

W. A. MOZART (1756-1791).

BY CEDRIC H. GLOVER.

BACH lived and died without making his influence as a composer very much felt among his contemporaries. After his death, it fell to the lot of at least two of his sons to achieve international repute, and one, Philipp Emmanuel, is of vital importance as the founder of the great Viennese school of composers, which culminated in Mozart and Beethoven. Philipp Emmanuel Bach departed altogether from the complexities and emotional subtleties of his father, and introduced a simpler and more artless style of composition, which was later imitated by Joseph Haydn. Mozart proceeded on the same lines, but, owing to the greater emotional depth of his nature and a consummate technical equipment, he was able to outstrip even an original genius like Joseph Haydn; indeed the relative position of these two composers is somewhat analogous to that of two contemporary writers Lessing and Goethe. Haydn, like Lessing, undoubtedly fashioned the moulds into which a little later Mozart was to pour the pure gold of his inspiration.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born at Salzburg on January 27th, 1756, six years after the death of J. S. Bach. His father, Leopold Mozart, was the court composer to the reigning archbishop; he proved to be an admirable father in all respects. Five years prior to the birth of Wolfgang the Mozarts had a girl, Maria Anna.

We have become inured to the musical prodigy of late years, and are accustomed to associate him with a glittering technique and a poverty of intellect, which rarely leads to anything. Mozart was a musical prodigy, but of an altogether different calibre. His genius was at the outset both creative and interpretive; the former quality is almost unique among children, though we have a contemporary instance in Erich Korngold. He [p 266]

could play the harpsichord when he was four years old, and composed a concerto for this instrument a little later. Two pieces of his, composed at the age of six, are given in the appendix to Holmes' Life. Like Richard Evelyn, he must have been at that age "a prodigy of wit and understanding, for beauty of body, a very angel; for endowment of mind, of incredible and rare hopes."

Mozart's early years were spent in touring round the courts of Europe with his father and sister. The success of these tours surpassed any that Mozart was to experience in the years of maturity. In Vienna the family had an almost royal progress; in Paris they were well received, while in London they remained eighteen months, and met John Christian Bach, a son of John Sebastian, often called the English Bach. Mozart was at this time eight years old. Such was the interest aroused in him that a paper was written on his attainments and sent to the Royal Society. It is interesting to note that his first symphony was composed in Lower Ebury Street, London.

In 1769 after much travelling Wolfgang and his father went alone to Italy, the Mecca of musicians. Honours were heaped on the young composer. The Pope created him a Knight of the Order of the Golden Spur, an honour which was also bestowed on another famous contemporary composer, Gluck. At Bologna he was elected a maestro di capella, while at Milan he saw the production of his first opera.

As Mozart increased in years, his success correspondingly diminished, and after much

wandering, he finally settled down in Vienna, where he became closely associated with Joseph Haydn. Here his greatest operas were composed, Don Giovanni, the Marriage of Figaro and the Magic Flute. He also wrote many lovely symphonies, concertos, string quintets and quartets, his productivity remaining unimpaired until the end.

His poverty and his fame increased together, until he died of typhoid fever in his thirty-sixth year, and was buried in a pauper's grave. The work on which he was aptly engaged at the time of his death, and which he never completed, was the great Requiem Mass.

Much of Mozart's music is poor and uninspired. He wrote prolifically, and often to earn bread for his family. He composed music for an astonishing variety of instruments from musical boxes, "musical glasses" and barrel organs upwards. Among the curiosities which have come down to us is a double concerto for the two instruments which he disliked most of all, the flute and harp. Some of his hack work however has survived, notably the additional orchestral parts which he so successfully supplied for some of Handel's oratorios.

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The best of Mozart's work will assuredly remain for all time. He typifies the best of the XVIII century and, in spite of the gloom of the Requiem and occasional excursions into the severe contrapuntal style of the Bach school, he remains a simple childlike nature, a curious medley of sophistication and innocence, too polished to be unreservedly emotional, but for the most part, prolific in music of ethereal loveliness.

Mozart's immortality is assured, if only for the G minor symphony, the string quintet in the same key, and the three great operas already named. These are the gems, and in them can be found the real essence of his genius in its many aspects. The buoyant light-heartedness and the serene beauty of these works have been a constant source of joy and inspiration to thousands, and will always remain a never failing solace in times of depression.

Mozart's life can be most conveniently studied in Holmes' *The Life of Mozart*, Everyman Edition (J. M. Dent, 2/6). Holmes was a school fellow of Keats, and did much to make Mozart known in England. There is quite a good sketch in Parry's *Studies of the Great Composers* (Routledge). Mozart's life is full of incident and anecdote, and a thorough acquaintance with it will unfailingly arouse and stimulate interest in his music.

Though Mozart wrote freely for harpsichord and pianoforte, the bulk of his work for these instruments is of little value, consisting mainly of music written for teaching purposes or for his friends. Mozart was too musical to write bad music, even the least inspired and dullest of his works shows the stamp of the musician, but it is manifestly impossible to form any idea of his status as a composer from the study of his key-board music alone. Recourse must therefore be had to the gramophone, or, failing this, to arrangements of orchestral works and chamber music for pianoforte solo or duet, though much is naturally lost in the process of transcription.

(1) *Sonata for Pianoforte in C major*: Mozart is in some ways the most formal of the really great composers, and his works readily lend themselves to the study of the models on which the vast bulk of music has since been based. It is impossible for people to listen intelligently to a piece of music without some knowledge of the principles on which the composer is working.

The term "Sonata" is applied to a musical work, composed normally of three or four

independent movements. The first of these is in strict sonata form, and gives its name to the whole; the second and third consist of a slow movement, and a minuet
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and trio, though either may be omitted. The last movement is often a Rondo (a species of dance movement), or sometimes another piece in sonata form. In this sonata there are only three movements and the minuet is omitted.

1st movement: this is in strict sonata form. In this species there are two subjects, which are in turn enunciated, then discussed and then re-stated. Briefly this can be expressed in the formula:—A, B: M,A,B, where A and B represent different subjects and M is the middle section devoted to a free discussion of A and B or sometimes to entirely fresh matter. The first subject (A) starts the movement, but gives way at bar 35 to the second subject (B) in G major, the dominant of the key, and this continues until the double bar is reached. After the double bar, the middle section (M) occurs, fragments of the first subject being discussed in various keys, and reference made to the second subject in bars 24-27. The first bars of the first subject then reappear, and finally at bar 36 the Recapitulation starts with the first subject in its original key (A), followed in turn by the second subject in the same key (B): four bars are added as a coda in which reference is again made to the first subject. This movement affords a perfect example of sonata form. It is also characteristic of much of the composer's work—polished, refined and musically, but of no great emotional depth. It contains moreover various clichés, by which Mozart's music can often be recognized, notably the semibreve shake, which constitutes the climax of the second subject.

2nd movement is in free form. The first subject (A) after much elaboration gives place to the second (B) at bar 33. (A) however recurs again at bar 45, but is displaced again by (B), much elaborated, at bar 53, which in turn gives place to (A) at bar 65, a short coda being added.

3rd movement is a Rondo. The first subject is like the Grand Chain in the Lancers: it alternates with two other subjects. The formula of the Rondo should run:—A,B,A,O,A, where A, B and O are different musical themes. In this case however Mozart has varied the conventional form to some extent, and, though the first theme recurs quite regularly, the contrasting themes (B) and (O) become somewhat confused, and bars from (B) are found intruding in the (O) section. The left hand accompaniment of the (A) theme is a regular old XVIII century cliché, producing a thoroughly wooden and mechanical effect.

(2) *Two pieces in C minor and E flat major:* These pieces are in striking contrast to the Sonata in C. They are studies in the old contrapuntal style of the first half of the XVIII century. The first is full of conscious archaisms, indeed bars 3 and 4 on
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page 2 might have been written by J.S. Bach himself. The form in which this piece is cast resembles that of certain preludes in the second book of the Forty-Eight, which supplied the foundation on which Philipp Emmanuel Bach and his successors built up sonata form. The second piece is full of suspensions and other primitive effects. Both have an old-world charm, and yet bear the impress of Mozart's genius.

(3) *Symphony in G minor:* This is the greatest of the Mozart symphonies, and full of an emotional depth to which he only occasionally attained. It was written in 1788. The conflicts of the human soul and attendant emotions, which are so obviously the sources of inspiration of the later Beethoven symphonies, were hardly considered a fit subject for musical expression in

Mozart's day. Introspection was only just coming into fashion. Music was written solely to give pleasure without an undue tax on the intellect being exacted. Jahn, the great biographer of Mozart, in his discussion of the symphonies, says:—"In the year 1774 "Werther" appeared; the strivings and conflicts of the time which produced it had their influence on music; but music had to pass through a longer and more arduous struggle before attaining to a like freedom of inspiration and expression." We may then justifiably consider this symphony to be one of the first fruits in music of the Sentimental movement, and in this light it should be carefully contrasted with the pianoforte sonata in C, which is purely genteel and decorative in spirit. The stormy passionate mood of this symphony and the absence of all extraneous embellishment are at once apparent. Much is of course lost in the process of transcription, but, even without the beautiful orchestral colouring, the music remains a thing of incomparable grandeur and solemnity. The writer has vivid impressions of hearing this symphony for the first time at the age of five, and can vouch for the instant appeal it makes to people of all temperaments and ages.

The analysis of the C major sonata will serve as a guide in dealing with this symphony; suffice to say that the last movement is in sonata form and not a Rondo. Throughout the symphony the subjects are well defined and easy to pick out.

(4) *Songs*: (a) Lullaby: one of the most perfect gems Mozart has given us. It is intentionally a children's song, and should be in the repertoire of every child.

(b) "The Violet": Mozart published very few songs, and his efforts were on the whole no more successful than were Beethoven's. This however is the best song he wrote; and it is worthy to rank beside any of Schubert's best. The words are by Goethe, and here we have the first case of a collaboration between

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a great poet and a great composer. It is an isolated example; Mozart did not select his words with any care, and he is not known to have set to music any other poems of Goethe. The dramatic quality of Goethe's words at once evoked a response from the composer, and the music is full of subtleties, such as the tripping semiquavers in the accompaniment to the words "with lightsome step." The repetition of the words at the end, which does not occur in the poem, is a very happy touch. This poem was written by Goethe in 1773, and has been set by at least three other composers besides Mozart, though these versions have not survived.

(c) "Voi che sapete": one of the most widely known of all Mozart's compositions. It is a simple ballad, though it occurs in one of the operas, "Figaro," written in 1786. It is sung by the page Cherubino to his mistress the Countess Almaviva, who accompanies the singer on her harp; actually the accompaniment is furnished by the plucked strings of the orchestra. There is an English version in one edition, but the words are not a translation of the Italian love song, to which Mozart wrote his music; to avoid this maudlin religious doggerel, which is entirely out of keeping with the music, a French edition, which is faithful to the original, is recommended for use.

(5) *Sonata in E minor for violin and pianoforte*: It is curious that Mozart's violin and pianoforte sonatas should generally speaking be of greater musical importance than Beethoven's, whereas the opposite is the case when comparing the respective values of the pianoforte sonatas of the two composers. The E minor is one of Mozart's greatest works for this medium, full of tenderness and melancholy and written by the Mozart of the G minor

symphony rather than the Mozart of "Figaro" or of the formal C major pianoforte sonata. The sonata under discussion was published with five others in Paris in 1778, and dedicated to the wife of the Elector Palatine. There are only two movements, both too simple in form to need special analysis. Notice however the so-called canon at the octave twenty-seven bars before the end of the first movement. Here the first subject played by the violin is imitated by the left hand of the pianoforte for ten bars. The minuet is a sad little movement, very different in spirit from the usual conception of this dance. The middle section, or trio, in E Major, affords a beautiful contrast to the gloom of the rest of the movement. The minuet is later resumed and a short coda added. This coda is in some ways the best thing in the whole sonata, and the wonder of it is in no way lessened when the thinness of the texture of the music is taken into consideration.

(6) *Overture to "The Marriage of Figaro:"* This opera was
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written in 1786. The material used in this short overture is peculiar to it and quite distinct from anything in the opera proper. The overture serves to create a spirit of light-hearted comedy; it is one of the most infectiously gay pieces of music in existence. It is in condensed sonata form with the orthodox first and second subjects, which are recapitulated with an extended coda; there is no development section. If possible, a gramophone record should be used for the study of this overture, as the orchestral colour is of course entirely lost in the pianoforte solo and duet versions; the effect of bustle and liveliness is obtained by quick passages on the strings, an effect impossible to reproduce on a key-board instrument.

(7) *Overture to "The Magic Flute":* "The Magic Flute," written in 1791, is the very antithesis of "Figaro." Apart from certain grotesque elements, which were inserted to satisfy the taste of the day, as was the case in many of Shakespear's plays, Mozart put into this last and greatest of his operas his whole philosophy of life. The nobility of this overture is a fit prelude for an opera, which contains a chorale prelude in the manner of J. S. Bach. The opera was composed at a time when Mozart was strongly under the influence of Freemasonry, and the libretto is largely concerned with initiation and other masonic mysteries. The opening common chords, which later interrupt the fugal section, are heard again during the initiation ceremony, and are said to have a peculiar significance for Freemasons. In form this overture stands in lively contrast to that already discussed; it belongs to the species known as the French overture, which was first evolved by Lulli. It may be aptly compared in this connection with the overture to "the Messiah." The French overture consists of a slow opening followed by a quick fugal movement. The material used in this overture is of the simplest, and the whole wonderful structure of the fugal section is practically based on the first bar. The gramophone record should be used if possible; failing this, either pianoforte solo or duet versions are available.

(8) *Andante cantabile and Minuet from the C major string quartet:* Pianoforte arrangements can only inadequately suggest the beauty of Mozart's string quartets, but some insight may be obtained into the peculiar intimacy of his style of writing for this combination. The quartet from which these movements are taken is one of a set written at Vienna in 1782 and dedicated to Joseph Haydn, who was the pioneer in this particular genre and who taught Mozart much. Both movements are easy to understand and do not require detailed analysis here; they are typical of the composer's methods, and may be usefully con-

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trasted with the pianoforte and orchestral works in the syllabus. Alternatively to this arrangement, gramophone records of two similar movements of the D major quartet may be used, wherein the peculiar flavour of the strings is in some measure preserved.

The music to be studied can be obtained as follows:—

- (1) Sonata for pianoforte in C major: Edition Nationale, No. 5012, 2s.
- (2) Two pieces in C minor and E flat major by Mozart: Edition Nationale No. 240, 1s.
- (3) Symphony by Mozart in G minor, arranged for pianoforte solo: Augener's Edition, No. 8260b, 2s. 6d.
- (4) Songs by Mozart: a. "Lullaby" in F—Augener's Edition, 1s. 6d.
b. "The Violet" in E flat—Augener's Edition, 1s. 6d.
c. "Voi che sapete"—Edition Nationale, No. 100, 1s.
- (5) Violin and pianoforte Sonata in E minor, No. 4: Augener's Edition, 2s.
- (6) Overture to "The Marriage of Figaro": Augener's Edition. Arrangement for pianoforte duet, 2s. 6d. Arrangement for pianoforte solo, 2s.
- (7) Overture to "The Magic Flute": Augener's Edition. Arrangement for pianoforte duet, 2s. 6d. Arrangement for pianoforte solo, 2s.
- (8) "Gleanings from the works of celebrated composers," No. 14 (E. Pauer)—Andante and Minuet from the C Major string quartet arranged for pianoforte solo. Augener's Edition, 2s.

Numbers (1), (2) and (4c) can be obtained from Messrs. J. and W. Chester, Ltd., 11, Great Marlborough Street, London, W.1.

Numbers (3), (4a and b), (5), (6), (7) and (8) can be obtained from Messrs. Augener, Ltd., 18, Great Marlborough Street, London, W.1.

GRAMOPHONE RECORDS.

Overture to "The Marriage of Figaro": D.141, 8s. 6d.

Overture to "The Magic Flute": C.648, 7s.

Quartet in D major—Andante: O.8080, 7s. 6d.

Quartet in D major—Minuet: O.8081, 7s. 6d.

The above gramophone records can be obtained from the Gramophone Company, Ltd., 94, Regent's Street, London, W.

(2) is recommended for study by children learning the pianoforte, (3) by children learning the violin. The songs enumerated in (4) can be used for class and solo singing by children.