

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

(January 27, 1756 – December 5, 1791)

Mozart was admitted as an apprentice to the Viennese Masonic lodge called "Zur Wohltätigkeit" ("Beneficence") on December 14, 1784. He was promoted to journeyman Mason on January 7, 1785, and became a master Mason "shortly thereafter." Mozart also attended the meetings of another lodge, called "Zur wahren Eintracht" ("True Concord"). According to Otto Erich Deutsch, this lodge was "the largest and most aristocratic in Vienna. ... Mozart, as the best of the musical 'Brothers,' was welcome in all the lodges." It was headed by the naturalist Ignaz von Born.

Mozart's own lodge "Zur Wohltätigkeit" was consolidated with two others in December of 1785, under the Imperial reform of Masonry (the *Freimaurerpatent*, "Masonic Decree") of December 11, 1785, and thus Mozart came to belong to the lodge called "Zur Neugekrönten Hoffnung" (New Crowned Hope).

At least as far as surviving Masonic documents can tell us, Mozart was well regarded by his fellow Masons. Many of his friends were Masons.

During his visit to Vienna in 1785, Mozart's father Leopold also became a Mason.

Masonic ideology and Masonic music

Mozart's position within the Masonic movement, according to Maynard Solomon, lay with the rationalist, Enlightenment-inspired membership, as opposed to those members oriented toward mysticism and the occult. This rationalist faction is identified by Katherine Thomson as the Illuminati, a masonically inspired group which was founded by Bavarian professor of canon law Adam Weishaupt, who was also a friend of Mozart. The Illuminati espoused the

Enlightenment-inspired, humanist views proposed by the French philosophers Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Denis Diderot. For example, the Illuminati contended that social rank was not coincident with nobility of the spirit, but that people of lowly class could be noble in spirit just as nobly born could be mean-spirited. This view appears in Mozart's operas; for example, in *The Marriage of Figaro*, an opera based on a play by Pierre Beaumarchais (another Freemason), the lowly-born Figaro is the hero and the Count Almaviva is the boor.

The Freemasons used music in their ceremonies, and adopted Rousseau's humanist views on the meaning of music. "The purpose of music in the {Masonic} ceremonies is to spread good thoughts and unity among the members" so that they may be "united in the idea of innocence and joy," wrote L.F. Lenz in a contemporary edition of Masonic songs. Music should "inculcate feelings of humanity, wisdom and patience, virtue and honesty, loyalty to friends, and finally an understanding of freedom."

These views suggest a musical style quite unlike the style of the Galant, which was dominant at the time. Galant style music was typically melodic with harmonic accompaniment, rather than polyphonic; and the melodic line was often richly ornamented with trills, runs and other virtuosic effects. The style promoted by the Masonic view was much less virtuosic and unornamented. Mozart's style of composition is often referred to as "humanist" and is in accord with this Masonic view of music.

The music of the Freemasons contained musical phrases and forms that held specific semiotic meanings. For example, the Masonic initiation ceremony began with the candidate knocking three times at the door to ask admittance. This is expressed musically as a dotted figure:

This figure appears in Mozart's opera *The Magic Flute* in the overture, suggesting the opening of the Masonic initiation. According to Katherine Thomson, there are many other examples of specific musical symbols taken from the Masonic rites that appear throughout Mozart's compositions. These include the use of suspensions to indicate friendship and brotherhood; the use of three-part harmony to emphasize the special significance of the number three in Freemasonry; and special rhythms and harmonies to signify fortitude and other attributes.

Much of Mozart's Masonic music is written in the key of Eb. This key, with 3 flats is indicative of Masonic symbolism. There are other examples of the number three in the opera as well. The opening chords of the introduction sound three times, which also happens during the Temple scenes. Also represented in threes are the three temples of Wisdom, Reason and Nature.

Tamino tries to open the three doors of the temple. There are three ladies, the attendants to the Queen of the Night, and three boys who serve as guides to Tamino and Papageno.

List of Mozart's Masonic compositions

The following is a list of surviving works that Mozart composed for performance at gatherings of Masons.

- Lied (song) "Gesellenreise," K. 468, "for use at installation of new journeymen", March 1785
- Cantata for tenor and male chorus *Die Maurerfreude* ("The Mason's Joy"), K. 471, premiered 24 April 1785
- The Masonic Funeral Music (*Maurerische Trauermusik*), K. 477/479a, no later than November 1785.
- Two songs, K. 483 and K. 484, to celebrate the opening of "Zur Neugekrönten Hoffnung"; 14 January 1786.
- Cantata for tenor and piano, *Die ihr die unermesslichen Weltalls Schöpfer ehrt*, K. 619 (1791)
- The Little Masonic Cantata (*Kleine Freimaurer-Kantate*) entitled *Laut verkünde unsre Freude*, for soloists, male chorus, and orchestra, K. 623, premiered under the composer's direction 18 November 1791.

The story and music of his opera *The Magic Flute* is also considered to have strong Masonic influences.

Courtesy of [Wikipedia](#) and the [Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon](#)