



PAPER

Bro. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Summary: Mozart, his relationship to Freemasonry and its possible influence on his work.

Mozart was born in Salzburg on 27th January 1756 and baptised in the name of Johannes Chrysostomus Wolfgangus Theophilus Mozart.

Now there is a name to conjure with! Enough to cause the most conscientious Inner Guard to blanch at the prospect of announcing him at the door of the Lodge. His father Leopold, was a composer, violinist and assistant concert master at Salzburg Court.

A Chronology of Mozart's early life is equally as remarkable.

- *At the age of three he began to play the piano*
- *At five he started to compose minuets*
- *Aged seven he began a concert tour of Europe*
- *At eight he wrote his first three symphonies, and met Johann Sabastian Bach*
- *By fourteen he had written three operas*
- *By his mid teenage years, he had mastered the piano, violin and harpsichord*
- *In 1770, during his visit to Rome he attended the performance of Allegri's Misere, afterwards he asked for a copy of the score; this was refused - so he wrote down the whole musical score from memory!*
- *At the age of thirteen he was appointed Concert Master to the orchestra of The Archbishop of Salzburg*

Mozart is recognised as the greatest melodic genius of his time. During his remarkable short life, he composed over 600 works, which included:

- *21 Works of Opera*
- *15 Religious Masses*
- *50 Symphonies*
- *25 Piano Concertos*
- *12 Violin Concertos*
- *27 Concert Arias*
- *17 Piano Sonatas*
- *26 String Quartets*
- *Many other Short Sacred Works*



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
by Barbara Krafft (1819) [Public domain]

These achievements are totally staggering. This is even more so, when seen behind a background of the commercial considerations of the time. There were no Performing Rights, or Copyright Laws in those days. Composers were only paid for their services of actually physically playing or conducting the work that they had composed. Mozart's later works include four of his most famous Operas: *The Marriage of Figaro*; *Don Giovanni*; *Così Fan Tutti*; and of course, *The Magic Flute*, one of the most celebrated operas in history.

Towards the end of his involvement as Concert Master to the Archbishop of Salzburg, who eventually refused him permission to tour Europe, he resigned his position and finally left Salzburg for good. He settled in Vienna and married Constanza Weber in 1782, with whom he had two children, Karl and Franz Xavier. They all enjoyed a loving and affectionate family life together.

In an attempt to rid him of the unhappiness which began to threaten his career, he completely broke away from the Roman Catholic Church, in the belief that the highest possible human happiness could only be attained in a Society governed by Brotherly Love Relief and Truth. Therefore, in 1784, Mozart was Initiated into The Lodge of True Harmony of Spirits. He later joined The Lodge of Charity, and finally The Lodge of New Crowned Hope. In the field of music, many Freemasons have risen to prominence and have openly acknowledged the role played by the Craft in their lives.

Thus, Mozart the supreme musical genius of the Enlightenment, saw Freemasonry as an essential part of his life in Vienna. Indeed, it may be argued that for the last, and most productive seven years of his short career, the Craft was the pivot around which his social and cultural life revolved. At the time that he joined the Craft, he wrote an extraordinary piece of music; a short Cantata which spelt out the sectarian divisive influence of the Church of Rome.

*'Oh, break the fetters of this folly,
Oh, tear this blinding prejudicial veil,
Take off the former robe, which long has
Rendered mankind sectarian'.*

Isn't that remarkable? It is a musical reference to principals behind The Ancient Charge, Concerning God and Religion;¹ eventually pronounced in the 1815 Book of Constitutions, which proclaimed to the world forever the non-sectarian character of Freemasonry.

Upon his Initiation, Mozart followed up with his Little Masonic Cantata, to rejoice about his membership of our Order.

*'Loudly herald our great gladness
joyous instrumental sound,
Let the echoes of these pillars in
Each Brother's heart abound!
For we dedicate this station by our
Golden chain of Brothers
And truest bond of hearts
That it shall our temple be'.*

The effect that Freemasonry had upon Mozart was profoundly significant; to the extent that within twelve months of his own Initiation he proposed his own father into his Lodge, New Crowned Hope. This was followed by his introduction of his friend Joseph Hayden into The Craft. To celebrate his father's passing to the Second Degree he composed *Fellowcrafts Journey*, The Masonic significance of the lyrics is obvious:

*'You who now are risen higher
Unto wisdom's high abode
Wander steadfast higher, higher
Know it is the noblest road
Only spirit without blight
May approach the source of Light'*

Of all composers, Mozart appears to be the one who has written the most on all types of Masonic subjects. His prolific work covers a wide range of matters, from actual ritual-music, compositions depicting personal feelings of the Brotherhood, together with music dedicated to The Consecration of Masonic Lodges, to Masonic funerals, and finally at almost the end of his life his incomplete Requiem. No doubt one of the greatest Masonic works ever written is Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. The Premiere which took the world by storm, took place on 30th September 1791, some sixty-six days before his passing to The Grand Lodge Above, at the age of thirty-five. Mozart died shortly after midnight on 5th December 1791 from acute Rheumatic Fever.

To put this tragic loss into historical perspective, Austria in 1791, as with so many countries in Europe at this time, was being subjected to the conventions of The Church of Rome, who had passed resolutions opposing all secret societies. Pastors were encouraged to take an active opposition to Freemasonry. It was in the light of this situation that the opera *The Magic Flute* was written by Mozart as a confession of fidelity for Freemasonry and its ideals of freedom and forbearance. In 1795,² Freemasonry was eventually prohibited in Austria and the consequences of this had a devastating effect upon society.

In an emotional sense, *The Magic Flute* was, '*a last sad tribute ... to departed merit*'.³ The impact of this was extraordinary. Its effect upon the world of Opera was profound. The theatre critic of the time, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's statement is revealing:

'Mozart has prompted some of the most philosophical discussions, in the annals of Opera. It points to an inner circle of beliefs that may be the very core of The Magic Flute's libretto and music. There lies an even deeper question to ponder. What is the higher meaning of The Magic Flute under the guise of Freemasonry?'

It is a most extra-ordinary statement? Mozart's fellow Brethren responded with the cautionary remark:

'The Magic Flute was Mozart's last chance to ensure that his knowledge of life's mysteries gained through Freemasonry reached the rest of Continental Europe and the world beyond before it was too late.'

The sub-title to the opera is *Love, Forgiveness, Tolerance and the Brotherhood of Man*. Behind this, the aria *Oh Isis and Osiris*, which represents the story of *The Magic Flute*, lies the ancient Egyptian Legend of the same name. The legend conveys the message of the triumph of Good over Evil and Life Everlasting. It bears a remarkable and striking similarity with the basis of our Legend of Hiram Abiff. The High Priest Sarastro conducts Tamino and Pamina through their Initiation Ceremony during which this solemn prayer is sung:

*'Oh, Isis and Osiris favour
This noble pair with Wisdom's light
Grant them your aid in their endeavour
Lead them to find the path of right!
Let them be strong against temptation
But if they fail in their probation
Do not their virtue need deny
Take them to your abode on high'*

The foremost Masonic Research Lodge in Austria is known as The Sarastro Club. It takes its name from the principal character in *The Magic Flute*, the High priest of the Temple of Isis. Their motto is:

'To live in the hearts of those we leave behind, is not to die'.

Bibliography

1. Harper, Paul, Famous Freemasons - A Prologue, <https://solomon.ugle.org.uk/mod/resource/view.php?id=2084>

References

1. Anderson, James, (1723), *The Constitutions of the Free-Masons. Containing the History, Charges, Regulations, &c. of that most Ancient and Right Worshipful Fraternity, I. Concerning God and Religion*, p. 50, William Hunter, London.
2. Önnersfors, Andreas, (2011), *Freemasonry and civil society: reform of manners and the Journal für Freymaurer (1784–1786)*, 10.13140/2.1.1602.2088.
3. Third Degree Ceremony, *Traditional History*

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Papers offer a simple, direct means of advancement in a particular aspect of Masonic knowledge. They can be used in a variety of ways:

- Read at home for private study
- Shared for pre-reading by members of a discussion group
- Read aloud in Lodge or Chapter, or in an LOI/COI/new members forum
 - Followed by 'any questions'
 - As a precursor to a discussion (in which case much more time is needed, possibly more than double that allocated to the paper itself)
 - Supported by audio-visual aids, if necessary

They can be delivered by a single person or split into bite-sized pieces and read by multiple presenters (in which case, the speaker(s) should have read and practiced the delivery of the paper beforehand).

*Note: All biblical passages are taken from the Authorized King James version unless otherwise specified.

If the paper is to be used to introduce a discussion, the presenter will need to have thought about the material, done a little research, and prepared some open questions to engage with the audience. Kipling's dictum can be of help in preparing open questions, which should begin with one of his 'serving men', as follows: *'I keep six honest serving men (they taught me all I knew). Their names are, What and Why and When and How and Where and Who'*. Rudyard Kipling

If used as part of an event, the paper should be advertised and promoted by way of trailers, flyers and announcements, in summonses, letters, emails, notice boards, and on social media.

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