GOING BEHIND THE NOTES: EXPLORING THE GREAT PIANO COMPOSER
AN 8- PART LECTURE CONCERT SERIES

MOZART: THE AMBIGUOUS

Dr. George Fee
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Mozart's Personality

The Enlightenment and Classicism

Performance: Fantasy in C Minor, K. 475

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Melancholy in Mozart and Other Qualities in Mozart's Music

Performance: Rondo in A Minor, K. 511

A Bit More on Mozart's Music and Brief Concluding Thoughts

Performance: Fantasy in D Minor, K. 397

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MOZART'S BEST-KNOWN MUSIC:

Operas: Don Giovanni, Marriage of Figaro, Cosi fan tutte, Magic Flute, Abduction from the Seraglio, Idomeneo

41 Symphonies (especially Nos. 35, 38-41)

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String Quartets (especially K. 421 and 465)

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Franz Liszt: Spiritual Seeker

Claude Debussy: Seeker of the Inexpressible

MOZART:THE AMBIGUOUS

Introduction

It is a common impression that Mozart the man, and his music, are representative of simplicity, easy-going joy, and sparkling light-heartedness. These qualities are certainly among the infinite number of ingredients which can be perceived in Mozart's music.

However, I am not alone in believing Mozart's personality and music to be among the most ambiguous of any composer and any music. Although many composers have complexities and contradictions in their personalities, scholars have frequently been able to decipher and explain them. However, lifetime Mozart specialists are usually left puzzled by the contradictions in the man, and in awe of the complexities in his music.

Of my eight presentations to you, this one has been by far the most challenging to prepare and has necessitated the most time and effort. It is not easy to describe Mozart's ineffable music, and I am not alone in this belief. When asked to write a forward to a book on Mozart, the great composer, Richard Strauss, many of whose operas were very consciously influenced by Mozart, said, "I cannot write about Mozart. I can only worship him."

Mozart and his music will, and must always, remain an enigma. It will be up to each of you to explore what Mozart's music means to you. That his music can simultaneously reach people in a wide variety of ways is part of its uniqueness and greatness.

Mozart's Personality

Mozart stood about 5'4'', had a very small frame, and was quite thin. His head appeared large in proportion to his body, and his nose was especially large in proportion to his head. He possessed very bright, clear blue eyes, and was extremely nearsighted. He spoke in a soft, tenor voice. He always appeared to be pale, and his face was yellowish and disfigured from the smallpox he contracted when he was 11 years old. He was perpetually self-conscious about those scars, as well as his large nose. Later in his life he did not wear the customary wig of the times, and was quite vain regarding his fine, light-brown hair, which he had professionally groomed and powdered. Everyone commented on his very "animated countenance."

It is rare for prodigies in any field to be highly social people. But Mozart seems to have been the biggest party animal of all the major composers. He hosted many all-night lavish parties in his home and had an extremely wide circle of friends from many professions. He felt comfortable approaching strangers to initiate conversations. A rarity for a creative artist and genius, he hated to be alone.

Mozart passionately loved dancing and claimed that he had more talent for dancing than for music. He was virtually addicted to playing billiards. He played almost daily- with friends, his wife, or by himself, and the billiard table was provided a prominent place in his home. It was said that Mozart was more enthused over the arrival in town of a famous billiard player than of a famous musician. He usually bested his friends at the game, but frequently lost to the virtuosos of the sport.

Mozart was an ardent playgoer and attended the theater at every possible opportunity. He liked fine black coffee and smoked a pipe. He loved animals, always having a dog in his home, and showing much affection for his canary.

“Kindhearted” was the word so often used to describe Mozart. He tended to like everyone, and he always wanted everyone to like him. He expressed a sweetness in childhood, which he never outgrew. He had been fawned over as a child, and from his earliest years he aimed to please everyone. His mother wrote of him at age 21, “When Wolfgang makes a new acquaintance, he immediately wants to give his life to them.”

Mozart was innately generous. Once when visiting the composer Michael Haydn, Joseph Haydn’s younger brother, he learned that Michael was quite ill and unable to finish a commissioned piece. Mozart immediately finished the piece for him. Mozart was generous in loaning money to friends, even when he himself already was in debt. Once, when Mozart was approached by a homeless person, he immediately went into a coffeehouse, sat down, and wrote a short piece. He then handed it to the person with instructions to go to Mozart’s publisher and keep the money which would be offered for the piece.

Mozart was a genius only in music. He was not a Renaissance man like a da Vinci, or a Goethe, or even to an extent, his father. He showed little interest in the developments leading to the French Revolution even though everyone else with a brain was following that situation closely.

Theological issues held little interest for Mozart. Some say this was evidence of a lack of intellectual curiosity. However, as Hans Kung has pointed out, this could have been evidence of Mozart’s devout Catholicism, which eliminated the need to search to discover his beliefs. Mozart vehemently opposed atheism and stated that no Protestant would ever be capable of understanding what lay behind the Agnus Dei. He desired to work only in a Catholic country.

Though it is unclear how often Mozart went to Mass, Mozart made it clear throughout his life how much he believed in God. “I live with God ever before me. He will never desert those who serve him.” His father had refused to have him inoculated against smallpox because that would be interfering with whatever was to transpire, which would be God’s will. Mozart emulated his father’s example and accepted all events as God’s will. This made it easier for him to accept the deaths of his parents and friends.

Throughout his life Mozart showed much playfulness and mischievous behavior and described himself more than once as a “clown.” He sometimes spoke in rhymes and riddles and loved word games and cryptic puzzles. By the way, he only used the name “Amadeus” three times in his life, and each time was as a joke in a letter. His given middle name was Theophilus, which, in German, means Gottlieb, “loved by God”. When signing his name, he usually signed simply” Mozart.” If a full name were required, he used “Amadé.” The Amadeus name entered common usage only in the 19th century to make Mozart appear more beatific. As a joke he sometimes signed his name “Trazom,” Mozart spelled backwards.

A medical doctor, Peter J. Davies, has extensively researched Mozart's physical and mental health. While speculative, Davies' conclusions have been accepted by many scholars. Davies believes it is likely that Mozart suffered from cyclothymic mood disorder, a mild form of manic depression, a.k.a. bipolar disorder. Cyclothymic mood disorder is not identical to true manic depression. However, it means that periods of hypomania alternate with periods of mild depression, with periods of normalcy occurring in between. In the hypomanic state a person with cyclothymic disorder experiences unusually expansive moods, enjoys increased productivity, and shows extreme gregariousness and physical hyperactivity. Inappropriate joking and extremely frivolous behavior can also occur.

It is an indisputable fact that Mozart exhibited juvenile behavior as an adult. He sometimes wrote letters of total nonsense or at least long passages of nonsense. His brother-in-law, who was very fond of Mozart, said he was often bewildered by Mozart's behavior which included "superficial frivolity, sudden outbursts of vulgarity, and jests of a nature which one did not expect of him." The brother-in-law also reported overly rapid, excited, disconnected speech at the same periods as the clowning.

Mozart's sister-in-law reported periods when Mozart could not sit still or keep his hands and feet from being in motion, his hands usually playing with some object. There are other accounts of Mozart's odd behavior as an adult, such as leaping over chairs and doing somersaults. None of this was alcohol induced. Mozart never drank more than a small amount because he feared that alcohol could interfere with the composing which was constantly going on in his mind.(In this respect, the movie "Amadeus" gave a false image .However, in many respects the movie was factually correct with regard to Mozart. However, nearly everything regarding Salieri in the movie and play was totally fictitious.)

I wonder if perhaps Mozart's clowning was also partially caused as a reaction to his life as a child when he was always expected to be on perfect behavior. He had had to ingratiate himself with kings, queens, and even the Pope, and his Papa was always present, critically watching over and directing him. It is interesting that when Mozart, at age 22, was in Paris without his father, ostensibly job-hunting , he actually spent most all of his time out socializing while his chaperoning mother sat in a dark, damp, cold hotel room where she eventually died. An observer in Paris wrote: "Mozart is very easily distracted and too little concerned with the means that lead to Fortune. I wish him half the talent that he has and double the enterprising spirit." Mozart's father once wrote to his son: "You never think of the future. The present engulfs you completely."

The Enlightenment and Classicism

Composers do not compose in isolation from the society in which they live. Rather, their music usually reflects the values and ideals of their society. The principal philosophic and aesthetic movements of Mozart's time were the Enlightenment and Classicism. A composer did not need to be a serious philosopher to be influenced by them. Everyone was.

The Enlightenment developed after the horrific effects of the 30 Years War, when one third of the population of Europe had been killed or died of illness, and the social order had disintegrated. After the hyper-emotionalism, religious zealousness and conflict of the Baroque era, people were ready to seek and trust Reason to be the ultimate authority, and to look to science for answers. A fresh, confident

optimism lifted peoples' aspirations. Man's quest for knowledge was going to lead the way to a better world, and enlightened, benevolent rulers were going to institute reforms to transform and perfect society. God would still have a place as the reasonable and benevolent creator of the universe but would not be looked to for every answer.

It is not co-incidental that the word light occurs in the middle of the word Enlightenment. The sun, beaming its rays became a symbol of the quest for knowledge and a spreading of illuminating light to the intellect. One writer of the time wrote: "This is an age so full of light, that there is scarcely a corner of Europe, where its beams are not crossed and interchanged with others."

Concurrent with Enlightenment thought were the aesthetics of Classicism. Classicism was not at all something cold or unfeeling. It simply aimed for a state of balance – a balance between emotion and reason, between inner feeling and outward form. Order and freedom were to exist side-by-side.

A "noble simplicity and calm grandeur" was highly valued in many aspects of life. These words were employed by the archaeologist and art historian, Johann Joachim Wincklemann, in 1764, to describe the architecture of ancient Greece. Combining these aesthetics with the concept of naturalness, he established the conscious ideal for all the arts.

Another important component of 18th-century aesthetics was that supplied by the French Rococo. After the interminable, sober reign of Louis XIV, where massive Baroque majesty was epitomized by Versailles, a hedonistic reaction occurred. As Will Durant has written, Venus became preferred over Mars. Life became oriented to the playful pursuit of pleasure and Beauty. A comfortable intimacy replaced heavy monumental grandeur. Refined, charming, graceful loveliness became desired in all the arts, with the preferred style being miniature forms with a polished, exquisite finish. Profuse, decorative ornamentation, featuring delicate sinuous curves was in evidence everywhere, as these aesthetics spread widely across Europe.

This elegance did not eliminate drama, profundity, intensity, or tragedy. In fact, the concept of the sublime was very important in the 18th century. The word's primary usage was to refer to something which could not be controlled, and therefore could be dangerous, and induce fear and terror.

Fantasy in C Minor, K.475

Some of the most insightful writings on Mozart and his music are surprisingly not by musicologists, but rather by two Swiss theologians: the Protestant, Karl Barth, and the Roman Catholic, Hans Küng. Both pay tribute to the elevating, spiritual qualities in Mozart's music. However, they don't stop there as many commentators have. Both Barth and Küng call attention to and explore the dark side of Mozart's music. This conflict of light versus darkness is one of the central components of Mozart's music. Barth referred to the darkness as "real life in all its discord." Others have described the darkness as "expressing uncertainty in an uncertain universe" and "turbulence and restlessness beneath the chaste surface." Maynard Solomon has gone so far as to state that he believes Mozart was "put on earth to trouble our thoughts – that all is not well, that things are not what they seem, and that life is transient."

Mozart's Fantasy in C minor, K.475 is illustrative of the darkness in Mozart's music (By the way, "K." stands for Ludwig von Köchel, who in the middle of the 19th century catalogued and assigned a chronological order of all of Mozart's known works. This was necessary because most of Mozart's works were not published and provided an Opus number during his lifetime.)

A fantasy is an improvisatory composition in a free form with multiple sections. This work of Mozart was said to have been very much like Mozart's famed keyboard improvisations. It was written in 1785 to precede his Sonata in C minor. However, it is often played by itself.

18th century musicians perceived inherent emotional qualities in the various keys and to most all of them, C minor represented tragedy. From the terrifying, stark, octaves in the first measure of the C Minor Fantasy, the listener senses that there will be life-and-death issues lurking behind the notes of this 11-minute work. At times, the music feels as if it was intended for the opera house, where I, and many others, believe Mozart's genius was most fully realized.

This Fantasy is a drama, and drama is built upon conflict and contrasts. Frequent, sudden contrasts of loud and soft contribute to the drama in this work. You will also hear repeated notes which could represent heartbeats. Mozart wrote that "silence is the greatest effect in all music," and he certainly employs silences effectively in this work.

Chords and key relationships are what the musical language and structure of classical era music is based upon and the harmonies and the keys determine the development and progression of the various emotional states of the music. In this daring work Mozart journeys to keys a long distance from the home key, and he juxtaposes harmonies which may not be unusual in themselves but striking in their juxtaposition.

Mozart's achievement of cohesiveness in this work is no small accomplishment. Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach and some other composers before Mozart had juxtaposed shocking harmonies. But their compositions sometimes conveyed the impression of primarily striving for unusual effects. The daring harmonies in Mozart's works are part of a structural edifice which supports a work of cumulative power, and not merely a collection of short-term effects.

Certainly, this piece can be described by the 18th century usage of the word "sublime" – something which aroused fear and terror. There is a distinction in 18th century music between music which was intended to evoke horror and that which was meant to evoke terror. The former was referred to as *Ombra*, meaning" shadow," and the latter as *Tempesta*. Both were derived from the world of opera. Ombra music was used to depict the supernatural, such as ghost scenes, or sometimes solemn processions. It often accompanied the darkness of night and could represent something ominous, unsettling, and perhaps an approaching, threatening menace. It could represent an apprehension of pain or even death.

The Tempesta, as the name indicates, was music written to depict a storm. This could be a literal storm with lightning and thunder. Or it could be representative of an irate deity, or an emotional outburst of human rage or madness.

GO TO PIANO: (The following words were spoken, not read)

The C minor Fantasy opens with a slow ombra section. When Beethoven opened a C minor piece, he tended to use notes of the C minor chord or scale. For example, (play 3rd Piano Concerto and 5th Symphony openings.) Mozart opens this Fantasy with bare octaves followed by notes which do not belong to the C minor chord or scale. This is an example of chromaticism, and Mozart's extensive use of chromaticism makes him clearly stand out from his contemporaries. This chromaticism provides an unsettling ambiguity right at the start. (Play m.1). What do we get in the next measure? Two figures which are termed "sigh" figures. Sigh figures are representative of pain, fear, grief, or longing. (Play m.2)

Measure 3 picks up where measure one ended and its notes comprise a diminished seventh chord, which was universally representative of mystery or tension. (Play m. 3) Measure 4 provides more sighs.(Play m.4)

Notice that the first notes of measures one through four descend by half steps (Play start of m.1-4). Measure five continues the descent. But then there occurs an extraordinary turn to the chord occurring a half step above the home key. This brings a sense of relief and for 3 measures we will feel a sense of peace.(Play m.5-7) But alas, a sudden, shattering, terrifying diminished seventh chord interrupts.(Play m.8) This is followed by the darkness of e flat minor and one measure later another a miracle seems to occur and the music appears to be in B Major , a half step below the home key.(Play m.9- m.10) Time does not allow me to show more details. However, note how many different shocking harmonies have occurred in just 10 measures of music.

Light and darkness will be in conflict for the remainder of this piece, both in close juxtaposition and between the sections. There are six sections in all. After the dark foreboding of the first section a calm and soothing second section emerges in D Major (play m. 26 through 29). The third section is representative of Tempesta, with its sudden furious, agitated outburst of bare octaves and jagged leaps. The tremolo in the right-hand could be representative of a shaking and trembling human being. (Play m. 36 through 42) A peaceful, charming fourth section follows. (Play m. 86 to 89.) Tempesta returns in the fifth section in which one can almost visualize the flames of a fire. (Play m. 125-127) Near the end of the section one can imagine an agitated singer being answered by an unforgiving orchestra. This is very operatic writing. (Play m.141-143).The sixth section is a return to the ghostly ombra of the first section.One could assume that, as in most 18th century musical works, there would have been a joyous or triumphant conclusion. However, the conclusion of this work leaves all the issues unresolved, as does the conclusion of the Sonata, which it was intended to precede.

PERFORM: Fantasy in C Minor, K. 475

Mozart's Life (1756-1791)

To understand Mozart's life, it is essential to recognize the dominating influence of his father. The mantra which Mozart was brought up to believe was: "Papa comes directly after God."

Leopold Mozart was well educated and an extremely capable professional musician. His treatise on violin playing was highly regarded all over Europe. He viewed it as his duty to sacrifice absolutely

EVERYTHING for the musical development of his son, born in 1756, whom he termed “the miracle that God made to happen in Salzburg.”

There was not just one international style of composing or performing in Europe, but rather enormously different approaches to both composition and performance in Paris, London, Berlin, Munich, Mannheim, Vienna, Milan, Rome, etc. For Wolfgang to experience all these varieties of music and musical performance, a massive amount of traveling would be necessary, and Leopold was willing to make the sacrifices to facilitate this endeavor. There was also the motivation to gain fame and money from the performances of the astounding young prodigy.

The majority of Mozart’s childhood and young adulthood ended up being consumed by traveling. For example, he was on the road the entire time from when he was seven and a half until age 11. A few years later additional extended travels occurred. In fact, between the ages of seven and 18 he was gone from Salzburg more than he was home. Travel was rugged in those days, and I suppose, today, his father would have been accused of child exploitation or abuse. It was an ordeal to sit on hard seats in a crowded stagecoach, being bounced along primitive roads, enduring the hardships of frigid weather, breakdowns, and robbers. The inns were poorly heated, and there were many illnesses one could contract, to which one did not have natural immunity.

The various musical styles Wolfgang was exposed to would all find their way into the mix which would eventually comprise his own musical language- the simple, sweet, melodic ,vocally- inspired writing in short, symmetrical phrases of the Italians; the elegant, intimate, tasteful Galant elements from the French Rococo; the stately, almost austere simplicity and breadth from the operas of Gluck; the orchestral fire and singing quality from Mannheim musicians ; the intense, dramatic, highly expressive, aesthetics of Emanuel Bach, a very important son of JS Bach; and the passionate, so-called Stürm und Drang writing of Haydn and other composers around 1770. Mozart would never have been able to write as he did without having been taken on these travels in his childhood. It was also a joy for him as a little tot to literally sit on the knees of some of the world’s greatest musicians and converse with them about composition. Also, at an early age, he acquired the skills necessary to successfully function in royal and aristocratic environments. No one could ever have had nearly as comprehensive musical education as a young person as did Mozart.

Leopold planned, organized, and managed the tours. He also tutored his son in music and in other subjects. Father and son were very close. Mozart’s mother, Anna, accepted her role which was to be subservient to whatever Leopold decreed. She kept a sense of humor and showed an unconditional love for her husband and her two children who survived infancy. Wolfgang’s sister, Nannerl, was five years older, and they were happy playmates and soulmates as they were hauled across Europe as children and young adolescents. Leopold called the shots, and the other three family members dutifully carried out their assigned roles.

Leopold was very shrewd and pragmatic, musically and otherwise. He knew the real world and the music world much better than his naïve, trusting son ever would. His omni- present advice was usually right on the mark. Bored in his position in the Salzburg musical establishment, where he remained until his death

at age 67, he lived for nothing except his son's career. He was in his glory directing the family enterprise, and it worked successfully for everyone when Wolfgang was young.

The problems arose as Wolfgang became an adult. Leopold was cautious, unbending, controlling, and obsessive-compulsive. His love for his son was conditional, and he was constantly bombarding his spirited, adventuresome son with detailed lectures and instructions on everything. He was proud of his son's musical achievements but never even tried to understand that his son had personal, human needs and feelings. The last straw was Wolfgang's decision to marry. After this occurred, Leopold abandoned communication on everything other than strictly musical matters. This devastated and crushed Wolfgang, who never ceased trying to establish a personal relationship with his father. Mozart's sister, influenced by her father, whom she now resided with and looked after, ceased all communication with her brother, and did not even inform him of their father's death. To father and sister, Wolfgang's marriage had broken up the threesome's cozy family unit. (Remember that the mother had died when Mozart was 22.)

It is essential to understand the status of a musician in the 18th century. Composers did not usually write from an inner compulsion until the 19th century, and until the 19th century, they never dreamed that their music would be performed after their deaths. Since the 11th century, musicians had been craftsmen holding a job to make a living. The employer was either the church or a court. It would have been laughable to attempt to make a musical living otherwise. Composers wrote for immediate pressing needs – masses for the church, operas for visiting dignitaries, and instrumental music for the entertainment of aristocrats, or for the aristocrats to play themselves. Musicians were basically servants. Their place in the 18th century fell between the butler and the kitchen staff. Some musicians even doubled as domestic servants. It was poor pay, but at least, it was a job.

In the 18th century, the Holy Roman Empire consisted of 1800 small states. There was no unified Germany, Austria, Hungary, Italy etc. Culture in those areas was not centralized in one big city, as was the case in France and England. Therefore, there were many job opportunities, since the local rulers competed to see who could have the most impressive musical establishment. Mozart was brought up to aim for one of these jobs. Any medium-size location would have been deemed satisfactory by his father, who dreamed of retiring from his own court position and going to live with his son. After all, he had sacrificed for his son, and so he believed his son would owe it to him.

Mozart's travel from age 16 onwards was no longer for fame or for education. It was to search for a musical leadership position at a court. However, there were either no vacancies or he was considered too young and inexperienced for such a position. Being unsuccessful, he returned to Salzburg as a court organist and violinist (although throughout his life, he always preferred playing the viola -which he did at a high level.) Increasingly, he found Salzburg to be intolerable. Its population was only about 16,000, and it had no real opera. He viewed the archbishop who ran Salzburg as stupid, and he was little appreciated since he was no longer the novelty of a child prodigy.

Mozart's big break occurred when he was 25. He received his first commission as an adult to write an opera for a major opera house. It happened to be Munich." Idomeneo" (pronounced E-do-men-a-o) was

the opera, and he put all of himself into it. This was his big chance to show what he could do, and he truly hit it out of the park.

I urge everyone to get to know this opera. It blazed new territory in his development, brought him new confidence, and it is extraordinary music. The music is explosive and powerful, and it remained Mozart's favorite opera, partly because it coincided with the happiest time of his life.

After his success with Idomeneo, he believed that now was the time to break out of his constraints and live life on his own terms, musically and personally. Against his father's advice, he moved to Vienna. His attitude was that if there were no positions, he would freelance, even though few musicians had ever even tried to be a freelancer. Vienna at that time had a little over 200,000 people, about the current size of Grand Rapids, MI. By comparison, Paris was twice as large, about the size of Detroit, and London then had a population of over 1 million.

Vienna had been the seat of the Holy Roman Empire for over two centuries. It was an elegant city, though pedestrians were encumbered by much blowing dust, as well as over 4,000 carriages and wagons. Vienna had an image of leisure and decadence. There was a huge passion for dancing, as well as an abundance of theaters, gambling casinos, and rampant prostitution.

Music only prospers in peace and relative prosperity, and Germany and Austria had both from 1763 to 1788. In those countries there was a fanaticism for music-- both among the nobility, and the increasing number of the rising middle class. It is incredible how many of the nobility themselves actually played instruments. This was especially true in Vienna, where even the royalty made playing music a part of their daily schedule. A magazine correspondent wrote in 1800: "Everyone plays, everyone learns music. Every proper girl, whether she has talent or not has to learn the piano or singing. The sons also have to learn music." Mozart himself exclaimed "This surely is Clavierland.," clavier being the German word for a keyboard instrument.

Not long after his move, Mozart married the sister of a girl with whom he had previously been in love but who had rejected him. He acknowledged he was initially attracted to Constanze because of her "small black eyes and slim figure," as well as her common sense and kind heart. He was 26 and she was 20. It did not begin as a passionate love affair for either of them. Rather, Mozart felt it was time for him to marry. Over time, it evolved into a fulfilling marriage for him. For Constanze, it proved to be enormously stressful, with many financial hardships and six births during their 9 ½ years together. Infant mortality was high in those days, and only two of her children survived past the age of six months. On top of her pregnancies, she also suffered ill health, which necessitated expensive spa treatments. Mozart was continually solicitous and protective of her. He was extremely dependent on her, seeking and heeding her advice in a wide range of areas. She was always willing to assist his career by doing whatever was needed at the time.

The only salary Mozart ever received in Vienna was during the last four years of his life. This was a very small stipend for him to supply dance music for court balls. His main source of income came from piano performances. There was no infrastructure for public attendance at concerts such as we have today. In his time, a composer would periodically organize a concert and locate subscribers who committed to

attend. Since the attendance would be rather small, the venues most often used were the salons of the aristocracy. Mozart did receive considerable income from such events since the aristocrats were willing to pay a high price to be able to hear new piano concerti which Mozart would frequently premiere in those venues.

Although Mozart received some opera commissions, in those days composers usually were forced to relinquish the rights to the presenting opera house after the early performances of their opera had taken place. He did receive income from some private teaching for which he was paid very handsomely. However, teaching bored him. He would rather have been playing billiards, and on occasion even suggested that he and the student play billiards instead of having a lesson. Since music publishing in Vienna was still in its infancy, when Mozart's music was sold it was in the form of handwritten copies made by professional copyists. Only about 10% of his works were published during his lifetime, resulting in only a small amount of income ever being derived from his compositions.

One scholar has estimated that Mozart wrote music on the average of eight hours a day, every day of his adult life. He eventually purchased a raised desk at which he could stand, rather than sustain the aches and pains from perpetually sitting hunched over a table. It was very time-consuming writing down millions and millions of notes with a quill pen. Mozart wrote very neatly, and his writing never appeared to be hurried.

Mozart's compositional process was to first work out the entire composition in his head. The ideas came effortlessly, and his mind was constantly composing. Even while playing billiards his mind was composing music. Sometimes at the end of a billiards game he would sit down at the piano and perform the piece he had composed in his head during the game.

While Constanze was in labor, Mozart was composing a string quartet in the next room, and she later pointed out to people where he wrote her cries into the music. Once while writing out a Fugue he had just composed, Mozart was composing in his head the prelude which would precede the Fugue. At the first performance of one of his violin and piano sonatas, he performed the piano part although he never had had the time to ever write any of it down.

Normally little revision was necessary for Mozart's pieces. This is so different from Beethoven or Chopin who sometimes kept revising some of their works for literally years. But the impression that everything was effortless for Mozart is not accurate. He wrote: "It is a mistake to think that the practice of my art has become easy to me. I assure you, dear friend, no one has given so much care to the study of composition as I. There is scarcely a famous master in music whose works I have not frequently and diligently studied." This brings to mind Johann Sebastian Bach's comment that "I have had to work hard; anyone who works just as hard will get just as far." How I wish that were true! However, Bach and Mozart's comments have merit in that they remind us to not overlook the discipline, work ethic, and sheer labor required even for geniuses.

Many of Mozart's works remain incomplete. In addition to his 800 completed works, there are almost 200 which remain unfinished. He didn't have the luxury to write what he wanted and take the time to complete everything. Composing was a vehicle to put food on the table for the family. The 18th century

composer has been likened to a short-order cook. He had to produce quickly. His music was tailored for a specific occasion, a specific performance, a specific performer, and a specific audience. Deadlines were always looming-perhaps the next day, or maybe as long as the next week for a major work. Or the deadline might be the next month to have to start from scratch and complete a four-hour opera. Therefore, some works were inevitably abandoned in order to address a more immediately pressing project.

These continuous deadlines, year after year, caused huge stress and pressure, which took a toll on Mozart's health, and ultimately actually hastened his death. Knowing that he was always facing deadlines increases our appreciation for the quality of writing he always demanded of himself. However imminent a deadline might be, he never lowered his standards, and was always continuously growing and evolving into a deeper, more complex, and sophisticated composer.

Mozart was able to generate a significant amount of income during his first five years in Vienna. He was the rage as a pianist, and the aristocrats couldn't wait to hear his next performance. It is wildly speculative to estimate the buying power of money in foreign currencies from over 2 ¼ centuries ago. But a number of scholars have tried to estimate Mozart's annual income and have arrived at vastly different conclusions. However, it is possible that in his most successful year Mozart was grossing as high as 200,000 dollars in today's buying power. His father, after 40 years of service at the court of Salzburg, was earning the equivalent of about our current 20,000 dollars. Business expenses, as we self-employeds all know, consumed a significant part of Mozart's gross income. For example, he needed to employ music copyists who worked in his home during the day. He also believed that he needed to own the most fashionable clothing in order to perform for, and be around, the aristocracy. "It is out of the question to be badly dressed, for appearances must be kept up," he said.

There is no doubt that Mozart was doing very well financially for his first few years as a self-employed musician in Vienna. He employed a servant, although servants were not expensive to engage in those days. He also owned a carriage and a horse and sometimes rode his horse as a hobby. This was initiated on his doctor's order that he get out of doors and experience recreation after so much of the day being spent indoors writing down music.

Feeling confident at this time, and living in the moment as usual, Mozart rented a huge, expensive residence in the most fashionable part of downtown Vienna. He habitually was purchasing a vast number of clothes regardless of the price--and clothing for 18th century male and female aristocrats, whom he was aping, was extremely expensive.

Mozart was only able to maintain this affluent lifestyle for a few years. An aide to the Salzburg archbishop, the person who literally gave Mozart a kick in the rear after Mozart had resigned his Salzburg position, had given Mozart prescient advice: "Remember, Mozart, the Viennese are very fickle. They will initially shower you with attention. But then they will lose interest in you and become fascinated with the latest novelty." This advice proved to be exactly right. Mozart was on top of the world for a while, and then Vienna lost interest in him.

This was partially because Mozart composed increasingly sophisticated music which began to go over the heads of many listeners. However, part of it was that Viennese fickleness of which he had been warned. Being self-employed, he suffered a significant decline in income which led to a major financial crisis for him in 1788, when he was 32. Austria, to support Russia, had entered a war against the Turks which resulted in massive inflation. A bad harvest occurred which sent food prices soaring even more. Everyone's morale sank. The aristocracy either were on the military front or had fled to avoid conscription. Those who stayed in Vienna saw their buying power shrink big-time. Therefore, they disbanded their musical establishments and concert sponsorship, and stopped attending concerts. Mozart therefore didn't have places to perform and performance had been by far his primary source of income. He was forced to borrow significant amounts of money from his friends, after having already downsized his residence.

At the time of Mozart's death in 1791, things were starting to look up financially. His loans were being repaid and there were even invitations to go to London in 1792. Haydn, after working at a butler's wages for 40 years, had generated, in 18 months in London commencing in 1791, a huge fortune equivalent to possibly as much as a couple hundred thousand of today's dollars. Mozart would have earned as much. Had Mozart lived 18 months more, he would likely have been appointed to the prestigious and lucrative musical directorship at St. Stephen's Cathedral. Though Mozart and Constanze experienced harrowing times financially, it should be noted that they never lived in actual poverty.

There is controversy whether Mozart was a frequent gambler, and possibly could have lost considerable sums of money gambling. There is no hard evidence of this, although it was alluded to shortly after his death. Dr. Davies has shown that a case could be constructed that this was true. Gambling was rampant in Austria at that time – at the ubiquitous casinos, coffeehouses, and even at the Masonic lodges. Everything was a candidate to be gambled on -card games, billiards, you name it. It is intriguing that statements of some of Mozart's friends referred to his "irresponsible way of life and unworthy activities." Being an innate man of the theater, Mozart was by nature flirtatious, especially with female singers. But we do not know for a fact that he was ever unfaithful to Constanze. Therefore, these elusive innuendos could possibly refer to gambling.

People often ask why Mozart died at age 35. There will always be uncertainty, although we can very quickly dispense with the nonsensical notion that he was poisoned. The most widely accepted hypothesis, the one proposed by Dr. Davies, is as follows. From all the constant traveling during the ages of 6 to 17, we know that Mozart suffered numerous upper respiratory infections, in addition to rheumatic fever and typhoid fever. He didn't have the natural immunity the locals had. We know that repeated occurrences of respiratory illnesses occurred in adulthood, most seriously at age 28 when rheumatic fever re-occurred. Dr. Davies believes that this attack likely resulted in Mozart's contracting Schoenlein-Henoch Syndrome, an autoimmune disease which likely spread to his kidneys. This then likely caused chronic glu- mer- u- lo- neph- ri- tis. Eventually renal failure occurred, which was hastened by overwork and pneumonia contracted during a bronchial epidemic in Vienna in which thousands of people died.

Mozart's burial in what has been incorrectly called a "pauper's grave" was not disrespectful. At that time, for hygienic and sanitary reasons, all but the most wealthy people were buried outside the city in mass graves. Seven years later their bones would be replaced with newer bodies. Family and mourners never accompanied the cart carrying the body to the grave after a funeral.

Mozart's early death has been widely referred to as "the greatest tragedy in the history of music." It is extra tragic in that his finances were recovering, and his composing was continuously entering newer and newer frontiers. In his last days he lamented: "I must die when I could live quietly. Now to leave my Art, when I must no longer be a slave to fashion. When I could follow the flights of my fantasy, when I could compose freely and independently whatever my heart dictates. I must leave my family, my poor children, in that moment when I would be in a better condition to care for them".

Constanze hurled her body on top of Mozart's the moment after he died. She remained devastated for years. However, she was smart enough to capitalize on his reputation and music in order to financially survive. She was only 29 when she lost her Wolfgang, and she would live another 51 years until the age of 80. Ironically, she is buried in her father-in-law Leopold's plot in Salzburg – the plot of the man who hated her, not so much because of who she was , but because he viewed her as having taken his son away from him.

18 years after Mozart's death, she married an older Danish diplomat who always was very solicitous of her. They wrote a biography of Mozart based on her recollections. She wrote of Mozart: "His extraordinary love for me breathes through all his letters. Those of his last year on earth are just as tender as those he wrote in the first year of our married life.

Despite his demanding schedule, Mozart was a caring and attentive father. His older son became a government official, and the son born four months before his death established a minor career as a

composer. Neither child ever married, although the older son may have fathered an illegitimate child.

Rondo in D Major, K.485

We will shortly take a 10-minute break before the second and shorter portion of our afternoon, when we will probe into the heart and soul and essence of Mozart's music. It is by far the more significant portion of today's presentation.

Before our break, let us hear a work which exhibits many of the joyous qualities for which Mozart is well-known.

A Rondo is by definition a sectional composition in which a refrain alternates with sections referred to as episodes. Rondos usually appear as one movement of multi-movement works. However independent rondos also exist, and Mozart wrote four such rondos for piano, of which three survive. We will hear two of them today.

Rondos were popular in large part because they almost always employed cheerful, lyrical, and sometimes humorous tunes in the refrain. Mozart's D Major Rondo, composed in 1786, a very happy

and successful year for Mozart, is typical in this respect. But what is very unusual in this so-called Rondo is the fact that there are no episodes! Therefore it is a Rondo only in the fact that it has the typical cheerful Rondo theme which appears on numerous occasions, and is showcased in many different, often unexpected, keys, which you can listen for.

Even in this generally bright, cheerful work, Mozart slips in moments of darkness.

GO TO PIANO: (The following words were spoken, not read):

Here is an example where the employment of a minor key and chromaticism heighten expressivity and lend an uncertainty and ambiguity. (Play m. 27-31)

Another example is where one would expect a routine accompaniment pattern in the LH, Mozart provides the LH a melody of its own with obvious chromaticism. (Play mm. 53-59)

There are numerous examples of chromatic scales, which employ all the 12 possible notes in an octave. (Play 34-36)

In Mozart's time and before, it was always expected that in sections or passages which are repeated, the player would add embellishments to what the composer had written. To not do so was a sign of ignorance, and adding embellishments was a primary reason to repeat a section. Adding embellishment makes playing more fun for the player and adds much stimulus to the listening experience of the audience. It is not that hard to do. One simply experiments. It is bizarre that today one hears the National Anthem disfigured by self-indulgent embellishment, and yet Mozart's music is rarely embellished when it was intended to be.

I add my own embellishments in the repeat of the opening section of this Rondo, and in a few other places that involve a repetition.

Here are some examples of my embellishments, which are in the style of what musicians did in Mozart's time.:. (Play m. 1-2) and then two different embellishments; here are some other embellishments: (play mm. 21-22 plain and embellished; play mm. 25 and 26 plain and embellishment.)

I believe that Mozart's music can frequently be viewed as a conversation --with another person, or with oneself. Here are some examples of what I mean. (Play m25 and 26; play30-34; play pleading gesture 107-110)

I hope you will enjoy all the surprising twists and turns in this 7-minute Rondo.

PERFORM: Rondo in D Major, K.485

10 Minute Break

Challenges of Playing Mozart's Music

Ask musicians of any instrument or voice which composers' works are the most difficult to perform and I guarantee you that most all will answer Mozart's. Playing Mozart has been a challenge for many

musicians throughout their lives, and some have even avoided doing so. The great pianist Sviatoslav Richter said at the end of his rather long life: “Mozart: an age-old problem. I really can’t get to grips with him and I’m afraid I am not convincing when I play him.”

Let us explore some of the reasons why Mozart’s music can be so difficult to play, when to many listeners it sounds easy.

It may surprise some of you that fewer notes can be more difficult to interpret than many notes. The great pianist Artur Schnabel observed: “Children are given Mozart because of the quantity of the notes; grown-ups avoid him because of the quality of the notes.” There is an old adage in the music world: ”Mozart: too easy for children and too difficult for adults and artists.”

Mozart’s music needs to sound simple, effortless, and natural. He frequently stated that his music should “flow like oil.” Yet, simplicity, gracefulness, elegance, and charm are frequently the most elusive qualities for most musicians to realize in musical performance. It is usually easier for musicians over the age of 12 to communicate sadness, melancholy, or passionate intensity.

Playing Mozart’s music is very different from playing most 19th century music. The success of the later music is often dependent on the obvious communicating of the performer’s fervent emotional intensity. However, too much overt emotional intensity can sabotage a Mozart performance. Mozart’s music is most successfully communicated when the performer allows the music to speak for itself and invites the listener into Mozart’s world. Schnabel advised pianists to “Play Russian music as if you are the center of the universe. Play Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert as if you are part of the cosmos.”

However, a significant challenge for the pianist is how to deal with the fact that Mozart not infrequently wrote music which is representative of nearly uncontrollable rage and anguish. While it is most obvious in his operas-for example, Elettra’s Act III aria in the opera Idomeneo, and The Queen of the Night’s second act aria in the Magic Flute- such writing also occurs in his instrumental works. To underplay the drama and passion in any of his music is disrespectful to the character of the music. But however intense the emotion, Mozart performance should never exceed tastefulness. Mozart admonished: “As soon as one oversteps the bounds of order, moderation and propriety, it is no longer beautiful because it is contrary to nature. The passions, whether violent or not, must never be carried in their expression to the verge of disgust, and music, even in the most frightful situations, must not offend the ear, but always please.” He faulted singers who “do not sing; they shriek, they howl with all their might.”

Finding the perfect balance and equilibrium in every aspect is one of the greatest challenges in playing Mozart’s music. Too much or too little of anything spoils the result. In life in the real world, some of a person’s best decisions are sometimes the actions which a person does NOT actually take, or the words which a person is tempted to say but does not. So it is in playing Mozart--some of our best decisions are what we elect NOT to do in performance.

Anything exaggerated can be disastrous to Mozart’s music, and a mannered, overly conspicuous individuality is always something to avoid. I once heard a pedagogue aptly fault a Mozart performance for resembling the appearance of someone who had, in poor taste, applied excessive make-up.

The avoidance of extremes is usually part of the answer to every issue which arises when playing Mozart's music. Many 18th century thinkers saw as their models the ancient Greeks, and one of the maxims at the Oracle of Delphi in ancient Greece was: "Nothing to excess, moderation in all things," which was representative of the ancient Greek concept of "sophrosyne." This best describes how to play Mozart's music.

Mozart's keyboard music was intended for keyboard instruments which were called fortepianos. They weighed around 100 pounds. Large grand pianos today can weigh nearly 1000 pounds, and with their iron frame can withstand 20 tons of pressure from the tension of the strings. Mozart's pianos required about 17 grams of weight to put a key down. Today's pianos necessitate about 55 grams in the bass and 48-50 grams in the treble. Mozart's pianos were intended to be played in small rooms and their sound rapidly decayed. They inherently excelled in clarity, with the louder sounds being crisp and pungent, and they were innately perfectly balanced between treble and bass registers.

Today's pianos are built primarily to project and sustain lush sounds in large halls. Mozart's music can easily sound tubby, thick, and opaque on them. They have booming bass registers which the pianist has to always carefully monitor and attempt to control. I believe Mozart would be shocked and appalled if he were to attempt to play today's pianos, especially a 9-foot grand piano.

Unless a pianist is a Mozart specialist, most pianists feel extremely exposed and vulnerable when performing Mozart's transparent music. The exact rhythmic placement of every single note is clearly audible. The fact that pianists should use very little pedal when playing Mozart's music adds to the insecurity.

Mozart's music demands its own unique sound. This is challenging because it necessitates sweetness, purity, dignity, and warmth, but also consistent clarity, sparkle, and transparency. However, one must avoid the easy trap to fall into of an overly precious approach. It is essential that when playing Mozart's music, a pianist feel comfortable and allow the piano to sufficiently and naturally sing.

Ascertaining an optimum tempo is an important aspect in Mozart playing. I do not believe Mozart's faster movements were usually intended to be played as fast as they are often performed today. His music needs to speak and to breathe. Mozart wrote: "It is much easier to play rapidly than slowly. But is it beautiful? If there is no fire in the composition one will never get it by hurrying." Empty virtuosity meant nothing to Mozart and he faulted the virtuoso, Clementi, for " lacking a penny's worth of feeling or taste." Mozart's father in his treatise specified that the designation" Allegro" meant "gay, but not hurried." By not hurrying Mozart's music, the player can have more opportunity to "play with " the notes through subtle rhythmic and dynamic inflections. As a result , the music can more effectively swing and dance, and evidence increased character and personality.

On the other hand, a player must be sure that Mozart's slow movements are not played too slowly. Mozart cautioned players to not turn his Andantes into Adagios. The tempo words at the start of pieces were carefully selected by Mozart and he subsequently made literally hundreds of changes to what he had originally supplied, in order to more specifically indicate exactly what he wished to be the tempo and mood. The optimum tempo can usually be ascertained by singing the music out loud or to oneself.

Whatever tempo is selected, an essential aspect of successful Mozart performance is feeling a sense of direction and forward motion to every phrase.

One cannot fully understand any composer's keyboard music without an understanding of the composer's output in all genres and in Mozart's case this is especially true. I have gained profound insights into the interpretation of Mozart's keyboard music from witnessing the incomparable James Levine conduct the seven most significant Mozart operas, and from studying the operas in detail .Pianists will be most successful if they view themselves as operatic characters singing the keyboard melodies. After all, performing Mozart at the piano should emulate the music -making of a great singer – knowing what one is singing about, shaping the phrases, and knowing where to breathe.

Mozart's keyboard music frequently is modelled on the writing for a string quartet or an orchestra, and a pianist will benefit from interpreting it as if it were being played by a string quartet or orchestra. It is important that the bass lines and the inner voices be sufficiently highlighted.

There are many psychological factors which can plague pianists when playing Mozart. One is that over-reverence for the perfection and almost divine quality in Mozart's music can result in tentativeness, caution, and fear. The fact that profundity lies beneath the apparent simplicity of Mozart's music can cause a player to try too hard when plumbing the depths inherent in the music. Overthinking music can result in a fussiness which can destroy the effortless, natural flow of the music, and a performance can end up like Hamlet's description of his indecisive self: "sicklied o'er the pale cast of thought."

Sometimes the more one knows, and is aware of, the harder Mozart's music can seem to be. This is true in the creative process of any artistic endeavor. There are three stages. For musicians, in stage one, youth, one plays from the joy of playing without a true knowledge of the craft. In stage two, as one becomes obsessed with the details of the craft, the joy of making music can recede, since it is difficult in this stage to "see the forest for the trees." Stage three is reached when the musician has mastered the details of the craft and then rediscovers the spontaneity and joy of making music. If one can reach stage three, one has attained true artistry. However, it can be a long path to attain stage three—perhaps even a lifetime.

Older musicians have sometimes found it easier and more enjoyable to play Mozart than middle-aged musicians. Robert Schumann once wrote "Many things only become clear when you are old." (I think that many of us have found that to be very true in many aspects of life.) Perhaps older musicians are more able to achieve self- acceptance and confidence. Perhaps it is also that they are frequently in a more reflective and calm state of mind than earlier in life. Both Arthur Rubinstein and Vladimir Horowitz performed Mozart's music frequently in their older age whereas they had not earlier in their careers. The fiery and volatile virtuoso Horowitz even said late in his life: "I like it more than any other music. Mozart is number one."

Fellow pianists, while we should respect Mozart's music, we must try to not be afraid of Mozart's music. It is warm. It is human, and it lends itself so naturally to our feeling as if we are singing it and speaking it to our listeners.

We need to remember to allow ourselves to enjoy playing Mozart. It is very easy for diligent musicians to forget to enjoy playing the music which he or she has so very carefully studied. We need to remember what the legendary pianist and teacher Menahem Pressler advised his students: to "smile with your fingers," and to "taste the chromaticism."

Mozart was an improviser, and the performance of his music should always sound improvised. As we have discussed, Mozart could be gregarious, spontaneous, impulsive, childlike, mischievous, and a fun-loving prankster. He lived in the moment and we need to let his personality show in his music. Mozart, when coaching an ensemble ,once broke a shoelace as he stomped his foot in his attempt to get the players to play with more energy. The cardinal sin in any musical performance is to be boring.

Great musical interpretation is never simply the result of raw, emotional outpouring. An outstanding interpretation is always grounded upon illuminating the architecture and structure of the music, and without a thorough knowledge of music theory, a musician is equivalent to a person speaking a foreign language without knowing what he/she is actually saying. Every note needs to be analyzed in its relationship to every other note. Non-musicians would be surprised at how analytical a musician must be to be able to play with the deepest expression. Success in playing, as perhaps in everything in life, is dependent upon details and two old sayings are both true: "The devil is in the details," and "God is in the details." The details are especially crucial in Mozart's music, partially because it is so transparent.

In the 18th century, music was likened to conversation and speech , and was expected to be delivered according to the principles of rhetoric, which is related to oratory. In oratory as well as in musical performance, one needs to know what to stress and what not to stress.

Let us examine some of the ways that a musician puts together an interpretation. Experienced musicians will be familiar with what I am sharing. However, I thought that those of you who are not musicians would find it of interest to gain a window into how a musician works. We will look at the second movement of the Sonata in C Major, K.330, Andante cantabile. You have a score of the movement in your handout.

When looking at a piece, one first discerns the overall form. This movement is comprised of three symmetrical sections of 20 measures each, plus a four-bar coda, a word which means a tail appended to the apparent end. The third section is an exact repeat of the first, creating what is called an ABA form.

Just as when one diagrams a sentence in English, prioritizing the nouns and verbs over the adjectives, adverbs, and articles, one does not respond to all the chords and notes of a piece as if they are equally important. I have circled the especially important harmonic and rhythmic destinations in this piece. These destinations act as magnets which draw and pull the lesser priority notes to them.

A player must feel the music flowing forward to these destinations. Squareness is deadly and is often the overlooked culprit in an unfulfilling performance. When one arrives at destinations, the expressive musician will stress these important structural points by holding the notes slightly longer than notated, and frequently playing the notes at the arrival points louder.

You will note that many of these arrival points occur at spots where it would be natural to breathe shortly thereafter. Music has its degrees of punctuation as does speech. On your handout I have placed commas, semicolons, and periods to represent the relative degrees of rest. Points of varying degrees of rest need to be illuminated, and not barreled through mechanically and metronomically. The failure of a performer to respond to the breathing points is like speaking sentences with no punctuation and creating run-on sentences. Let us look at examples, and also examine how Mozart constructed this piece.

GO TO PIANO: (The following was spoken, not read.)

The movement opens with a rhythmic motive of three short upbeats leading to a downbeat. This motive can be perceived in every one of the 64 measures of the piece. When performing it, I sometimes let the notes move slightly ahead of their notated value. I also aim to be sure to open with a very small sound. Musical phrases are like an airplane ride- exactly what happens when in the air is not so consequential. But it is crucial that one have a smooth takeoff and landing, and not crash at the onset or conclusion of a phrase. (Play mm. 1-2).

Measure 2 is the first temporary destination. I play this chord longer and louder than it is notated. It seems to be asking a question. (Play m.1-2.).

Measure 3-4 answers the question, though the cadence at m.4 is not conclusive. Therefore, it is like a semicolon. (Play m. 3-4)

Measure 8 provides a more conclusive end, though not in the home key of F major. (Play m.5-8).

At measures 9 and 10, I play louder and sit longer on the first beat of the measures since they are comprised of dissonances. Why is dissonance so significant? Because musical interpretation is based on responding to the varying degrees of consonance and dissonance, which represent tension and release. Dissonance represents the tension, pain, grief, anxiety, longing – the darkness. (Play m. 9-10.).

Measures 11-12 lead to a calmer temporary point of rest. (Play m.11-12).

At measure 15, we feel that we are in an especially tender world, and Mozart marks this section to be played “sweetly”. (Play mm.15-16). The A section concludes in our home key. (Play m. 18-20).

The B section, m.21, immediately jumps to the darkness of F Minor, with pulsating heartbeats in the accompaniment. (Play m. 21-24). It then evolves into the warmth of its relative major. (Play m. 25-28). Notice how I stressed the dissonant small c’s in m.25, since they are foreign to the underlying harmony in the measure. (Play m.25). At m.31, F minor reasserts itself when we arrive at the most intense portion of the piece. A pleading melody in the RH is joined by an urgent melody in the LH. They both build into an anguished cry of despair. (Play m.31-36). At m. 37, the original melody of the B section returns. However, this time it contains one of the most heart-rending notes in all of Mozart’s music. (Play m.37-40). The E natural against the rest of the harmony is absolutely like a “dagger to the heart.” I pull the tempo back as I approach and set up that highly intense dissonance. (Play m. 39-40.)

You will note that I add embellishments at the repeat of the A section, commencing at m.41. Singers always highly embellished the returns of A sections, and keyboardists in Mozart's time were expected to do the same.

The coda, at m.61, provides the effect of a halo at the end of the movement, by transforming the F minor material of the B section into the peaceful, consoling, healing effect of the home key of F Major.

PERFORM: Andante cantabile from Sonata in C Major, K.330

For more details on the subject of interpreting 18th century music , once can consult my 8 page essay , "Relevant advice from the 18th century on playing 18th century music," which organizes and shares advice from the extremely valuable 18th century treatises on musical performance. This can be found on my website, www.dersnah-fee.com .Also on that website is a video of my lecture/demonstration on playing Chopin's music ,which contains information very relevant to the playing of Mozart's music, since there is much more affinity between the music of these two composers than is often realized. I have long believed that Chopin's music can be viewed as overpedalled Mozart and as Mozartean chromaticism on steroids. After all, along with J.S.Bach, Mozart was Chopin's primary model.

Melancholy in Mozart and Other Qualities in Mozart's Music

From his young adult days through his last days, Mozart wrote of his melancholy: "From time to time, I have fits of melancholy. I am neither hot nor cold – and don't find much pleasure in anything...If only such black thoughts did not come to me so often which take great effort to banish." He referred to his "constant sadness," and made the statement: "To me everything is cold – cold as ice."

Mozart could not stand to be alone and was a basket case when Constanze was away. He wrote to her that "it is not at all good for me to be alone. . . .I have been feeling a kind of longing, which is never satisfied, which never ceases, and which persists. Even my work gives me no pleasure, because I am accustomed to stop working now and then and exchange a few words with you."

Friends frequently noted a "melancholy, grave expression" on Mozart's face. But they observed that this rapidly dissipated when he would speak and that when he was with people, he exuded enormous vitality. A friend was asked after Mozart's death whether Mozart was a happy person. The friend's response was: "Never." On the other hand, contributing to the ambiguity regarding the man Mozart, four years before his death Mozart wrote: "Not one of the many persons who know me can say that I am morose or melancholy. For this happy disposition I thank my Creator daily, and wish with all my heart that it were shared by all my fellows."

Sadness has undoubtedly been expressed in music since the first human beings sang, and many people would maintain that the most powerfully emotional music is that which features sadness as the principal ingredient. However, Mozart's music has a unique sweetness intermingled with the sorrow. This brings up the subject of the relationship between joy and sadness, and whether they are sometimes intertwined and inseparable. The poet Shelley wrote: "Our sweetest songs are those of saddest

thoughts." This is not totally unrelated to Dante's famous quotation: "There is no greater sorrow than to recall happiness in times of misery."

Music literature is filled with an infinite number of examples where joy and sadness alternate. But in Mozart's music they are constantly intertwined. This to me is a part of the essence of Mozart and what causes much of the ambiguity in his music. Shelley, when describing human life, again seems to describe Mozart's music: "Our sincerest laughter with some pain is fraught." This reminds me of the old saying among musicians that Mozart's music makes us "smile through our tears and cry behind our smile."

Mozart's music to me has something in common with the ethereal beauty in the paintings of Watteau. With exquisite refinement and an inimitable use of shimmering light Watteau frequently painted amorous couples ostensibly enjoying life and love in idyllic pastoral scenes. However, beneath the surface he revealed a melancholy and pathos in these paintings. Watteau's most famous painting is that which was formerly called "Gilles" and is now called "Pierrot." The clown in the white satin costume seems isolated from the immediate world around him and one can sense his underlying sadness.

Mozart's music evokes a very complex, fragile, delicately balanced blend of emotions. But then, life and human beings are also complex, fragile, and delicately balanced. Mozart's music has a uniquely reflective, meditative, longing quality which frequently seems to evoke Shelley's words from the same poem, "To a Skylark:" "We look before and after and pine for what is not."

I think of the words uttered by the prisoner, played by Morgan Freeman, about Mozart's music in that outstanding motion picture from 1994, "The Shawshank Redemption": "I have no idea to this day what those two Italian ladies were singing about. I'd like to think they were singing about something so beautiful it can't be expressed in words, and it makes your heart ache because of it."

Expressing the inexpressible is indeed what Mozart's music so often does. It expresses what Wordsworth termed "thoughts that lie too deep for tears, and soothing thoughts that spring out of human suffering."

However, Mozart's music glows even when expressing sorrow. Mozart's music never evidences the self-indulgence and self-pity which is characteristic of some 19th-century so-called" Romantic" music. I deeply love 19th-century music and in my life have played far more of it than 18th-century music. But one cannot ignore the fact that a lot of the psychological foundation of the romantic movement is based on the following feelings: "Poor me. I'm hurting. My lover rejected me. Everyone has abandoned me. I have no home. Society is to blame. There is no hope except to retreat into myself and immerse myself in nostalgia for an imagined idyllic past."

When it comes to personal suffering, the words of many of the Mozart opera arias are every bit as full of hurt and pain as is 19th-century so-called "romantic" poetry. But Mozart clothes the words in music of such transcendental simplicity, proportion, and dignity that the effect can be even more profound and lasting than the high decibel volume which 19th-century composers frequently employed to express suffering. Wagner would fill five hours with longing in his powerful opera, "Tristan und Isolde." Mozart sometimes only needed three, four or five dozen measures of music to express the deepest, most

profound longing, and accomplish it with the utmost simplicity. Sometimes less is more. Lincoln only needed 272 words for his immortal Gettysburg Address.

What Classicism is, is balance. This is why Goethe called classicism, “health,” and romanticism, ”sickness.” Romanticism has resulted in such tremendous, magnificent, profound beauty in the arts. But what did 19th century romanticism lead to in the real world? I see it as having led to excessive nationalism resulting in two world wars, and to today’s world of hysteria where so often people are yelling at each other instead of speaking softly and listening reasonably to one another. Though such a wonderful stimulant for the arts, I believe romanticism can be insidious when carried to excess in real life.

We have already called attention to Mozart’s use of chromaticism, even in primarily joyous pieces and pieces in major keys. In melancholy and minor key pieces, his chromaticism can become pervasive, as we will shortly hear. Melancholy works or melancholy sections also employ unusually dark and often unexpected harmonies. But even when expressing melancholy, there are aspects of Mozart’s music which keep it from ever seeming ponderous, heavy, or cloying.

One aspect which is too rarely commented upon is the incredibly sensuous quality which permeates Mozart’s music. As the great pianist and musical thinker, Charles Rosen, has written, “What is most extraordinary about Mozart’s style is the combination of physical delight – a sensuous play of sonority, and indulgence in the most luscious harmonic sequences – with a purity and economy of line and form that render the seduction all the more efficient. It is only through recognizing the violence and sensuality at the center of Mozart’s work that we can make a start towards a comprehension of his structures and insight into his magnificence. In all of Mozart’s supreme expressions of suffering and terror, there is something shockingly voluptuous.”

Mozart wrote that melody is the essence of music and his music always sings. Today we may take it for granted that music often consists of singing melodies and that an instrument should emulate the voice. However, this was not always the case in Mozart’s time and before.

Where Haydn and Beethoven are known for their earthy, rugged, rhythmic vigor, Mozart’s rhythm is primarily characterized by its grace and buoyancy. However, Mozart’s extensive use of syncopations and sforzandi, which are unexpected rhythmic and dynamic stresses, adds much rhythmic zest and pungency to his music. A frequent aspect of Mozart’s personal rhythmic style was his habit of writing phrases in a manner where the rhythmic activity increases as the phrase or phrases progress, providing a sense of propulsion to destinations.

The rhythmic vitality and buoyancy of Mozart’s music makes it always seem to dance. Mozart has been called the “supreme choreographer of the passions” and George Balanchine once said that there was nothing that Mozart wrote that could not be put to dance. The close affinity of Mozart’s music with the dance calls to mind Ezra Pound’s statement which merits pondering: “Music begins to atrophy when it departs too far from the dance.”

Transparency always seems in evidence in Mozart's music, despite the fact that his textures are much fuller than those of his contemporaries. As his life progressed, his writing of inner musical lines become more frequent and complex. In his last 10 years, counterpoint(meaning, parallel horizontal musical lines forming the texture, as opposed to a single melody with accompaniment) increasingly came to the fore, partially influenced by his discovery of the works of J.S. Bach. Mozart's counterpoint was never composed in a dry, academic manner, as occurred in many of his predecessors' and contemporaries' music. Rather, his contrapuntal writing was always vocal, melodic, and warmly human.

One of the most extraordinary aspects of Mozart's music is that regardless of how many hundreds, or even thousands, of times a listener has heard a Mozart composition, every detail sounds as fresh and surprising as it did during one's first hearing. One knows very well what it is coming, and yet the effect is never diminished upon the rehearing.

Rondo in A Minor, K.511

The A Minor Rondo is an extremely unusual Rondo because it is in a rather slow tempo and is in a minor key. It is among the most intense and astonishingly harmonically daring pieces Mozart would ever write. It is believed by many, including me, to be his greatest piece for solo piano. In this work chromaticism is omni-present, and each of the numerous reappearances of the refrain is meaningfully and poignantly varied. The episodes at times seem tenderly consoling- but only for very brief moments, since soon after, they break out into indescribable sadness. The coda is especially full of anguish, despair, and heartbreak. Yet the lilting 6/8 Siciliano rhythm always keeps the 11-minute piece moving and prevents it from degenerating into cloying pathos.

It is exceedingly rare in Mozart's huge output to be able to trace the creation of a composition to an emotional personal event in his own life. However, this work was written immediately after Mozart learned that his closest friend, precisely his own same age of 31, had unexpectedly died.

PERFORM: Rondo in A Minor, K.511

A Bit More on Mozart's Music and Concluding Thoughts

Mozart wrote in every genre and elevated every single one of them to a higher level. He transformed the Serenade from frivolous lighthearted entertainment into a meaningful vehicle of longing. The sensuous atmosphere and the importance of wind instruments in these Serenades would eventually enter his writing in all genres.

Mozart basically created the modern piano concerto. It is his piano concerti rather than his solo piano works which are his major contribution to the piano literature. His solo piano pieces were nowhere near the significance for his successors which his concerti were, and the concerto is his much more profound keyboard genre. His concerti have been called "operas without words. . . .which laugh, and weep and meditate on life's big themes." Solo piano music in his time was usually intended to bring pleasure and relaxation to the player playing for themselves in the privacy of their home and was viewed by composers as being secondary to opera, symphony, and chamber music. To grasp the full greatness of

Mozart's music, you need to experience the works listed on the handout, and not merely his clearly secondary solo piano works.

Mozart took the symphony, which was a public vehicle, to Olympian heights. The notion that Beethoven improved upon Mozart's symphonic writing is nonsensical. Mozart was the culmination of the classical era. No one would ever surpass that high point. Beethoven went down a different path, creating his own unique language with new emotional and philosophical attitudes.

I fervently believe the key to Mozart the man and Mozart's music lies most of all in his operas, by far Mozart's favorite genre in which to work. I also believe that no one can really understand Mozart's music without knowing his operas. If you don't know them, you have a treat in store whether musician or non-musician. (You can purchase DVD's of some of them for under 6 dollars on Amazon.) Above all, it is Mozart's humanity which makes his operas arguably the most uplifting operas ever created. Mozart was a Shakespeare who could portray human nature in all its nuances. The comic operas, benefitting from the teamwork with his truly ingenious librettist, Lorenzo da Ponte, especially furnished him opportunities to reveal and illuminate the complexities and ambiguities found in all human beings. There are those authorities, not even professional musicians, who consider Mozart's opera "Don Giovanni, "to be the greatest work of any art ever produced in the entire history of mankind.

There is a spiritual component to the Mozart operas. Nearly all his operas written as an adult revolve around the concept of forgiveness, reconciliation, and the acceptance of human weaknesses. All reflect the belief in a moral order in the universe, where Beauty, Truth, and Virtue in the end triumph.

It is significant that a few months before he died, Mozart set out to produce Viennese lowbrow entertainment for a raunchy theater which specialized in magic and special effects, and the end result turned out to be the transcendent "Magic Flute." It was an obvious testament to his identification with, and promotion of, the ideals of Freemasonry.

Freemasonry was a crucial adjunct to 18th century Enlightenment ideals. Though not a religion, it provided transcendental aspirations, moral values to live by, and the vision and ideal of how society should harmoniously function. Truth, Virtue, Universal Brotherhood, and Beauty epitomized the movement. Mozart was clearly attracted to the spiritual and humanitarian aspects of Freemasonry, as well as the fellowship it afforded him.

Trying to adequately describe Mozart's music is a fruitless endeavor. Can an art historian fully account for the greatness of Raphael and Botticelli, both of whose art has been likened to Mozart's music?

For the past nearly two and a half centuries people have perceived what they have wanted to hear in Mozart's music. Some heard mostly elegance and grace in Mozart's most demonic and tragic works, while others heard the drama and intense pathos, but missed the gracefulness and elegance. Mozart's music is like the blind man and the elephant-it lends itself to being perceived in an infinite variety of ways.

Many wise people have stated that it is Mozart's music which brings them closest to God. George Bernard Shaw, a confirmed atheist for the first part of his life, and a very unconventional thinker for the rest of his life, wrote, "If God had a voice it would be Mozart's." The noted theologian Karl Barth, who wrote an extraordinary series of essays on what he perceived in Mozart and his music, wrote: "If I ever get to heaven I would first of all seek out Mozart and only then inquire after Augustine, St. Thomas, Luther and Calvin." The conductor Joseph Krips wrote: "Beethoven, in his tumultuous struggles sometimes reaches to heaven .Mozart of course COMES from heaven."

Many people have written of the healing effect which Mozart's music has had on them, and to me that is what great music is about and what it should provide for listeners. Many have spoken of Mozart's music having provided them the ultimate consolation in times of deepest grief and sorrow. Others have frequently expressed how, while listening to Mozart's music, they have experienced a feeling of transcendence. They have spoken of having their faith, their reason and a sense of peace restored in the midst of today's chaotic world. One commentator said during the COVID epidemic of 2020: "The crazier the world gets ,the more that I cling to Mozart because it is so affirming." I, myself, fully concur with this sentiment. Mozart was the composer whose music I most played and listened to during those times.

But what about the darkness we discussed more than once today? Which quality overall wins out in Mozart's music – the light or the darkness? In terms of the man Mozart, I believe it to be the light. Mozart sensed in his last year that he did not have long to live, even while not having a rational reason to believe this. With his end approaching, many of Mozart's works evidence a valedictory quality, an elegiac and bittersweet sadness. But it is not music representative of depression or gloom. It expresses acceptance, peacefulness, serenity, and consolation.

Regarding Mozart's works overall, and the victory question, I would cite Karl Barth's answer: "The light increases, and the shadows fail. Joy overtakes sorrow, but without extinguishing it – the Yes wins out louder than the ever-present No."

It is significant that Mozart died in 1791, since within months after his death, the violence of the French Revolution forever altered European thought and dealt a death blow to the rational optimism of the Enlightenment. The world and the worldview Mozart had known rapidly disintegrated. Some Enlightenment ideals continued to influence people, including Beethoven. But Beethoven's world was a very different world from Mozart's, and Schubert's world would become an even different world from Beethoven's, both of which we will discuss in future sessions.

The foundation of Mozart's world and the foundation of his music is the Age of the Enlightenment, the Age of Reason, the Age of Elegance, the Classical Era. But his music is timeless. It speaks to our needs in the 21st century, providing us, at all times, with whatever each of us needs to receive from his immortal music.

Fantasy in D Minor, K.397

The first music you heard today was a Fantasy, and we will conclude with a Fantasy, the genre which contains numerous contrasting moods and sections, and was intended to be performed as if improvised.

The key of D minor in Mozart's operas was almost always used to express vengeance or the supernatural. It is not surprising that his opera "Don Giovanni "is rooted in the key of D minor. In keeping with the classical aesthetic of ending a minor key work in the joyous major, representing a celebration or happy ending after adversity, in the final section of the D Minor Fantasy, Mozart wrote a pleasing D Major "allegretto" section, which, by the way, I believe is too often performed inappropriately fast for music marked as" allegretto".

Some of you may note that 60% of the music I have performed today is in a minor key when only 7% of Mozart's total instrumental works are written in a minor key. My purpose in selecting the music I have is twofold: 1) to counteract the common impression of the "always cheerful Mozart" ; and 2) these pieces are excellent vehicles to employ to probe into the question of who Mozart really was, and what does lie behind Mozart's notes.

The D Minor Fantasy was one of many works which Mozart began at the age of 26 and never completed. After Mozart had died, Constanze gathered many incomplete works of her husband and took them to a Viennese musician to see if there was anything which could be salvaged and published. That musician composed 10 bars of his own to create an ending for this Fantasy, which Constanze then had published and received a little bit of needed income.

In this under six minute work you will hear many of the Mozartean ingredients which I have previously called attention to today: intense theatrical drama and suspense; dramatic use of silence; pulsating rhythms; unexpected harmonies; chromaticism, both in the melody and in the powerful descending bass lines; sudden outbursts of improvisational fury which sometimes seem like bolts of lightning; quasi-operatic writing which at times resembles a singer's recitative or aria; and powerful, ominous, almost violent quasi- orchestral gestures.

PERFORM: Fantasy in D Minor, K. 397