

Magnificent Mozart

1756-1791

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Promotions and Publications

'Too many notes, my dear Mozart.'
Emperor Joseph II on the opera *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*

Salzburg sees the semiquincentennial anniversary of the birth of its most famous son in 2006. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart showed his musical genius at a very early age, composing at five, performing in numerous courts and composing symphonies before his tenth birthday. In his short lifetime of 35 years he excelled in virtually every genre and style and left behind a rich legacy of compositions ranging from masses, litanies and other sacred works to comic operas. His large variety of compositions in various genres and styles have stood the test of time and still provide entertainment and regard for his masterful handling of universal technical difficulties of musical composition such as counterpoint, harmony, instrumentation and formal planning of arias, ensembles, sonatas and rondos.

The Library Service has in its collection interesting viewing material highlighting various aspects of this composer for borrowers to enjoy, be it an enthusiastic lover of music or a serious student researching and studying the musical genius of this master.

His life

Amadeus/producer, Saul Zaentz; director Milos Forman.

Milos Forman's film is based on the celebrated play by Peter Shaffer, first performed at the National Theatre in London in 1979. Set in the years 1781 to 1823, it was inspired by the rumoured poisoning of Mozart by his contemporary, the court composer Antonio Salieri. The story is told in flashback by Salieri himself who, while in an insane asylum, first acquaints the audience with his own musical career, which culminated in his appointment as composer to the court of Emperor Joseph II. The arrival of the young Mozart throws his world into turmoil. As presented here, the interloper is an objec-

tionable brat and to Salieri, whose august position is now challenged, the composer's undoubted musical genius is a bitter affront. Being in the frustrating position of being the only person in Vienna who truly appreciates Mozart's music as well as his mortal enemy, he reviles the God who has bestowed his gifts on such an undeserving creature and plots his rival's downfall.

The film retains much of the play's dialogue and structure, but in its staging is able to add considerable physical detail, from the atmospheric location shooting in Czechoslovakia, to the visualisation of Mozart's operas. Beautifully photographed by Forman's longtime collaborator, Miroslav Ondricek, the film won no fewer than eight Academy Awards, including those for Best Film, Best Direction, Best Adapted Screenplay, Best Art Direction and Best Costume Design. Thomas Hulce, who plays Mozart, was also nominated, but lost to F Murray Abraham, who is Salieri.

Best-loved operas - a selection

1787 - *Don Giovanni*/director, Joseph Losey.
1790 - *Così fan tutte, ossia La scuola degli amanti*/producer and director, Dave Heather.
1791 - *Die Zauberflöte*/director, Rens Groot.

Celebrating his eternally beautiful music

The music of man. Part 4, The age of the composer/producers, John Thomson, Curtis W Davis and Richard Bocking; directors, John Thomson and Richard Bocking.

The fourth in a series of eight programmes in which Yehudi Menuhin discusses various aspects of music, introduces the work of some of its most important figures and explains why to him it personifies man's very identity. Following the age of Vivaldi, the dawning of the Baroque era meant that the music of the Germanic north, notably that of the keyboard, became the dominant influence in Western Europe, often reflecting order, discipline and power. Menuhin regards Bach as the spokesman of universal faith and hope and discusses this composer's

great achievements, including his innovations concerning the structure of music. Two other composers featured prominently are Mozart and Beethoven, the one romantic and elegant, heralding the age of the individual, the other defiant and uncompromising, exemplifying freedom and human worth. Menuhin refers to the music of Beethoven as one of the ultimate expressions of man and contrasts it with that of Schubert, which he calls the inner voice of the human being.

Not Mozart/producer, Elizabeth Queenan.

Two programmes from the original series of six shown on BBC2 in December 1991 as part of the Mozart Bicentennial celebrations.

The musical genius of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart has inspired music lovers in the past and will continue to do so for generations. Many lovers of classical music were introduced to the genre listening to the strains of Mozart's passionate concertos or insightful comic operas and became devoted fans for life, cultivating an appreciation for other classical composers as well.

What an honour for librarians to pass on his rich legacy to the next generation by introducing the compositions of this genius from Salzburg to library patrons and in doing so bring about an appreciation for magnificent Mozart for life!

References

<http://w3.rz-berlin.mpg.de/cmp/mozart.html>
The Oxford companion to music. Oxford University Press, 2002.

Note: Reviews by Freddy Ogterop, *Film/Video/DVD Selector of the Western Cape Provincial Library Service.*

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