

BROTHER WOLFGANG MOZART

From the very beginning of Freemasonry, music played an important part in the meetings of the Brethren, both in closed lodges and in the social meetings which followed. Conversely, we find that Masonry not only played an important role in the life of one of the giants of music, but also affected the musical style of his later years. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, born in Salzburg on January 27, 1756, joined the lodge “Zur wahren Eintracht”, “True Harmony of Spirits”, in Vienna in late 1784 and remained an active Mason until his death at age 35, on December 5, 1791.

Not only did he find satisfaction in the social intercourse with his fellow members in the lodge, but he was also attracted by the spiritual, and particularly the mystic side of the order. The spiritual power of masonic symbolism is found in what musicologists call Mozart’s “humanitarian style”. This style is “wonderfully gentle, deep seated, and pure; glowing with harmony and human warmth.”

This is the style used in the Magic Flute as well as other compositions. During his first year of Masonic membership, Mozart composed a number of songs. One, “For the Opening of the Lodge” was composed following the consolidation of eight lodges into three by the Emperor Joseph II. Members of four of the dissolved lodges whose names appear in the passage. Joseph’s benevolence has crowned anew our hope, for in our hearts a threefold flame now gleams. (Joseph) (Benevolence) (Crowned Hope) (Three Fires). This piece is scored for a vocal solo, three-part chorus, and an instrument.

Play

At the same lodge meeting, in December 1785, another three-part choral work with accompaniment was performed. The text refers to the installation of newly elected officers.

Play

Earlier, in March 1785, Mozart composed the Fellowcraft’s Journey “Gesellenreise”, in commemoration of the passing of his father Leopold to the second degree, and demonstrates that Mozart’s impressions received only shortly before were deep and significant.

Play

Also in 1785, he composed a Masonic Dirge on the occasion of the deaths of Brothers Mecklenburg and Eszterhazy, and a cantata “The Mason’s Joy” in honor of Ignaz von Born, on the occasion of his recognition as the inventor of soldering by the Emperor. Born is said to have been the model for the High Priest Sarastro in the Magic Flute.

Play

This opera as well as a Little Masonic Cantata were composed in the last year of his life, 1791, and it is perhaps ironic that shortly after Mozart’s death, Freemasonry, which had meant much to him, was prohibited in Austria by the Imperial Decree of the new Emperor, the reactionary Leopold II, who believed that Masonic circles were the gathering places of the Jacobites. One would wonder what Mozart’s reaction would have been to this.

Much more could be said concerning the relationship of Mozart, music and Masonry. Suffice it to say that music and Masonry are related as closely as Masonry and humanity.

K 483 FOR THE OPENING OF THE LODGE

Solo: Oh sing today beloved brothers
Your song of jubilation,
For Joseph’s benevolence
Has crowned anew our hope,
For in our hearts a threefold flame now gleams.

Choir: United in hearts and in tongue be
To Joseph this song full of praises,
The father who closer has tied us.
Most beautiful of duties is charity.
He saw us perform it with vigor
And crowns us with loving hand.

Solo: Oh thanks to those, whom before us
The flame of virtue inspired

And served as our example,
From whose every pace
On their Masonic path
A spring of brotherlove has sprung.

Choir: The greatest and innermost striving
To raise ourselves up to them
Is to them most glorious thanks.
So let us, our power now threefold,
Begin our new lofty task,
And silence the happy song.

K484 FOR THE CLOSING OF THE LODGE

Solo: Oh you our new leaders
We thank you now for all your faith.
Oh lead us ever on paths of virtue,
That all rejoice in the chain that binds us,
The chain that ties us unto better men
And giveth sweetness to life's chalice,
Gives sweetness to the cup of life.

Choir: The holy adjuration we also vow:
To strive for perfection of our great temple,
To strive for perfection of our building great,
To strive for perfection of the temple, like you.

Solo: And on the rungs of truth
Let us approach the throne of wisdom,,
That we may reach its holiness,
And that we of her crown may be worthy,
If we with charity drive our
The jealousy of the profane.

K 468 FKLLOWCRAFT' S JOURNEY

You, who are risen higher
Unto wisdom's high abode
Wander steadfast higher, higher,

Know, it is the noblest road.
Only spirit without blight
May approach the source of light.

This Multi-media presentation was made to Delaware College SRICF on June 18,
1984 by Frater Henry George Law