



COMMUNICATION: CONFERENCE REPORT

Mozart and Salzburg: Mozart Society of America and Society for Eighteenth-Century Music Joint Conference

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During the final week of May 2022 musicologists gathered in the city of Mozart's birth for a conference jointly sponsored by the Mozart Society of America and the Society for Eighteenth-Century Music. The Internationale Stiftung Mozarteum hosted the event, which for many participants constituted the first in-person conference since the beginning of the pandemic more than two years earlier. Not surprisingly, given that both societies are based in the United States, most participants were American. Other countries represented by the delegates included Brazil, Costa Rica, the United Kingdom, Austria and Sweden.

The paper sessions took place in the small auditorium of the Villa Vicina, next to the Stiftung Mozarteum's main building on the Schwarzstrasse. The conference theme inspired a wide variety of papers related to Mozart while encouraging speakers to avoid the well-trodden path of Vienna in the 1780s. The programme committee, chaired by Paul Corneilson (Packard Humanities Institute) and consisting of Dorothea Link (University of Georgia), Simon Keefe (University of Sheffield), Daniel Melamed (Indiana University Bloomington) and Beverly Wilcox (California State University Sacramento), put together a schedule that strongly emphasized opera, but that also addressed sacred and instrumental music. In its call for papers the committee had expressed interest in composers other than Mozart, and three participants responded with presentations in which his friend and colleague Michael Haydn played an important part. But the names of other Salzburg masters, such as Johann Ernst Eberlin and Anton Cajetan Adlgasser, came up only rarely.

The many operas discussed during the conference included only one actually written for Salzburg, as discussed by Laurel Zeiss (Baylor University) in her paper on the origins and performances of an early *azione teatrale* (*Il sogno di Scipione: One Dream, Two Archbishops, Four Interpreters*). Steven Machtinger (independent scholar, Tiburon, California) traced elements of the plot of *Idomeneo* back to Graeco-Roman antiquity in a paper whose references to plague were especially timely ('Vestiges of Plague Literature in Mozart's *Idomeneo*'), while Magnus Tessing Schneider (Stockholms universitet) discussed the contribution to this opera made by the prima donna Dorothea Wendling. Another presentation, by Karina Zybina (Paris Lodron Universität Salzburg), focused on a little-known project by Mozart: his unfinished opera buffa *L'oca del Cairo*. Mozart began to compose this work in Vienna, but abandoned it after completing a few numbers. Nevertheless, it has strong connections with Salzburg: the librettist was the Salzburg chaplain Giambattista Varesco, with whom Mozart had collaborated on *Idomeneo*. In a lively and enlightening lecture-recital, Zybina revealed another connection with the *Mozart-Stadt* in discussing the reconstruction of *L'oca del Cairo* performed in Salzburg in 1936.

That papers on opera outnumbered those on other genres resulted in part from the programme committee's willingness to accept some proposals on Viennese topics, despite this event's focus on Salzburg. Venturing to the last year of Mozart's life, and to an opera with only tenuous connections to Salzburg, Mítia d'Acol (Indiana University Bloomington) subjected to close analysis a musical topic defined by rhythm, tempo and melodic style ('Constructing Pamina's "Ach ich fühl's" as Siciliana Lament') and

Miguel Arango Calle (Indiana University Bloomington) examined the sets for the first production of *The Magic Flute* ('Sets, Settings, and Stage Décor in *Die Zauberflöte* and Contemporary Magical Operas').

The two speakers who discussed instrumental music approached the topic from completely different angles. Ulrich Leisinger (Internationale Stiftung Mozarteum) focused on issues of terminology and genre in 'The *Cassatio* in Mozart's Salzburg', while James MacKay (Loyola University New Orleans) brought the traditional tools of musical analysis to bear on species counterpoint and fugal techniques in the finales of the string quartets K168, K173 and K387.

Equally diverse were the studies of sacred music. Erick Arenas (San Francisco Conservatory of Music) directed our attention to the quotation of Gregorian chant in the masses of Mozart and Michael Haydn; Michael Ruhling (Rochester Institute of Technology and Eastman School of Music) shared with us the insights into Michael Haydn's great Requiem in C minor that he has gained from conducting it; and Amy Holbrook (Arizona State University) identified the use of musical mottos as a distinctive feature of the church music that Mozart wrote in 1774.

Perhaps reflecting the fact that Covid has kept many of us from working in archives, most of the speakers discussed musical works easily accessible in libraries or online. Among the few papers that addressed topics unconnected with particular pieces was 'Elegy for Maria Anna Meindl: Black Europeans in Salzburg in the Time of Mozart' by Adeline Mueller (Mount Holyoke College), the only speaker who addressed the conference by video. She investigated the case of a young woman in Salzburg, a cook described by Leopold Mozart as 'ein abscheuliches schwarzes Mensch' (a detestable black person) in a letter from Salzburg to his wife and son dated 29 April 1778 (in Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *Mozart: Briefe und Aufzeichnungen*, expanded edition by Ulrich Konrad (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2005), eight volumes, volume 2, 350). Mueller focused on the meaning of 'schwarzes'; was Meindl a Black woman from Africa or of African descent, or an unusually dark-complexioned local woman? In 'Patriotism, Isolationism, and the Bohemian *Mozart-Denkmal* in the 1830s' Martin Nedbal (University of Kansas) presented a fascinating analysis of the rivalry between Prague and Salzburg that arose in the nineteenth century as both cities sought recognition for their association with Mozart.

The organizers of our conference made no provision for attending remotely (with the exception of the paper noted above). This was a comfortably old-fashioned event in which being in Salzburg together – not only listening to the papers but walking the streets and along the banks of the fast-flowing Salzach, sharing meals and attending a concert in the Mozart family apartment as well as a musical mass in the cathedral – was an essential part of the experience.

A day-long excursion to Munich further enriched that experience. Much closer to Salzburg than is Vienna, Munich offered the young Mozart more professional opportunities than the Habsburg capital. Our tours of Nymphenburg Palace and the Cuvilliés Theatre (where *Idomeneo* was performed in 1781) brought us into close physical contact with other aspects of the world in which Mozart lived before settling in Vienna.

The viewing of two exhibitions framed the conference. The opening reception, in the Mozart family apartment, simultaneously celebrated the opening of an exhibition on Mozart's singers. Portraits, musical autographs, letters and librettos assembled by the curators Karl Böhmer (Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz), Paul Corneilson and Ulrich Leisinger documented the complex and productive relations between the composer and the musicians who brought his operas to life. At the end of the conference, as an unscheduled bonus, Matthew Werley (Universität Mozarteum) gave us a guided tour of an exhibition curated by him at the Universität Mozarteum, Salzburg's main conservatoire, 'Salzburg and 100 Years of the International Society for Contemporary Music'. While this had nothing directly to do with Mozart, it offered valuable perspectives on the evolution of Salzburg in the early twentieth century into a musical capital.

John A. Rice, a freelance writer and teacher, studied with Daniel Hertz at the University of California Berkeley. After many years of research on eighteenth-century opera and musical patronage, in the last decade he has divided his attention between galant schemata (inspired by Robert Gjerdingen's *Music in the Galant Style*) and renaissance music and musical iconography. His work on schemata has produced several lectures, articles and the 'Settecentista' YouTube channel. His work on earlier music has recently produced *Saint Cecilia in the Renaissance: The Emergence of a Musical Icon* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2022).