

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Le nozze di Figaro

K. 492

Facsimile of the Autograph Score

Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin—Preußischer Kulturbesitz

Biblioteka Jagiellońska Kraków

(*Mus. ms. autogr. W. A. Mozart 492*)

Stanford University Library · The Juilliard School Library

Introductory Essay by Norbert Miller

Musicological Introduction by Dexter Edge

The Packard Humanities Institute

LOS ALTOS, CALIFORNIA

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PREFACE · GELEITWORT

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Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's seven great operas from *Idomeneo* to *Die Zauberflöte* constitute a unique repertoire in the history of music. Here the genre of opera arrives at a new level, with the relationship of music and drama redefined. It is true that these works represent only one third of Mozart's operatic output, and many of the earlier operas are truly spectacular by any measure—especially in view of the composer's young age—but they did not leave the same distinct mark as the mature operas.

The Packard Humanities Institute and the International Mozarteum Foundation celebrate Mozart's 250th birthday in 2006 by presenting for the first time the autograph scores of the seven great operas in facsimile. Intended for opera lovers, musicians, and scholars alike, the series makes available the authentic texts of the works in the composer's own handwriting. In particular, for five of the seven operas, the project reunites physically separated parts of the original scores, which are today dispersed among different libraries.

Only two autograph scores, *Don Giovanni* and *The Magic Flute*, have always remained intact and were previously published in facsimile.

The present edition has taken advantage of the most advanced digital scanning and reproduction technology, applying the same standards to all seven operas. Each opera facsimile is accompanied by a commentary volume providing up-to-date information on the autograph sources and introductory essays on the literary origins, musical genesis, and historical context of the operas.

The Packard Humanities Institute has deliberately set an unusually low price for these volumes—despite their very high quality of production—in the expectation that many lovers of Mozart's operas may wish to acquire them personally, and also to make it easier for smaller libraries to obtain the full set.

— SEPTEMBER, 2005



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozarts sieben große Opern von *Idomeneo* bis zur *Zauberflöte* bilden in der Musikgeschichte ein einzigartiges Repertoire. Die Gattung Oper erreicht hier ein nie dagewesenes Niveau; das Verhältnis von Musik und Drama wird neu definiert. Wenngleich diese Werke nur ein Drittel von Mozarts Operschaffen umfassen und unter den früheren Opern sich wahrhaft bedeutende Werke befinden—ganz abgesehen vom jugendlichen Alter des Komponisten—, kommt ihnen jedoch nicht die Schlüsselrolle zu wie den Opern der Reifezeit.

Das Packard Humanities Institute und die Internationale Stiftung Mozarteum präsentieren zu Mozarts 250. Geburtstag im Jahre 2006 erstmals eine Faksimile-Ausgabe der autographen Partituren der sieben großen Opern. Den Interessen von Opernfreunden, Musikern und Musikwissenschaftlern gleichermaßen entgegen kommend, macht die Serie die authentischen Notentexte der Opern in der Eigenschrift des Komponisten zugänglich. Insbesondere vereinigt das Projekt bei fünf der sieben Opern die physisch

voneinander getrennten originalen Partiturteile, die heute auf verschiedene Bibliotheken verteilt sind. Nur die beiden autographen Partituren von *Don Giovanni* und *Zauberflöte* wurden nie getrennt und darum auch früher schon faksimiliert.

Die vorliegende Ausgabe bedient sich der modernsten Möglichkeiten der Digitalfotografie und der Reproduktionstechnologie und wendet die gleichen Normen bei allen sieben Opern an. Jedem Faksimile ist ein Kommentarband beigefügt, der nach dem neuesten Kenntnisstand über die autographen Quellen informiert und Einführungen in die literarischen Ursprünge, die musikalische Werkgeschichte und den historischen Kontext der Opern bietet.

Das Packard Humanities Institute hat den Preis der Faksimile-Bände bei hoher Ausstattungs-Qualität bewußt sehr niedrig angesetzt, um vielen Liebhabern der Mozart-Opern den persönlichen Erwerb zu ermöglichen und kleineren Bibliotheken die Anschaffung der gesamten Serie zu erleichtern.

— SEPTEMBER, 2005

“UN QUASI NUOVO GENERE DI SPETTACOLO...” BEAUMARCHAIS’, DA PONTE’S, AND MOZART’S FOLLE JOURNÉE

Norbert Miller

Mozart’s first meeting with Lorenzo Da Ponte is mentioned in the same letter to his father (dated 7 May 1783) in which he reports on the return of Italian opera buffa to Vienna. It has started up again, he enthuses, and he likes it a lot. In late 1782 Count Orsini-Rosenberg, the Court Chamberlain and *General-Spektakel-Direktor* in Vienna, had suggested to him, in the most noncommittal manner, that he should write an opera in Italian for the newly established company. Since then the young composer had thumbed through more than a hundred librettos and found hardly one that left him satisfied. Patching up librettos that had already been set to music was, he continued, a dissatisfying business:

It’s always best to write a new one. Our poet here is now a certain Abbate da Ponte. He has an enormous amount to do in revising pieces for the theater, and he has to write *per obbligo* an entirely new libretto for Salieri, which won’t be finished for another two months. He has promised after that to write a new libretto for me. But who knows whether he will be able to keep his word—or will want to. For, as you are aware, these Italian gentlemen are very civil to your face. Enough, we know them! If he is in league with Salieri, I shall never get anything out of him. But indeed I should dearly love to show what I can do in an Italian opera.

According to Da Ponte’s *Memorie*, the meeting took place at the home of Baron von Wetzlar, an admirer, patron, and friend of Mozart who was then giving the young composer temporary lodgings in his house. Perhaps it took place at that same domestic ball which, as Mozart noted to his father (on 22 January 1783), got so very out of hand!

Abbate Lorenzo Da Ponte, after being banished from Venice, had been living for some time in Vienna. A supremely self-confident adventurer who relied on his wits, he had been taken under wing and presented at court by Antonio Salieri, the composer entrusted by Emperor Joseph II to supervise the establishment of an Italian opera company. Da Ponte had been introduced to Salieri through the offices of a close

friend. Joseph II retained him as court poet after the very first audience, even though Da Ponte admitted never having written a single line for the theater. Now he was at work on his first libretto, *Il ricco d’un giorno* (“The rich man for a day”), an overly intricate comedy of intrigue on the theme of miserliness and extravagance. It was the first time that Carlo Goldoni’s comedies, rather than his frequently composed opera texts, had served as a model for a libretto. The clever versifier still had considerable trouble writing for music when that memorable meeting took place in the convivial surroundings of Baron Wetzlar’s home. Mozart, a highly regarded instrumental composer who had also achieved success in German singspiel with *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, may have proved a welcome sounding board. Some of Da Ponte’s complaints found their way into Mozart’s letter to his father; the account of his fruitless search for a suitable libretto seems almost like a précis of his discussion with the librettist, then still awaiting his first success. Where were truly novel opera subjects independent of the patterns of earlier opera buffa likely to be found? If the Venetian Da Ponte touched on Goldoni’s comedies of character—and Goldoni’s life-project was, after all, to blend Italian and French comedy in an effort to fashion a new form of comedy rooted in real life—then Mozart’s hasty scheme to transform his *Il servitore di due padroni* into a German singspiel presumably dates from this same conversation. As he wrote to his father on 5 February, “I have chosen Goldoni’s comedy *The Servant of Two Masters*, and the whole of the first act has now been translated. Baron Binder is the translator. But we are keeping it a secret until it is quite finished. Well, what do you think of this?” To redeem the *commedia per musica* from its stereotypes, to pin the action of the drama and the music to *mezzo carattere* figures, and thus to reality, without losing sight of the spirit of play: that, assuredly, was where the mission and the future of musical theater resided. Da Ponte failed at his first attempt, as he later recalled in self-critical merriment. His lack of theatrical experience proved to be the snag, and he was severely punished for it when Salieri’s opera finally went on the boards. For his next attempt, two