

Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz* is a hideous, incomprehensible jargon of noise, cacophony and eccentricity, musically valueless... - Boston Gazette, November 20, 1887.

What we do for our children

Leopold Mozart was a gifted and successful musician. Born in 1719, he studied jurisprudence at the University of Salzburg. However, he was already a skilled violinist, and soon after completing his studies he became valet-musician to the Archbishop of Salzburg, rising through the position of court musician to vice-kapellmeister – a position as composer and conductor of the orchestra.

When 21 he composed six violin trios and twelve pieces for the clavier, published as *The Morning and Evening Melodiously and Harmoniously introduced to the Inhabitants of Salzburg*. Catchy!

In all he composed twelve oratorios, several pantomimes, serenades, symphonies and other assorted musical pieces.

However it was as a teacher that Leopold excelled, and his *An Attempt Towards a Fundamental System for Violin* was highly respected by violin players in the late 18th century.

Leopold married Anna Berlina – it was said at the time that 'so handsome a couple had never before been seen at Salzburg'. They had seven children, only two of whom survived childhood.

The first, Maria Anna Walburga Ignatiar, known by her nickname Nannerl, born August 29, 1751, was a child prodigy, and possibly inspired her brother. By the age of seven she had gained a reputation as the finest keyboard player 'that any female performer had ever acquired'.

Wolfgang, born January 27, 1756, by the time he was three attended all her lessons and showed a great interest in music, and a talent beyond his years. By the time he was four, he demonstrated perfect pitch, chiding his elders when their violins were a quarter-tone out of tune. He was a keyboard virtuoso at the age of five.

Leopold was not slow to recognize the talents of his children (*pictured*), and soon gave up his job to become their manager, touring Europe to the delight of royal courts and the public.

In 1762, Leopold wrote home from Passau: 'The children are in good spirits, and everywhere just as if at home. The boy is frank and confiding to everyone, but particularly to officers, whom he seems as if had known all his life. My children are the admiration of everyone, the boy especially. Counts Herbenstein and Schlick, the principal personages of this place, will make a great noise about us at Vienna, and in all probability our affairs will prosper.'

Of course it's unlikely that Wolfgang would have become a famous composer these days. His father would be in serious trouble with DOCS, and young Wolfy in even deeper trouble with his teacher for his attitude to his little girl classmates and for telling too many fart jokes. We have drugs to handle such problem children.

Wouldn't the world be a lesser place without Mozart's 59 symphonies, 78 other orchestral pieces, 176 chamber compositions, 119 other instrumental, 23 operas, 95 choral works and 105 songs!

Later in the year we'll be presenting a whole concert of his works. This April, as a sampler, you will hear his *Ave Verum* and *Laudate Dominum*.

Ave Verum, Mozart's final completed sacred work, was written on 17 June 1791, for the feast of Corpus Christi at the request of Anton Stoll, choirmaster at Baden where Mozart was visiting with his wife Constanze. Some regard it as one of the most beautiful pieces of music ever written.

Laudate dominum is the fifth of six parts of a larger piece known as *Vesperae Solennes de*



(cont'd from p1)

Errata

Confessore, and was composed in September 1780. The work is made up of musical settings of 5 Psalms and was used in the Roman Catholic liturgy known as Vespers. The original manuscript is lost presumed destroyed in the Second World War. It was commissioned by the Archbishop of Salzburg, Hieronymus von Colloredo.

Certainly both are choral masterpieces – lovely to sing, lovely to listen to.



This is the photo I mentioned in a previous issue - the hall in Dublin where Handel's Messiah premiered in 1742 - complete with suspected IRA member who refused to leave the scene.

Got a favourite?
Why not share it!

Do you like Emma Ayres – Classic Breakfast on ABC Classic FM? I do! Why mention this? Today she suggested listeners might enjoy this: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eXs93KbBCgY>

Well, it's different and with a title like "Rock Me Amadeus" I had to see it.

While you're on YouTube, and still on the subject of Mozart – have a look at this: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fGJJJaG4u3Y>

Still more Mozart: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lhiP4cNgHxs>

Still with me? Here's something from the German composer Franz Biebl (1906 – 2001). Ave Maria is his best known work, and lovely to listen to: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XVyCJlPiHFg>

Do you have a favourite work that you would like to share with other readers? Send it to us at newsletter@newcastleuniversitychoir.com and we'll publish it.

If you google Zadoch, Google asks "Did you mean: Zadok", and of course, I do. In our last issue, I used "Zadoch" and "Zadock", but missed the correct spelling, which is "Zadok". But our score uses "Zadock".

My apologies if I have confused you. I have no plans to write again of this priest, so I'm unlikely to make the same mistake again.

Also: Bach was born in the same year as Handel (1685), not Haydn (1732).

Finally: Mendelssohn is spelled Mendelssohn, not Mendellsohn.

The effect of music is so very much more powerful and penetrating than is that of the other arts, for these others speak only of the shadow, but music of the essence.

- Schopenhauer

I feel like a bit of a fraud...

Do you sometimes think you would like to join a choir, but feel a little... well shy, and selfconscious, even not good enough? Welcome to the club!

I thought I would like to share with you the words of one of our members:

"I feel like a bit of a fraud after reading the profiles of the other choir members. For starters I do not have a history in music, in fact I am very ignorant about it, all I can say is that I enjoy it. I was in the school choir however and did perform at the Great Hall as a child but that was short lived due to being asked to leave in year five for talking too much.

"A friend and I decided earlier this year that since we both liked to sing we should join a choir. I mentioned this to another friend who invited us to join Newcastle choir. I have enjoyed being part of this group and everyone has been really welcoming, but I do feel like a bit of a fraud and am expecting to get a pat on the shoulder any time now with a suggestion that perhaps I should look for another hobby."

Needless to say, that member is still with us, gaining confidence and enjoying every moment.

Why not give it a go?

We rehearse every Monday night in the University Great Hall from 7pm until 9:30. No auditions are necessary.

For more information visit our website: www.newcastleuniversitychoir.com.

Cacophony is edited by Peter McCloy on behalf of the Newcastle University Choir, who do not necessarily share the views of the editor. To contribute or to communicate, email us at newsletter@newcastleuniversitychoir.com

For more about Newcastle University Choir, go to www.newcastleuniversitychoir.com