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[8.570897](#) - MOZART, W.A.: Masonic Music (Complete) (Heo Young-Hoon, Kassel Spohr Chamber Orchestra, Patemostro)

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Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) Complete Masonic Music

To this day, Freemasonry tends to have different, even opposing, priorities: in the predominantly Catholic countries of the Romance and Latin-American spheres it saw itself always as a republican and anti-clerical movement of reform, was outlawed and was anathema to the church. In Protestant countries it counted kings, bishops and presidents among its number. In the almost three hundred years of its history—it began on 24 June 1717, the day on which five Masonic lodges in London amalgamated to form one Grand Lodge—it has not changed direction, but for all of them the purpose is the same: the ennoblement of men, from the rough to the refined stone, to become part of the temple of universal love of mankind. This process is fulfilled in the degrees of Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft and Master Mason.

Grouped under their respective grand lodge, the sister lodges follow ancient symbolic rituals. These emotional and spiritual procedures were, and still are, intensified by music (today often by recordings). Singing was central to Freemasonry from its earliest days, and is derived from the stonemasons' guilds of the Middle Ages. An intellectual and cultural *élite* established buildings which survived all the dark doubts of superstition. The client, the church, was the principal cause of this darkness. And so the master-builders of the cathedrals met, together with their journeymen and apprentices, in private places where they could pass on their superior wisdom. Of prime importance to Masonic key symbolism is the number 3 and the musical flat sign (b): in Freemasonry three is the most important number, the consonant B is connected with the Temple of Solomon, which symbolizes the ideal building for mankind. The musical keys which have three flats, however, are E flat major and C minor, the keys associated with Freemasonry.

E flat major is the fundamental key of Freemasonry; C minor is the symbol of death, while the pure key of C major (which has no key-signature) represents the resurrection of the enlightened man to the rank of Master. Mozart expanded this key symbolism further. To represent the first level of Freemasonry, that of the Entered Apprentice, Mozart often uses the key of F major (which has one flat). The second level—that of Fellow Craft—is indicated by the use of B flat major, which has two flats. In addition Mozart introduced the key of A major (with its three sharps) into the Masonic canon: the *Clarinet Concerto* and the *Clarinet Quintet* (both in A major) were performed in the lodge. And finally the keys of G major and G minor also appear in Mozart's Masonic works, probably because the consonant "g" has a symbolic meaning.

The following forms are to be noted:

1) Lodge songs, mostly with piano or organ accompaniment, were sung at the beginning and end of meetings, as well as during the meal which followed. Mozart wrote thirteen such lodge songs, but five of these are missing.

2) Instrumental music of ritual to accompany symbolic events in the lodge. Examples of this are the *Masonic Funeral Music* or the *Adagios K. 410* and *411*.

3) Masonic subject-matter is used incidentally in works which were not intended for the lodge. It has, therefore, been suggested that Mozart's last three symphonies represent the three degrees of Masonic life.

Mozart and Freemasonry

When Mozart was admitted to the Viennese lodge "Zur Wohltätigkeit" ("Beneficence") on Tuesday 14 December 1784, Freemasonry in Austria was forty-two years old. Banned by the church in 1738, its continuation was due above all to the discretion of the sovereign. This had been Franz I (originally Franz Stephan) who, until his death in 1765, had been a Freemason, as was the Prussian King Friedrich II, the mortal enemy of Francis' consort and successor, Maria Theresia. She prohibited Freemasonry repeatedly, yet her son Joseph II acceded to the throne. At that time there were fourteen lodges in Vienna alone, among them several of an esoteric and Rosicrucian character. At court, however, the strongly rationalist opposition party had seized power, the secret order of the Illuminati, which wanted to infiltrate Freemasonry in order to further its anti-clerical and republican aims. In fact under the influence of Masonic Illuminati witch-hunts were abolished and educational reform brought in. The secret centre of the movement was the *élite* lodge "Zur wahren Eintracht" ("True Concord") under its Grand Master, the mineralogist Ignaz von Born. Mozart was a constant guest there and became an Entered Apprentice and then Master. In 1785 the Illuminati persuaded the Emperor radically to restrict the number of lodges in order to put an end to other forms of Freemasonry. The outcome of this imperial edict, "the Freemasonic Patent", though, was state control and the immediate cessation of all activity. In 1800 Freemasonry was virtually outlawed by Franz II and the ban ended practically only with the declaration of the Republic in 1918.

By the time of his initiation into Freemasonry Mozart already had knowledge of its practices: his father had maintained a risky contact with Freemasonry, under the Catholic-fundamentalist Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg, and the sixteen-year-old Wolfgang wrote a cantata in response to a commission from a lodge in Munich. During his stay in Mannheim in 1777 Mozart was supported by Otto Freiherr von Gemmingen, who was later to become his first lodge Master in Vienna. Following Joseph II's decree Mozart was unwilling to come to terms with the decline of Freemasonry, so he intended to make a new start by founding a secret society called "Die Grotte" ("The Grotto").

Masonic Music

[1]–[2] Cantata fragment „Dir, Seele des Weltalls" ("To You, Soul of the Universe") for choir, tenor solo, strings, flute, two oboes, clarinet, bassoon and two horns in E flat major, K. 429

This work, dated 1783 in an unknown hand, is far more likely to come from a later period. The writer of the words, Lorenz Leopold Haschka, is also the author of the imperial hymn „*Gott erhalte...*" ("May God preserve..."), adapted as the present German national anthem. The accompanying chorus, in the Masonic key of E flat major, is a hymn to the sun in the spirit of Egyptomania characterized also by *Die Zauberflöte* (The Magic Flute). The tenor aria is in the key of B flat major—the key of the Masonic Fellow Craft.

[3] Adagio in F major for two basset horns and bassoon, K. 410
[4] Adagio in B flat major for two clarinets and three basset horns, K. 411

The *Adagio in F major*, only 27 bars long, and the *Adagio in B flat major*, both probably dating from 1785, are fragments of what was perhaps intended as a larger work of ritual music. The ascending tonalities of F major and B flat major, in the Masonic sense, as well as the striding rhythm, could refer to a Masonic admission ceremony: on completion of the three ritual "journeys", each accompanied by music, the seeker becomes a Freemason. From its earliest days Masonic music was dominated by wind instruments. The basset horn, a kind of tenor clarinet, with its dark, mystical tone-quality, represents final things in Mozart's world. The *Adagio in F major* is a canon and is thus a symbol of the chain of brotherhood. The *Adagio in B flat major* contains some pauses, probably to give a lodge official time to read out some ritual texts. In the coda the theme from the Finale of the *Jupiter Symphony* is heard at the outset.

[5] „Lied der Gesellenreise" ("Song for the Initiate's Journey"), in B flat major, for voice and piano, K. 468

Mozart wrote this song on the occasion of his promotion to the rank of Entered Apprentice into the "Wahren Eintracht" lodge on 7 January 1785. The text was written by the councillor of state, editor and poet Joseph Franz Ratschky.

[6] „Zerflisset heut', geliebte Brüder" ("Run this day, beloved brothers"), in B flat major, K. 483
[7] „Ihr unsre neuen Leiter" ("You, our new leaders"), in G major, K. 484, for tenor, men's chorus and piano

On 14 January 1786 the work of the Illuminati achieved something of its purpose when the Emperor Joseph II amalgamated the Viennese lodges into two joint lodges. For its inauguration Mozart wrote two three-part choruses, probably to texts by the Bohemian ex-Jesuit and state official Augustin Veith von Schittlersberg. Ignaz von Born became Master of the newly-formed lodge "Zur Wahrheit" ("Truth"), while Mozart's lodge "Neugekrönte Hoffnung" ("New-Crowned Hope") was led by Tobias Freiherr von Gebler. In September 1786, however, Born gave up all his duties and in 1787 abandoned Freemasonry. The first chorus is in praise of the wisdom of Joseph II, which must have gone against the grain for Mozart, and so he plots a little revenge. The paean of praise comes a cropper in the second line when the text and music diverge awkwardly at the word "Joseph", the name of the Emperor, and at the word "Wohltätigkeit", the name of Mozart's mother-lodge, now closed.

[8] „Die Maurerfreude" ("Masonic Joy") in E flat major for tenor and men's chorus, strings, two oboes, two clarinets and two horns, K. 471

Once again this is in praise of Joseph II, yet from a time when the Masonic world was not under threat and was still accepted. On 24 April 1785 the lodge "Zur gekrönten Hoffnung" ("To Crowned Hope") held a celebratory gathering for Ignaz von Born, whose influence on the Emperor was at its greatest. The cantata performed there was to a text by the secular priest Franz Petran. To be on the safe side it thanks the Emperor for his attitude and way of thinking, friendly towards the Masons.

[9] Maurerische Trauermusik (Masonic Funeral Music) in C minor for strings, two oboes, clarinet, basset horn, contrabassoon and two French horns (later replaced by two basset horns), K. 477

The 69 bars of this masterpiece, dated July 1785, have disturbed historians as much as they have unsettled listeners. For the lodge-brothers Duke Georg August Mecklenburg-Strelitz and Count Franz Esterházy von Galantha, for whose funerals the work was performed on 17 November 1785 in the Crowned Hope Lodge were, at the time it was written, still alive. Today it is thought that the work was written as ritual music for the installation of a Master, whose elevation symbolic death crowns through resurrection. The three-part(!) work goes from C minor to E flat major, then to C major. It begins with a heart-rending lament from the wind players, in C minor. This leads into a chorale in E flat major, based on the *Lamentations of Jeremiah*, which would have been sung in synagogues in memory of the destruction of the temple of Solomon. This temple, however, is the symbolic ideal of the Masonic life and the murder of its architect a great mystery. At the end of the work the C minor key of the beginning returns, changing for the last chord into C major, but its highest note is not the bright C but the note E: the elevation (to Master) is not a proud finale, but rather the beginning of the next stage of the journey.

[10] „Die ihr des unermesslichen Weltalls Schöpfer ehrt" ("Thou that honourest the Creator of the measureless universe") in C major for solo voice and piano, K. 619

When Mozart completed this cantata, on 12 July in the year of his death, 1791, he was in the middle of writing *The Magic Flute*. The project of the Hamburg Mason Franz-Heinrich Ziegenhagen, however, fascinated him. Ziegenhagen offered a supplementary work to his treatise *Lehre vom richtigen Verhältnis zu den Schöpfungswerken* (The Doctrine of the Right Relationship with the Works of Creation), an account of the utopian communal life of young people, for the implementation of which this follower of Rousseau had already acquired a plot of land in Alsace. This was a region of French revolutionary activity and the text argues for the co-ordination of religions against Catholic dogma.

[11]–[12] Adagio and Fugue in C minor, K. 546, arranged for string orchestra

The principal theme of the fugue is based on an anapaestic Masonic signal in use at that time. The fugue, the form of which often symbolizes the chain of brotherhood, originates from 1783 in a version for two pianos. Mozart became a Freemason in the following year but had maintained close contact with the movement ever since his move to Vienna in 1781.

The stimulus to write the *Adagio and Fugue* came from the Illuminato Gottfried van Swieten, the librettist of the Haydn oratorios. The work is in the "mysterious" key of C minor and in 1788 Mozart reworked it for string quartet or string orchestra and placed the *Adagio* first.

[13] „Lobgesang auf die feierliche Johannisloge: O heiliges Band der Freundschaft" ("Hymn of Praise for Festivities at the St John Lodge: O sacred bond of friendship") in D major for solo voice with piano accompaniment, K. 148

This work, written in 1772 in Salzburg to a text by the Mason Ludwig Friedrich Lenz for the Munich lodge "Zur Behutsamkeit" ("To Caution"), is the first indication of the sixteen-year old composer's interest in Freemasonry.

[14]–[17] „Eine kleine Freimaurer-Kantate: Laut verkünde unsre Freude" ("Little Masonic Cantata: Loudly proclaim our joy") in C major for two tenors and bass, strings, flute, two oboes and two horns, K. 623

On 15 November 1791 Mozart entered the cantata, to a text by Schikaneder, into his list of works. Three days later the work was given its first performance on the occasion of the official opening of the new temple of the "New-Crowned Hope" Lodge. Less than three weeks later Mozart was dead. This, the last work to be entered into his catalogue of works in his own hand, goes beyond the bright realm of the canon of his Masonic keys. Here he was clearly on safe ground, while he brought his profane life to an end in the agony of the *Requiem*, written in the terrifying key of D minor. After the exultant chorus in C major, "Loudly proclaim our joy", there follow a recitative and aria for tenor, in G major, then a recitative and duet for tenor and baritone in F major before the opening chorus returns and so the work comes full circle, like a chain, without beginning or end. Mozart bids farewell to the world in the redemptive key of C major, euphoric and at peace, filled with the fire of faith.

Heinz Sichrovsky

English version: David Stevens

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