Conference Report: “Mozart and Modernity”

MSA’s seventh conference, “Mozart and Modernity,” was held from October 20 to 22, 2017, at the University of Western Ontario. Members traveled from across Canada, the United States, and China to attend.

Fascinating themes emerged from the diverse papers that were presented. Both Kevin Ngo and Mary Robbins explored Mozart’s notation and suggested how teachers and performers might better interpret it. Other presenters offered reinterpretations of Mozart’s music. James DiNardo’s analysis of the Kyrie from the C-minor Mass, K. 427, revealed the profitability of applying form-function theory to the study of Mozart’s sacred works. Drawing on topic theory and theories of mimesis, Marina Gallagher suggested that Cosi fan tutte’s Despina can be understood as a modern, female counterpart to Don Alfonso. Adem Merter Birson argued for a reassessment of Die Entführung aus dem Serail in light of recent studies on cultural exchange between the Austrian and Ottoman empires in the late eighteenth century.

Several papers explored reception history. Martin Nedbal discussed performances of Don Giovanni in Prague in the late nineteenth century, revealing how Angelo Neumann’s production was influenced by political disagreements within the city’s German-speaking communities. Adeline Mueller situated the 1931 film Mozarts Leben, Lieben, und Leiden within Austrian efforts to portray Mozart as a national icon.

Focusing on George Rochberg’s Music for the Magic Theater (1965), Paul Corneilson explored the significance of Mozart to artists in the 1960s. Annie Yen-Ling Liu examined confrontations between Chinese artists and Isaac Stern in the documentary film From Mao to Mozart (1979), which follows Stern on a tour of China.

The conference featured three “firsts” for the Society. The first was a presentation by librarian Brian McMillan on UWO’s special collections in eighteenth-century music. This was also the first conference to feature a rousing roundtable discussion. Led by panelists Nathan Martin, James Currie, and Edmund Goehring, attendees discussed Wye Jamison Allanbrook’s book The Secular Commedia: Comic Mimesis in Late Eighteenth-Century Music (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014). Finally, the annual business meeting was included in the biennial conference, rather than at the annual AMS meeting.

The conference provided a wonderful opportunity for members to reconnect with old friends and make new ones, and in the evenings attendees enjoyed lovely dinners at local restaurants and musical and theatrical performances at UWO. The Society is grateful to Edmund Goehring for organizing such an enjoyable and stimulating conference, and to UWO for covering the complete costs.

—Christopher Lynch
Announcements

**MSA Panel at Mostly Mozart Festival**

“I pay no attention whatever to anybody’s praise or blame—I mean, until people have heard the work as a whole. I simply follow my own feelings.”

In this statement in a letter to his father, written on August 8, 1781, Mozart evinces a strong independent streak with regard to musical style, an attitude in conformity with his recent rejection of continued service, under humiliating conditions, to the Salzburg court of Prince-Archbishop Colloredo. But Mozart could only go his own way to a limited degree: of necessity (given the prevailing musical language), he relied to a large degree on formal and stylistic conventions even in the best of his works, and he enjoyed various forms of patronage throughout his Viennese decade, even while mostly remaining a freelance composer.

For this year’s panel at the Mostly Mozart Festival, the MSA Program Committee invites proposals for short papers (twenty minutes) that address the theme “Mozart the Maverick”—whether as an innovative composer who broke with (or at least stretched) musical traditions, or in terms of his (largely) independent professional path. As this year’s Festival includes performances of several of the composer’s late piano concertos, and of both the “Prague” and “Jupiter” Symphonies (pieces that contemporary audiences considered particularly challenging), proposals treating these works are especially encouraged.

Topics should be proposed in abstracts of up to 300 words and sent to Bruce Alan Brown at brucebro@usc.edu by April 30, 2018. One need not be an MSA member in order to submit a proposal, but all speakers chosen must be members of the Society by the time the session takes place.

**A Workshop on Mozart Performance Practice**

Mozart composed his music in all genres and for all instruments with five essential markings of expression (and occasional combinations of them). These markings indicate every note’s particular type of sound (for example, to be played at a lesser dynamic, or more lightly, or to move the music forward, etc.). However, because of the nature of today’s pianos, pianists who play Mozart’s music must cultivate a different application of weight to produce the five sound types that his markings indicate.

Representing Mozart’s music according to the five types of sounds indicated by his use of expression markings is the subject of a workshop, “Enjoying Mozart’s Five Types of Notes: A Workshop for Performers and Teachers,” to be held Saturday, July 28, 2018, in Austin, Texas. It will be presented by MSA member Mary Robbins, DMA, and is sponsored by the Music Teachers National Association (MTNA) and The Steinway Piano Gallery of Austin.

**MSA at International Mozart Communities Event in Salzburg**

In January 2018, representatives from Mozart associations from three continents came together to exchange information and ideas during Mozartwoche in Salzburg. Board member Laurel E. Zeiss represented MSA at two Mozart Communities events sponsored by the Salzburg Mozarteum Foundation. Delegates learned about the foundation’s activities during the past year and about future initiatives from director of research Ulrich Leisinger and director of international outreach Franziska Förster. The Sachsische Mozart Gesellschaft gave a presentation on its music education program that included a lively rhythmic chant in honor of Mozart’s birthday: “Mozart hat Geburtstag Heut. Glück Wunsch!” Representatives also were treated to a short performance by Lilli Lehmann Medal–winner Alice Hoffman, mezzo-soprano, and had opportunities to share information about their programs and publications.
**Edward Klorman Wins the Emerson Award**

MSA was pleased to announce at the October business meeting that Edward Klorman has been awarded the Marjorie Weston Emerson Award for his book *Mozart’s Music of Friends: Social Interplay in the Chamber Works* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017). Klorman is assistant professor at the Schulich School of Music, McGill University. He previously served on the faculty at The Juilliard School and Queens College (City University of New York), where he taught musical analysis, chamber music, and viola performance. Committed to intersections between musical scholarship and performance, he currently serves as co-chair of the Performance and Analysis Interest Group of the Society for Music Theory. He has performed as a guest artist with the Borromeo, Orion, and Ying Quartets and the Lysander Trio, and he is featured on two albums of chamber music from Albany Records. He has published and presented widely on topics in the performance of eighteenth-century chamber music.

Inspired by Goethe’s famous description of a string quartet as “a conversation among four intelligent people,” Klorman’s book draws on a wide variety of documentary and iconographic sources to explore Mozart’s chamber works as “the music of friends.” Illuminating the meanings and historical foundations of comparisons between chamber music and social interplay, Klorman infuses the analysis of sonata form and phrase rhythm with a performer’s sensibility. He develops a new analytical method that interprets the various players within an ensemble as participants in stylized social intercourse—characters capable of surprising, seducing, outwitting, and even deceiving one another musically. The book’s accompanying website (www.MozartsMusicOfFriends.com) includes original recordings performed by the author and other musicians, as well as video analyses that invite the reader to experience the interplay in time, as if from within the ensemble.

**MSA Donates Mozart Portrait to Estates Theater**

In 2011, I was fortunate to be able to attend a performance of *Le nozze di Figaro* at the Estates Theatre in Prague. Ever since then I wanted to honor both the music and Mozart himself by having a portrait of him hang in the theatre. With the 230th anniversary of *Don Giovanni* this past year, I thought it was an appropriate time to create one.

I have done reproductions of both the Barbara Krafft and the Joseph Lange portraits in the past and the method I use, be it for reproductions or of living subjects, is based in the traditional Old Masters technique of building layers of oil paint. In working this way, I really begin to study the structure of the subject’s face. There are few authentic portraits of Mozart that exist, and even though they may look rather different initially, certain physical traits are observable. The two portraits known as being the best representations of him are Joseph Lange’s (as confirmed by Constanze) and the family portrait by Johann Nepomuk della Croce (as confirmed by Nannerl). However, the one I chose to recreate was the posthumous one by Krafft. It was done under the supervision of Nannerl and based on the Croce as well as two additional smaller pieces in her collection. It has the physical characteristics as the above mentioned, but to me it is not only a beautiful portrait, but also a visual representation of all that is in his music.

Mozart has been my favorite composer since I was a young girl. My love and admiration for his music have only deepened with age and it is thrilling to think that I could, even in this humble way, create something to honor him and represent the Mozart Society as well.

—Victoria Anne Koursaros

**Victoria Anne Koursaros** is a Philadelphia-based artist and MSA member. Her portrait of Mozart, based on Barbara Krafft’s, was donated to MSA and presented to the Prague Estates Theater last year.
Ave verum corpus in Labrador

Sarah Eyerly

In the summer of 2010, while completing research at the Archives of the Moravian Church in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, for a book chapter on the improvisation of hymns in Moravian mission communities in North America, I noticed a wooden card catalog in a dim corner of the reading room. Upon inquiry, I was told by Gwyn Michel, codirector of the Moravian Music Foundation, that it contained a fairly complete record of the Foundation’s musical holdings in Bethlehem. I had heard that the musical collection in Bethlehem numbered over 10,000 manuscripts, so I was curious to see what composers and pieces were represented in the catalog. As I leafed through the faded index cards, I began to notice that a number of European composers were represented in the collection: Joseph Haydn, Ignaz Joseph Pleyel, Karl Heinrich Graun, J. C. F. Bach, Johann Stamitz, George Frideric Handel, and W. A. Mozart. The card entries for Mozart seemed especially interesting, as there were a number of vocal excerpts, so Gwyn helped me to retrieve both handwritten manuscripts and early printed volumes of Mozart’s works from the archive’s vault. Interspersed with fragments of the Gloria from the Mass in C Major, K. 257, were copies of Papageno’s part for the duet “Könnte jeder brave Mann” from Die Zauberflöte, K. 620, and of full scores and sets of parts for the Requiem, K. 626. Also present were sections of the Masonic cantata Laut verkünde unsre Freude, K. 623, and choruses from Thamos, König in Ägypten, K. 345/336a, both in German and in English translation.

As I read through the various manuscripts of texted works by Mozart, I noticed that many had been subjected to sacred retexting. This included contrafacted versions of the sacred motet Ave verum corpus, K. 618, as well as Papagena and Papageno’s duet “Bei Männern, welche Liebe fühlen” from Die Zauberflöte, and Ferrando and Guglielmo’s duet “Secondate, aurette amiche” from Così fan tutte. These contrafacts were copied multiple times, in individual parts in several handwritten versions, spanning the late eighteenth through the late nineteenth century, when the fashion for such tributary works died out in Europe and America. Many of the manuscripts contained multiple layers of penciled markings from perhaps two or three generations of performers and singers, testifying to the frequency of use and variety of performance occasions. Given the obvious signs that these manuscripts were valued and very much a part of community life, I wondered if Mozart’s works were also performed in other Moravian communities. As I reached out to other scholars of Moravian history working at mission sites from Suriname to North Carolina to Labrador, I began to discover a network of Mozart manuscripts that had been used since the eighteenth century by the Moravians to transmit the musical culture of the German-speaking world to the far reaches of the Atlantic world.

I was especially interested in the regular appearance of the motet Ave verum corpus in all of the North American collections. I wondered about its significance in the intensely polyglot communities of the Moravian Atlantic, populated by German, English, Delaware, Mohican, Arawak, and Inuit Christians, among others. Vocal works such as Ave verum corpus were typically performed in several different languages, depending on the background of the performers and listeners. Given the multi-ethnic nature of Moravian communities, one wonders who heard and performed these German-, English-, and Native-language contrafacts? What identities and meanings did these contrafacts carry for German-born missionaries and indigenous musicians and audiences? And what could these adaptations contribute to understanding the transatlantic reception and performance of Mozart’s music, especially in colonial settings?

The literature on the performance practice of Mozart’s works is vast. In writing for the readers of this newsletter, I certainly do not need to belabor this point. However, as I contemplated the various meanings and questions that arose from the Ave verum corpus manuscripts, it occurred to me that one of their most important implications could be to highlight a shift in performance practice from the colonial musical centers of Philadelphia and New York to remoter locations such as the Moravian mission of Gnadenhütten in the Blue Mountains of Pennsylvania. What if we listened to...
Mozart in Gnadenhütten, or in the mission of Nain, Labrador (still one of the most remote inhabited parts of the planet), rather than Philadelphia, New York, or even Vienna? How did Mohican, Delaware, and Inuit voices sing *Ave verum corpus*?

Although the specific nature and sounds of performance practices, whether imported or indigenous, can be difficult to assess in historic Native communities, Moravian archival records do demonstrate that Native musicians were adapting Mozart’s musical works to their own tastes as early as the eighteenth century. That the German-Moravian musical style marked a substantial departure from familiar Mohican ways of singing is suggested by the comments of Martin, a Mohican resident at the Moravian mission in Pachgatgoch, Connecticut. According to a communal diary, Martin was frustrated with learning to sing like the Moravians and exclaimed, “Hopefully in heaven it will be easier!”. Despite his initial difficulties, Martin apparently persisted in learning to sing differently. Several years later, the Pachgatgoch diarist noted that late in the evening he heard “Brother Martin in his house singing the Indian verse, ‘waneckk Paquaik’ [a Mohican version of the German hymn “Seiten Höhlgen”]. The moonlight was so beautiful we invited him . . . to sit in front of our door. And he played these verses and many others on his transverse flute. Soon several Indian boys were gathered around him to listen.” Martin had apparently succeeded in achieving an ideal of musical beauty that resonated with the unknown German diarist of Pachgatgoch.

There are numerous other archival records from the Moravian missions that depict Native singing as successful and harmonious, musically and aesthetically. Missionary Johannes Hagen described the “angelic voices” of a group of Mohican singers who had gathered in his house in Shkonoko, and an anonymous German missionary noted that Nathanael, a resident of Wechquetank, a Delaware community near Gnadenhütten in the Blue Mountains, sang “his German and Indian verses so beautifully and clearly that one could feel that the Savior with his glistening wounds was near to him.” On another occasion, the same missionary commented on the “beautiful sounds coming through the thick woods and over the high mountains” as he heard the “brown brethren” of Gnadenhütten singing hymn verses.

Other mission records describe missionaries and Native community members working together to create new texts and music for the use of their communities, even going so far as to hold group meetings at which “the unclear words and incomprehensible matters could be corrected.” On several occasions, communal diaries and letters report that missionaries sought instruction from Native teachers in the proper pronunciation, rhythm, and inflection of Native-language texts for use in singing. Clearly, musical creation and performance were processes of cultural negotiation, and it is likely that Mohican or Delaware styles of singing were not completely superseded by German-Moravian singing practices. As is true of most mission communities around the globe, indigenous cultures and performance practices are not erased when cultures blend or are imposed. Hybrid performance styles are usually the result.

The clearest evidence of hybridity in relation to specific performance approaches to Mozart’s works by Native musicians comes from the Moravian Inuit communities of the Labrador coast, where the music of Haydn, Mozart, and Bach, among others, is still sung by Inuit choirs in Inuktitut from original eighteenth-century manuscripts. In fact, this music has been continuously performed in these remote communities founded by the German Moravian church since the late eighteenth century, often arriving in Labrador within twenty years of the European premieres. In the surviving Moravian churches of Nain, Makkovik, and Hopedale, collections of hand-copied music manuscripts dating to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries preserve a legacy of European music that, after two centuries, has been transformed into a central feature of Labrador Inuit cultural traditions. The German missionaries who brought this music to Labrador are gone, but the music that they documented and translated into Inuktitut, and the Latin alphabet that they created to preserve the language, have endured.

According to Canadian musicologist Tom Gordon, who has cataloged the nearly 15,000 manuscript pages of the Labrador congregation collections, a copy of Mozart’s *Ave verum*
corpus arrived sometime in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century on the SS Harmony, which sailed to Labrador every August to bring supplies and fetch trade goods. Decades of seal oil thumbprints on the margins of the four surviving manuscript contrafacts of Ave verum corpus testify to the generations of Inuit singers who have performed this motet since its arrival. Gordon believes that the original manuscript was the Inuktitut contrafact “Heilig time” from the Hebron congregation collection (fig. 1). It is scored for two violins, viola, cello, and organ, and may have been prepared by a Moravian missionary in Germany before being shipped to Labrador. After this manuscript arrived, a copy was likely transmitted to other Labrador mission stations and received a further retexting in Inuktitut as “Timinget pivluta.” An additional contrafact of Ave verum corpus was prepared in Hebron by an unknown Inuit musician, beginning with the text “Uvlok tamna” (fig. 2). Gordon has been able to use watermarks to date some of these manuscripts, including parts for the contrafact “Jesub timinga,” from the Hopedale mission station. The earliest part set of “Jesub timinga” dates from 1818. The most popular contrafact, “Opinak ikkelijotit,” appears in manuscript form at all three Labrador missions, with the earliest watermarks dating to 1829 (fig. 3). According to Gordon, “Opinak ikkelijotit” is still being performed by the Nain church choir as part of the Good Friday liturgy, representing a continuous performance tradition of Ave verum corpus dating back to the early nineteenth century.

While the tradition of re-texting European music into Inuktitut originated with Moravian missionaries, archival records from the Labrador missions demonstrate that Inuit musicians were adapting European musical works, includ-
externally-imposed cultural traditions into something that is still meaningful. As Gordon states in the documentary film *Till We Meet Again: Moravian Music in Labrador*: “I came to recognize that the Inuit of Labrador regard this [European music], despite its European origins, despite the fact that it was something that was imposed on them in a way by the missionaries, they regard this wholly as their own music. And, with good reason, because [for] over two hundred years, they’ve made it their own. It’s no longer what it started as.”

The Moravian Inuit have gradually transformed *Ave verum corpus* and other pieces brought by missionaries into a musical tradition that is both European and Inuit, demonstrating the importance of considering the reception and adaptive reuse of Mozart’s music on a global scale. That is perhaps the greatest contribution of the Moravians’ Mozart contrafacts to Mozart studies. They represent an enduring legacy of transformation and adaptation, negotiation and survival.

While the historic archival records of Moravian communities do present some evidence of diverging styles of singing, and culturally negotiated aesthetic considerations, we can infer from the living performance traditions of Inuit singers and musicians that Native musicians were actively shaping European repertories to suit their own tastes and musical styles. Although Moravian missionaries clearly intended their transatlantic network of music, instruments, and people to facilitate the sense of a worldwide church body connected through the performance of German music, the result was likely very different from the ideal. Each performance of Mozart’s vocal works, whether in contrafacted or original versions, would have invoked a variety of cultural and religious perspectives and meanings, layer upon layer, resonating through the forest or across the tundra. Mozart sounded very different on the peripheries of the Atlantic world.

Sarah Eyerly is Assistant Professor of Musicology and Director of the Early Music Program at the Florida State University. She previously taught at UCLA, the University of Southern California, and Butler University. Her research interests include eighteenth-century sacred music, Native American hymnody, sound studies, and the spatial humanities. She is currently working on a monograph entitled *How the Moravians Sang Away the Wilderness*, for Indiana University Press’s Music, Nature, and Place series. She is also involved in a collaborative research project on the history and transmission of eighteenth-century hymn manuscripts in the Mohican language from Moravian mission communities in eastern North America which is funded by an ACLS Collaborative Research Grant. She is president of the Society for Eighteenth-Century Music.

NOTES
1 The catalog of the Moravian Music Foundation (MMF) in North Carolina has now been digitized and is available through the GemeinKat system: http://moravianmusic.org/gemeinkat-catalog/. The catalog of the MMF in Bethlehem is scheduled to be digitized.
2 *Pachgatgoch Diary*, March 9, 1749, 114/1, Records of the Moravian Missions to the American Indians (MissInd), Moravian Archives, Bethlehem.
3 *Pachgatgoch Diary*, April 22, 1752, 114/6, MissInd, Moravian Archives, Bethlehem.
4 *Shekomeko Diary*, March 7, 1745, 111/1, MissInd, Moravian Archives, Bethlehem.
5 *Wechquetan Diary*, June 23, 1753, 122/3, MissInd, Moravian Archives, Bethlehem.
6 *Gnadenhütten Diary*, May 24, 1747, 116/1, MissInd, Moravian Archives, Bethlehem.
7 *Gnadenhütten Diary*, September 17 and 24, 1748, 116/4, MissInd, Moravian Archives, Bethlehem.
9 The original instruments brought by missionaries are also still played, including a choir of trombones, a collection of string instruments, and the soft Moravian-style organs that are often used to play European chamber music and anthems.
10 The Hebron mission is now closed, and the Hebron congregation collection is currently housed in Makkovik, Labrador.
12 For more information on the Labrador mission collections and the work of Inuit copyists, see Tom Gordon, “Found in Translation.” For historical accounts of the Labrador missions, see *Moravian Beginnings in Labrador: Papers from a Symposium Held in Makkovik and Hopedale*, ed. Hans Rollman (St. John’s, NL: Faculty of Arts Publications, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2009). For those who cannot travel to coastal Labrador to hear a Moravian choir, Gordon is currently preparing a recording of historic and modern pieces from Nain, Hopedale,
Makkovik, and Hebron, which will be issued by the Research Centre for the Study of Music, Media and Place at the Memorial University, Newfoundland, under the title “Ahâk, Ahâk! Moravian Music of the Labrador Inuit.” Although the recording will not include a contrafact of *Ave verum corpus*, those interested in the music of Haydn will be able to listen to a 1966 recording of the Nain church choir singing “Imgerkattigeka,” an Inuktitut contrafact of the chorus “The Heavens Are Telling,” from The Creation. For more information on the audio publication series, “Back on Track,” see https://www.mun.ca/mmap/research_pub/ back_on_track/. Gordon and his colleague Tim Borlase of Memorial University of Newfoundland, as well as Inuit elders in Labrador, have also collaborated with Canadian filmmaker Nigel Markham to produce a documentary film about the contemporary performance traditions of Moravian Inuit communities: *Till We Meet Again: Moravian Music in Labrador*, produced by Nigel Markham and Mary Sexton, directed by Nigel Markham (Lazybank Productions, 2012).

13 Tom Gordon, interview by Nigel Markham, *Till We Meet Again: Moravian Music in Labrador*. Quotation lightly edited for clarity.

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**Mozart and His Fellow Prodigies in Giovenale Sacchi’s Della divisione del tempo (1770)**

*Adeline Mueller*

In 1770, the Milanese mathematician, music theorist, biographer, and member of the Barnabite order Giovenale Sacchi (1726–89) published a treatise entitled *Della divisione del tempo nella musica nel ballo e nella poesia* (On the Division of Time in Music, Dance, and Poetry; Milan, 1770). *Della divisione* is probably most familiar today to dance historians, due to its treatment of rhythm in music, dance, and poetry.¹ However, *Della divisione* is also a source of a little-known fragment of Mozartiana.

In the treatise’s final chapter, Sacchi recalled a visit with his fellow Milanese, the theorist and composer Giorgio Antoniotti (ca. 1692–1776), author of *L’Arte Armonica: or, A Treatise on the Composition of Musick* (London, 1760). According to Sacchi, Antoniotti (then in his seventies) sat at the harpsichord, and Sacchi placed “the first poem that came to hand” in front of him. Antoniotti immediately improvised an introduction, recitative, and aria, singing to his own accompaniment, adding musical jokes and asides as he went. Antoniotti’s improvisation delighted Sacchi and his other guest, a fellow priest named Girolamo Carboni. Yet Carboni lamented that no one would believe his eyewitness account of Antoniotti’s incredible feat, due to the ephemeral nature of the improvisation. Recounting this exchange, Sacchi observed that those who do not know musical notation could never hope to repeat the kinds of difficult tests that expert maestros such as Antoniotti perform without the slightest difficulty.”² In a footnote to this sentence, Sacchi described five other such master extemporizers, all of whom showed their talent early in life. Among the five is Mozart.

This Mozart reference was only recently brought to light by Peter Keenan, and published on Dexter Edge and David Black’s website *Mozart: New Documents.*³ Sacchi’s footnote provides insight into the ways Mozart was received in Milan in 1770, in the midst of his first Italian journey. If, as I argue elsewhere, the child Mozart was often interpreted by critics as another *puer doctus*, or child scholar,⁴ in this instance Mozart the adolescent is understood as one in a succession of legendary improvisers and sight-readers.

In what follows, I provide each section of the footnote in a translation by John Rice, a portion of which appears in the entry in *Mozart: New Documents*. (The original Italian can be seen in facsimile in fig. 1.) Along the way, I will offer some biographical context on the musicians mentioned alongside Mozart.

**Silvio Antoniotti**

Silvio Antoniotti, who was later a cardinal, and is highly praised in the superb dialogue *De claris pontificiarum epistolarum scriptoribus* of Mons. Filippo Buonamici, began around his tenth year to make and to sing improvised verses, accompanying himself on the lyre [lira da braccio], which he played magnificently.

Silvio Antoniotti (1540–1603), a Roman priest, musician, and pedagogue, was the first of the legendary improvisers and sight-readers in Sacchi’s gallery. His prodigy status was cemented in the papal secretary Philippo Bonamici’s (1705–80) *De claris pontificiarum* (Rome, 1753). The phrase “aureo dialogo” appears to have been used to refer to the classical dialogues of Plato or Cicero, and *De claris* employed the concept of a conversation between Bonamici and several of his secretary colleagues. Bonamici mentioned Antoniotti just once in *De claris*, but described him as having “raised the expectations of the greatest of men while a very young man, almost a child, when he sat in an assembly of the most illustrious men and poured out a great number of verses from the Latin.”⁵ This feat earned Antoniotti the nickname *Il poetino,* at least according to several eighteenth- and nineteenth-cen-
In an article on sixteenth-century Italian poet-singers, Philippe Canguilhem refers to Antoniano as “the most famous improviser of the era,” and mentions his practice of singing to the *lira da braccio*, a common instrument for the accompaniment of solo and improvised song.

**Franz Lamotte**

In the last few years in Milan two amazing boys have been seen: one, in 1768, a thirteen-year-old named Francesco della Motta, and a native (if I remember correctly) of Malines [Mechelen], who played at sight the most difficult violin sonata with the greatest perfection and grace, and in addition to that spoke several languages and had a knowledge of several areas of mathematics.

Here Sacchi turned to the more recent past, citing the examples of Franz Lamotte (ca. 1751–80) and Mozart (see below). The pairing of these two can be traced back to 1766, when Johann Adam Hiller mentioned Lamotte in the same article in *Wöchentliche Nachrichten und Anmerkungen die Musik betreffend* in which he first introduced Mozart.

Lamotte’s country of origin is uncertain; he may indeed have been born in Mechelen, Flanders, and was reported to have studied with Felice Giardini in London. But from 1764 he was a traveling performer, appearing in Southampton, London, Vienna, Prague, Leipzig, Naples, and Milan, often under the moniker “the young Englander.”

Chappell White writes that “the only two specific aspects of Lamotte’s performance noted by contemporaries were his skill with double stops, mentioned in the *Memoires secrets* [1775], and his staccato bowing, which Mozart [in a 1783 letter] said was the feature Viennese audiences remembered.”

But even before those two references, Lamotte was renowned for his sight-reading abilities. Othmar Wessely describes a famous Prague performance in 1767 in which Lamotte performed a violin concerto in a sharp-heavy key at sight.

Charles Burney identified him in 1773 as “the best solo player and sightsman, upon the violin, at Vienna,” and related a story in which Lamotte sight-read a solo by the violin teacher Pietro Nardini from manuscript after hearing it just once, with such skill that Nardini declined to take him as a student. Ernst Ludwig Gerber affirmed Burney’s description...
in 1790, asserting that in 1767 he heard Lamotte in a private concert in Leipzig at which “he gave a hint of what Burney would say of him five years later.”

These or other similar concerts or accounts are the likely origin for Sacchi’s remark in the Della divisione footnote, though I have not yet found corroboration of Lamotte’s skill with languages or mathematics. Leopold Mozart mentioned Lamotte twice in the surviving correspondence: in a letter from Rome in 1770 (describing how long Lamotte had to wait to be presented at court in Naples) and another passing reference from home in 1777. But it is unclear whether the Mozarts ever met Lamotte. From 1766 or 1767 until his death, Lamotte was employed as a violinist in Maria Theresa’s Hofkapelle.

**Mozart**

The other, in this year 1770, at probably the same age, a native of Salzburg, and called by the name Amadeo Mozart, who not only executes at sight any keyboard composition with absolute precision, but also improvises arias and charming sonatas on themes proposed to him, as well as fugues as beautifully composed as could be done with complete leisure.

Sacchi’s knowledge of Mozart’s ability to improvise arias, sonatas, and fugues doubtless came from the public demonstrations and examinations that marked the Mozarts’ first Italian tour in 1769–71. Their first sojourn in Milan lasted from January 23 to March 15, 1770. Mozart gave several private and public concerts during this stay, with one highlight being a concert at Count Karl Joseph Firmian’s residence on March 12, attended by—according to Leopold’s account—“over 150 members of the leading aristocracy... foremost among whom were the duke, the princess, and the cardinal.”

Mozart’s reputation as a sight-reader and improviser preceded even his arrival in Milan, however. His sojourn in Mantua earlier in January gave rise to the following account in the Mantua Gazette: “The said famous little boy in the course of some two hours gave proofs of his amazing talent, sight-reading at the harpsichord various sonatas by several worthy composers.” In a concert there on January 16, seven of the fourteen numbers on the program were either sight-read or extemporized by Mozart. And during their very next stop after Milan, Bologna, Mozart twice composed a fugue on the spot for Padre Martini, a feat about which Leopold boasted, “He has also been most comprehensively tested here, and this increases his fame throughout Italy, because Padre Martino is the idol of the Italians and speaks of Wolfgang with such admiration and did all the tests with him.” That fall, Martini would write in support of Mozart’s successful application to the Accademia Filarmonica, while July had seen Mozart receive the Order of the Golden Spur from the Pope.

Black reminds us that Sacchi knew Count Firmian and Padre Martini, and that a copy of Della divisione at the University Library, Glasgow, bears Mozart’s signature; so the two may very well have met during one of Mozart’s periods in Milan. While I have not yet been able to establish the exact month(s) in which Sacchi’s Della divisione was completed and published, it seems that any of these public demonstrations before, during, or after the Milan sojourn could have been the source or sources of Sacchi’s description.

**Two Prodigies of the Foundling Hospital**

In these [boys] the power of natural disposition is apparent; nevertheless none of them lacked instruction; on the contrary they had excellent teachers. In the Foundling Hospital in London are two blind brothers, little boys who play the following game. When one of the boys is summoned elsewhere, an aria is sung to the other one. With little pieces of wood he notates it on a tablet, and goes away. The first boy is recalled: he touches [the tablet] with his hand and recognizes the aria; approaching the keyboard, he executes it perfectly.

This final reference is the most difficult to identify. The organist John Stanley (1713–86), blind since birth, was a governor of the Foundling Hospital from 1770. The two “brothers” to whom Sacchi refers were probably not brothers, but rather two of a group of young blind musicians whom Stanley taught at the Foundling Hospital, perhaps Thomas Grenville (1746?–1827) and John Printer (1756?–1815). John Richard Prescott writes of this group of musicians and their “interdependent working and teaching relationships,” which led to the promotion of music instruction for both sighted and blind children at the Foundling Hospital.

The engraving table described by Sacchi is referred to as a “music board” in the Foundling Hospital minutes, but its origins are unknown, and it may indeed have been a collaborative invention that predated even Stanley’s associations with the institution. The apparatus may have resembled, or even inspired, the composition board created for Maria Theresia von Paradis (1759–1824) by her collaborator Johann Riedinger in the 1780s (now in the collection of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna). While I have not yet found an account of the public demonstration Sacchi described, it must have made its way to Italian readers through reports in one or more periodicals or travel narratives. What is remarkable here is that the “game” or trick is presented not primarily as an example of musicians overcoming blind-
ness, but as simply another in Sacchi's list of extraordinary instances of musical memory and sight-reading. Mozart, for Sacchi at least, was part of this august lineage of “sightsmen,” to use Burney's term. His primary claim to fame in 1770, in other words, was his extraordinary skill as a performer and a creator of beautiful music that vanished as soon as it was heard—two legendary aspects of his music-making that we can never fully recover, only approximate.

Adeline Mueller is Assistant Professor of Music at Mount Holyoke College. She has published articles on Mozart in the journals Eighteenth-Century Music and Opera Quarterly, and guest-edited an issue of Opera Quarterly on Die Zauberflöte. Mueller also contributed an essay on the score to Fritz Lang's silent film Die Nibelungen for the edited volume Wagner and Cinema (Indiana University Press, 2010). Her forthcoming book, Mozart and the Mediation of Childhood, examines Mozart’s role in social and cultural transformations of childhood during the Austrian Enlightenment. Other forthcoming publications include contributions to the edited volumes Dance and the Enlightenment, Mozart in Context, and The Cambridge Companion to The Magic Flute.

NOTES

I would like to thank Bruce Alan Brown for his thoughtful comments on an early draft of this article. I am also grateful to John Rice for sharing his translation with me.


2 Sacchi, Della divisione, 213–14.


5 Bonamici, De claris pontifiarum, 123.


9 See also Chappell White, From Vivaldi to Viotti: A History of the Early Classical Violin Concerto (Langhorne, PA: Gordon and Breach, 1992), 317. “Tell [Heinrich Marchand] that he ought to concentrate hard on staccato-playing, for it is just in this particular that the Viennese cannot forget Lamotte.” MBA, vol. 3, 295; LMF, 862.


12 "Und schon damals ließ er das von sich vermuthen, was D. Burney 5 Jahre später von ihm sagt." Ernst Ludwig Gerber, Historisch-Biographisches Lexicon der Tonkünstler (Leipzig: Breitkopf, 1790), vol. 1, A–M, 777–78.


17 MBA, vol. 1, 328; LMF, 123.


21 Prescott, John Stanley, 32.
Reviews


Introduction
Packed tightly into a twenty-three-pound, green square box is the most recent compilation of Mozart's life and music—published in celebration of the 225th anniversary of the composer's death. Released in October 2016 in a joint effort by Decca Classics, Deutsche Grammophon, and the Salzburg Mozarteum Foundation, the Mozart 225 collection boasts impressive numbers: 200 CDs with 240 hours of music performed by 600 world-class performers. And in just ten days and sleepless nights, you could hear Mozart's entire catalogue. The CDs are divided roughly into five primary categories—Chamber, Orchestral, Theatre, Sacred, and Private—as well as fragments, doubtful works, arrangements, and works completed by other composers. The recordings included on the collection span previous decades and listeners will find multiple versions of a piece through what the publisher labels as “historic” and “classical” performances. Notably, the collection includes a recording of “Per la ricuperata salute di Ofelia”—a recently discovered collaboration between Mozart and Salieri.

Beyond the CDs, the collection includes several resources that encourage listeners not to just listen to the music, but to engage with it in a variety of ways. The collection contains two beautifully illustrated books: a new biography by Cliff Eisen, as well as a book that accompanies the CDs. This volume, titled “Die Musik,” contains short essays to preface the categories of the collection, track-by-track commentaries, and detailed discussions of the operas from Idomeneo onward. Short essays on performance practice, primary-source materials, and Mozart's personal instruments further supplement the discussion and repertoire. In a small paper volume is a copy of the “K Book,” which adheres to the structure and numbering Neal Zaslaw uses in his upcoming edition of the Köchel Catalogue (see Zaslaw’s review on pp. 14–15). In addition to the title of the work, place where it was written, and the Köchel number, the listing also guides listeners to the corresponding CD in the collection and volume in the Neue Mozart-Ausgabe.

Several images printed on cardstock round out the collection, giving listeners a look at the music and the man. The images include several passages from the lied “Als Luise die Briefe,” K. 520, as well as the Canon for 4 voices, K. 228; a facsimile of a letter from Mozart to his father dated February 15, 1783; and a small portrait (perhaps the final portrait of Mozart) done in silverpoint by Dorothea Stock. Finally, listeners also have access to several digital resources via the Mozart 225 website, including access to a PDF or app edition of Mozart’s libretti and a commentary.

To review Mozart 225, we divided it roughly based on genre and encouraged reviewers to consider the overall collection of recordings and their significance to the repertoire rather than individual pieces or tracks. In this issue, we feature reviews of the biography, orchestral music, and sacred music. Reviews of Mozart’s theater, private, and chamber music will appear in the fall 2018 issue.

—Emily Wuchner

W. A. Mozart by Cliff Eisen

In addition to recordings, the Mozart 225 collection includes a beautifully illustrated, substantive overview of Mozart’s life and music authored by Cliff Eisen.

Eisen organizes his account of Mozart’s life and creative activities into three parts: the first is titled “Mozart on the Road, 1762–1773”; the second focuses on what Eisen calls Mozart’s “short’ Salzburg decade,” the years 1773–1780 (p. 50); and the final segment concentrates on Mozart's years in Vienna. In all three sections, Eisen seeks to counter the traditional narrative of Mozart’s life: that he was an exploited child prodigy who endured a period of “servitude” to “an unappreciative Archbishop” from which he broke free only to fall prey to the “fickle Viennese public” whose neglect led to the composer’s financial ruin and “terminal decline” (p. 123). Eisen argues that, contrary to prevailing views, Mozart’s life was “on the whole a successful negotiation—both professionally and personally—of the complex eighteenth-century world” (p. 123). The author weaves in many primary sources, including some lesser-known ones, to support his points. The high number of primary sources is one of the companion volume’s many strengths.

Part I of Eisen’s essay stresses the educational nature of the family’s travels and demonstrates how influential these trips were to Mozart’s development as a composer. While many portrayals of Mozart’s early life focus on the young prodigy’s musical feats and his seemingly magical abilities, Eisen provides a fuller picture of the Mozart family’s journeys: what archeological sites they visited, the technological innovations they encountered, and the cultural differences they had to negotiate. Eisen concludes this portion of the essay by stating that as a result of these travels
and his father’s tutelage, Mozart was “a modern, enlightened man of his times” (p. 43). However, while this is unquestionably true of his father Leopold, it seems less true for Wolfgang based on the evidence supplied here.

Part II (“Salzburg, 1773–1780”) presents a fairly balanced portrait of Leopold and Wolfgang’s relationship. Eisen shows that rather than being perceived as a harsh, exploitative taskmaster, Leopold and his parenting were praised in contemporaneous documents. In fact, several imply that Leopold actually might have been too lenient with his talented son. Eisen also wisely reminds readers that Leopold himself did not follow his parents’ wishes—he was dismissed from university for insubordination and pursued music rather than law and philosophy. The author also attempts to redress misconceptions about musical life in Salzburg as well as relations between Archbishop Colloredo and the Mozarts. Colloredo may have been a “difficult employer,” but the Mozarts were in turn troublesome employees who regularly ignored the Archbishop’s musical and professional expectations (p. 81). Eisen successfully demonstrates how “both sides were at fault” for “the breakdown of Wolfgang’s relationship with his native city” (p. 83).

During Part III (“Mozart in Vienna, 1781–1791”) Eisen argues that many accounts of Mozart’s final years are inaccurate. Contrary to popular belief, Mozart’s letters show that he was upbeat and actively engaged with family and friends during his final months, not isolated and hounded by premonitions of death. Additionally, the composer’s letters suggest that he was far from destitute; he was able to retain a servant, for example. The author also addresses what he believes are misperceptions about the music from the composer’s final decade. Eisen claims that the political implications of Mozart’s Le nozze di Figaro and his Masonic activities have been exaggerated. He further asserts that scholars have magnified how neglected and unpopular Mozart’s music was in the late 1700s. While it is true that north German writers criticized the composer’s music as too complex, writers elsewhere praised his works. In fact, “within days of [Mozart’s] death,” Eisen writes, “obituaries appeared in newspapers across Europe” (p. 123). Therefore, Eisen joins Christoph Wolff in arguing that Mozart was poised for even greater musical and financial success at the time of his death. Therefore, Eisen joins Christoph Wolff in arguing that Mozart was poised for even greater musical and financial success at the time of his death (see Wolff, Mozart at the Gateway to his Fortune: Serving the Emperor, 1788–1791 [New York: W. W. Norton, 2012]).

At times, Eisen’s interpretation of the primary sources could be more nuanced. For instance, Eisen takes Leopold’s account of the quarrel over La finta semplice (which the author quotes at length) at face value. More information about how imperial opera commissions were customarily handled would lend more balance. Similarly, Eisen asserts that Empress Maria Theresa’s famous warning to her son that the Mozarts were “useless people . . . [who] go about the world as beggars” was “ill-conceived and inaccurate” (p. 28). Yet his own essay illuminates what behaviors might have prompted her assessment. A few pages after Eisen makes this claim he quotes Leopold’s April 14, 1770 letter from Rome, which reveals how Leopold manipulated circumstances in order to gain access to Cardinal Pallavinci—access that others easily could have viewed as undeserved. It is also worth noting that while Paul Moseley’s preface to the Mozart 225 collection states that Eisen’s biography is “new,” some of this material has been published elsewhere (p. 4). Much of Part II, for example, repeats material from Eisen’s chapter on Salzburg in the Cambridge Companion to Mozart.

In addition to Eisen’s musical biography, the companion volume contains two shorter essays by scholars associated with the Mozarteum in Salzburg. The first, “The Musical Correspondence of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart” by Anja Morgenstern, provides an admirably clear overview of the surviving Mozart family letters. Morgenstern rightly points out that many of Leopold’s letters to friends and family in Salzburg were intended to be read aloud and shared with other households and that, even though a substantial number of epistles exist, the correspondence is far from complete. A second essay, “Portraits of Mozart” by Christoph Grosspietsch, places the portraits that the Mozarteum considers “authenticated” into biographical context (p. 86). Despite the number of apparently authentic likenesses of Mozart that survive, Grosspietsch concludes, “what Mozart really looked like is something that we will never truly know” (p. 89), a conclusion that the accompanying illustrations bear out.

Throughout the volume, numerous color reproductions of eighteenth-century paintings, prints, and documents complement the text and help bring the places that Mozart lived in and visited and the people he worked with to life. Each section of Eisen’s essay commences with a biographical overview that then leads into a discussion of Mozart’s musical output and style during that period of his life. References to specific works pepper the text. These together with the accompanying Köchel index make it easy to listen to the works Mozart wrote at each stage of his life. With its rich use of primary sources and fresh look at themes prevalent in Mozart scholarship, Eisen’s book complements and enhances the entire set.

—Laurel E. Zeiss
Orchestral Music (CD Nos. 50–101)

I own two sets of recordings of Mozart's “complete” works. One of them—178 CDs in 59 double jewel boxes with thick booklets—was issued by Philips in time for the bicentennial of Mozart's death in 1991; the other—170 audio CDs in paper sleeves plus a CD ROM containing vocal texts and libretti, housed in a sturdy box measuring roughly 12 x 5 x 5 inches—was issued by Brilliant Classics in time for Mozart's 250th birthday in 2006. The former was a costly luxury product, the latter a low-priced, “generic” alternative, which I purchased a decade ago for a bit over $100.

“Complete” is in quotation marks above because a consensus about what that word must mean when applied to such a large, varied corpus of works is not possible. Does it include more than one version of works that have two or three of them? Does it include fragmentary works completed by others (Requiem!), or even fragments in their fragmentary state? Does it include Mozart's arrangements of other composers' compositions? And what about works of questionable provenance, those that have not been convincingly demonstrated to be either authentic or the opposite and have often been the object of heated scholarly debate?

This third traversal of Mozart's oeuvre was issued for 2016, for the 225th anniversary of his death. The obvious question, then, is this: what can a new “complete” set of Mozart recordings offer that the earlier ones lacked?

In his introduction to the collection (found in Volume I), Paul Moseley, the producer of Mozart 225, neatly answers my questions about completeness as follows:

How complete is Complete? The answer is: to a level never before attempted. For the first time, all Mozart's “work” (as opposed to “works”) that is realistically performable is included: all his significant fragments and sketches, works finished by others, plus arrangements (of both his own and others' works). New recordings have been made of several performable fragments, some on Mozart's own instruments at the Salzburg Mozarteum Foundation, including the first recordings of his recently donated “Costa” violin. (p. 3)

Both older sets contain primarily reissues of recordings from the archives, topped up by as many new recordings as were needed to fill in lacunae, presumably where no recording, or perhaps no adequate recording, was available. Both sets also licensed recordings from other firms. Philips' archive is of course deep and wide and, accordingly, their set contains many oldies-but-goodies, often performed by resonant names. The Brilliant Classics set comes from a smaller, newer company, so inevitably the recordings are on average more recent and the performing artists mostly from younger generations. When I need a recording for a class, lecture, or research, I compare the recordings from the two sets. As a generalization, what I find is that both sets offer more-than-adequate sound-quality, whereas when it comes to artistic qualities, sometimes I prefer the one from the earlier set, sometimes the one from the later set, and occasionally neither.

My assignment is to review those CDs of Mozart 225 that contain orchestral music, a category that is itself divided into six subcategories: Symphonies (CDs 50–61); Serenades, Divertimenti, Cassations (62–68); Dances (69–73); Concertos (74–87); Supplementary Performances (88–98); and Classic Performances (99–101). Each CD is in a handsome cardboard sleeve, and the discs come with a 116-page booklet that serves as an annotated table of contents of works, movements, and performing forces, as well as the dates, venues, engineers, and Tonmeistern of the original recordings. Program notes are found in Volume II (see below).

The considerations behind the choice of recordings to reissue are outlined by Moseley:

Mozart 225 avoids dogmatic adherence to performances given solely on either period or traditional instruments. . . . Using the recordings of Deutsche Grammophon, Decca, ASV and twelve other labels, more than two-thirds of the selected recordings are different from the 1991 [Philips] edition. . . Period- and modern-instrument performances are nearly always kept separate, not least for reasons of pitch. (p. 4)

Ensembles involved include the English Concert (Trevor Pinnock) and the Academy of Ancient Music (Christopher Hogwood), which between them account for some forty symphonies and isolated symphony movements composed by Mozart between 1764 and 1776, on seven discs. Then comes a single disc from the English Baroque Soloists (John Eliot Gardiner) with four symphonies plus a symphonic minuet from 1778–1782. A remaining eight symphonies (1779–1788) are distributed between Pinnock and Hogwood with an assist from the Orchestra of the Eighteenth Century (Frans Brüggen). The last disc in the set contains alternate versions of three symphonies that survive in two authentic versions, here performed by Hogwood (K. 132 and K. 297) and Les Musiciens du Louvre (Marc Minkowski) (K. 550).

Then we jump to CDs 88–98 (“Supplementary Recordings”) and 99–101 (“Classic Performances”). The former category includes three discs with seven symphonies—the most famous ones—conducted by Sándor Végó and Claudio Abbado. The three discs of Classic Performances include recordings of four late symphonies played by the Berlin Philharmoniker (Karl Böhm), the Lon-
don Symphony Orchestra (Benjamin Britten), the Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks (Eugen Jochum), and the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra (George Szell). Resonant names all!

What to make of this? Large university, conservatory, or public libraries may already own many of these recordings. (Publicity for the entire project reports that in “240 hours of music, Mozart 225 features over 5 hours of newly recorded material.”) Nevertheless, research libraries may wish to provide access to recordings that (using Paul Moseley’s distinction) belong to Mozart’s “work” even if not to his “works.” Libraries that allow their CDs to circulate may find Mozart 225 a convenient way to replace worn copies or even to add second copies. Fanatical collectors of CDs or of Mozartiana will naturally want Mozart 225. People who have all the worldly goods they require for survival may imagine it as a handsomely wrapped box under a Christmas tree. And there will (one hopes) be a new generation of listeners who don’t already own, or have access to, these or other performances, and who, perhaps, may envision this as their starter set.

There are, however, certain things that bother me, which I limit to matters of which I have first-hand knowledge. When the contract with Decca for the symphony recordings by the Academy of Ancient Music was signed in 1978, there was a stipulation that credit for the leadership of those performances—on the recordings themselves, on the accompanying packaging and booklets, and in the publicity—would read “Jaap Schröder, Concert master — Premier violon — Konzertmeister; Christopher Hogwood, Continuo,” in identical fonts of the same size. In those early days of early-music musicmaking, having the experienced Schröder training and leading the strings was a boon. He had much to do with the early success of the AAM’s symphony recordings, yet his name appears nowhere on the CD sleeves or in the booklet.

Unlike Paul Moseley’s reasonable summary of the Mozart 225 project, the advertising for the project puff[s] the results as being not only complete, but the nearest thing to official, definitive, unparalleled, authoritative, and in short, the last word. This tiresome tactic has long been employed to pedal cultural goods. Part of the desired aura of definitiveness and—dreaded word!—authenticity is produced by hints that great, new scholarship went into it. As described in a press release from the Mozarteum: “The 200 CD Complete Edition was created in partnership with the Salzburg Mozarteum Foundation and Mozart expert, Professor Cliff Eisen of King’s College London,” and the CDs are accompanied by “two major and lavishly illustrated hardback books including a radical new full-length biography by Cliff Eisen plus a work-by-work commentary from Mozart experts worldwide.” I agree wholehearted with the characterization of Eisen and Ulrich Leisinger of the Mozarteum as leading experts on all things Mozartean, and I look forward to reading what they’ve written. But what to make of the press release asserting that the tout ensemble includes


As the author of the forthcoming new version of “K,” who has spent twenty-five years researching and writing it and is now engaged in reading early proofs of its German translation, I feel obliged to report that I knew nothing of this until the publicity began to flow. Contrary to what the publicity says (but as Moseley correctly states in his remarks), the actual publisher of the new Köchel Catalogue is Breitkopf & Härtel of Leipzig and Wiesbaden. B&H was the publisher of the original edition of the venerable catalogue (1864) as well as of its revisions (1905, 1937, and 1964). When corporations allow admen (and women) to represent their products to the world without oversight of those who have created those products, the outcomes can be unfortunate.

—Neal Zaslaw

Sacred Works (CD Nos. 153–170)

If one were to give an overview of Mozart’s most significant contributions to music, it may be reasonably expected that certain genres would be invoked more readily than others. Indeed, it would seem virtually unimaginable to discuss Mozart’s musical legacy without mentioning his landmark contributions to opera, symphony, piano concerto and sonata, and string quartet. Mozart’s sacred compositions, though—with the exception of a handful of classics like the Krönungsmesse, K. 317, and the Requiem, K. 626—have generally occupied a secondary place in the composer’s oeuvre by comparison. The release of the Mozart 225 collection, however, has given music lovers a fantastic opportunity to explore this particular side of Mozart’s musical personality in its totality. Boasting standout performances by some of the finest Mozart interpreters of the past few decades, and featuring alternative versions of several pieces, the eighteen CDs of sacred works in Mozart 225 constitute an excellent display of Mozart’s approaches to the sacred musical genres of his era.

Taken as a whole, Mozart’s sacred works chart a fascinating trajectory through the composer’s life and artistic development. In works such as the Waisenhausmesse, K. 139/47a, and the Regina coeli, K. 108/74d, written just before Mozart reached his teenage years,
one senses the young prodigy developing strategies for setting longer texts, guided as much by his own inspiration as the conventions of Austrian sacred music (and most likely, in the case of K. 139, his father’s supervision). With the Missa brevis, K. 192/186f, written less than a decade later, however, one can discern a greater creative initiative—the more prominent role of the orchestra in the “Kyrie” and “Gloria,” and the striking modulations in the “Agnus Dei,” suggest a maturing composer in command of a variety of musical and expressive devices. By the time we reach the works of the later Salzburg and Viennese periods, Mozart’s compositional virtuosity is now fully apparent. In the Missa longa, K. 262/246a, Misericordias Domini, K. 222/205a, and the Mass in C minor, K. 427/417a, Mozart alternates musical styles, textures, and performing forces with astonishing frequency, but always with nuanced sensitivity to the text, weaving a tapestry of sound that simultaneously delights, moves, and amazes.

As masterful as Mozart’s sacred works may be on their own, it helps considerably that Mozart 225 features a superb array of conductors, ensembles, and soloists for virtually every piece. Many of these interpretations seem to strive for a balance between dramatic expressivity and refined, technically sound execution. In general, the performances directed by Neville Marriner and especially Herbert Kegel lean toward the former, while the renditions under Stephen Cleobury and George Guest lean toward the latter. On the other hand, John Eliot Gardiner’s interpretation of the Requiem, with its striking dynamic shifts and driving tempos, is one of the most intense and dramatic I’ve ever encountered, rivaling even Marriner’s 1991 recording with the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields. Only Leopold Hager’s monochrome performance of La Betulia liberata, K. 118/74c fails to convince, as the conductor exercises far too much restraint with his musicians. The soloists for virtually every piece are also universally excellent, but Emma Kirkby’s stunning execution in the Regina coeli, K. 127, and Exsultate, jubilate, K. 165/158a, as well as Sylvia McNair’s hauntingly expressive “Et incarnatus est” from the Mass in C minor, deserve special praise.

In an effort to be as complete as possible, Mozart 225 has included a number of alternative versions and performances of several pieces, as well as arrangements and editions of unfinished works. Some of these performances are simply alternate renditions of the same piece, as executed by different soloists or ensembles. However, the inclusion of both the 1773 and 1780 versions of Exsultate, jubilate on a single disc makes for intriguing listening, as one can compare the two side by side and trace how Mozart rethought the piece seven years after its initial composition. As for the arrangements, a fair number of them—for example, Richard Maunder’s reconstructions of several movements from the Mass in C minor—are modern constructions of several movements from the Mass in C minor—are modern constructions of several movements from the Mass in C minor—are modern constructions of several movements from the Mass in C minor—are modern constructions of several movements from the Mass in C minor—are modern constructions of several movements from the Mass in C minor—are modern constructions of several movements from the Mass in C minor—are modern constructions of several movements from the Mass in C minor—are modern constructions of several movements from the Mass in C minor—are modern constructions of several movements from the Mass in C minor—are modern constructions of several movements from the Mass in C minor—are modern constructions of several movements from the Mass in C minor—are modern constructions of several movements from the Mass in C minor.—Matthew Leone

The fall 2018 issue of the Newsletter will feature reviews of the remainder of Mozart 225:

Private Music and Miscellaneous Works, reviewed by Murl Sickbert Jr.

Italian Operas, reviewed by John Platoff

German Operas, reviewed by Lisa de Alwis

Chamber Music, reviewed by Edward Klorman