyone can see, classic; but in the music of his last year, when for the first time his ideals were fully realized, such terms as "classic," "romantic," and the like, became insignificant. Writing of the last piano concerto Einstein has said, "It is so perfect that the question of style has become meaningless." Matter and manner, form and content, style and man, have attained that perfect fusion which can be achieved only by the greatest art—the kind of art without which no artist can be wholly natural.

FOOTNOTES

¹ The finale of the B-flat piano concerto, K. 595, provides a charming example of this sort of wit. As the rhapsodic and somewhat stormy development is drawing to its close, the piano impatiently signals that it is time for it to take up the principal subject again (p. 61, third score). The orchestra assents, and after a brief cadenza, the piano does so, but in the wrong key, E flat instead of B flat (p. 62, second score). In the middle of its second phrase the orchestra tactfully reminds it that it has made a mistake (third score). The piano hesitates, seems to become confused, and engages in nearly a page of rather aimless (only apparently aimless, of course) wandering. Finally, with an air of relief it settles on the transitional phrase which leads to the second subject. By this highly witty procedure, Mozart accomplishes several ends: he avoids the repetition of the principal subject, reserving it for its very effective entrance just before the close; he gains suspense—for several measures the hearer does not know exactly what to expect; and he gives us a taste of his beautiful main melody in a key in which it sounds more ethereally lovely than it ever has before. The suspense is added to by the fact that E flat (the subdominant) would be a possible key in which to begin the recapitulation, although somewhat archaic; Mozart himself had used it not long before in the little piano sonata in C, K. 545. (My references to the concerto are to the two-piano score published by G. Schirmer, as readily accessible.)

² Cf. Saint-Foix, IV, 231, "ce morceau est presque un concerto pour la voix et le piano, accompagnées par l'orchestre!"

³ E. J. Dent, *Mozart's Operas*, 2nd edition (Oxford, 1947), 94.

⁴ Anderson, II, 555-6.

⁵ After her marriage to the banker Nissen, Constanze developed into a shrewd and not over-scrupulous business woman.

⁶ I believe that O. E. Deutsch has offered conclusive proof of this.

⁷ Anderson, III, 1144. The whole letter is extremely interesting.

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