

MOZART : Musical Genius - Devoted Freemason

HALF EUROPE REVERED HIM, THE GREAT CALLED HIM THEIR DARLING, AND WE - WE CALLED HIM OUR BROTHER (*Eulogy given in New Crowned Hope Lodge, 1791*)

On this day, 27th January at eight o'clock in the evening, two hundred and fifty years ago, 1756, WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART, the man that many consider the greatest universal musical genius the world has ever seen or is likely to see, was born in Salzburg, Austria. His father, Leopold (1719-1787), was a violinist in the service of the Archbishop of Salzburg. As a boy he displayed prodigious talent. He began playing when he was four and composing short pieces for the keyboard when he was in his sixth year. Beginning in 1762 the young prodigy travelled throughout Europe with his father and sister giving concerts.

Freemasonry was first introduced into Austria in 1742. In 1784, forty-five lodges formed the Grand Lodge of Austria. Bro. Mozart was initiated 14 December 1784, passed and raised January 1785 in Zur Wohltätigkeit (Beneficence) Lodge, Vienna, which amalgamated with Zur Gekrönten Hoffnung (Crowned Hope) Lodge following the edict of Joseph II. He was also affiliated with Zur Neugeroenten (New Crowned Hope) Lodge in 1786. His father, Leopold, was initiated, passed and raised in 1785. Mozart composed a long list of works specifically for performance in the lodge: songs, cantatas, funeral music. The Viennese lodges had as members many professional musicians, vocalists and instrumentalists, well able to perform these works.

For those with eyes to see and ears to hear, the singspiel, *Die Zauberflöte / The Magic Flute*, Mozart's last great operatic work (1791), is full of Masonic symbolism - the trials of Initiation, the conflict between two realms of good and evil, the characters, the orchestration (clarinets and bassoon-horns), rhythmic repetition of three chords in ritual knocks, even the prevailing keys of E flat and C minor (three flats) and C major (the key of light). Professor Chailley (see reference below) contends that almost every melody, rhythm, key, harmony, and detail of orchestration is based on Masonic symbolism. The libretto was by Emanuel Schikaneder (1751-1812), also a Freemason.

'to the just and virtuous man death has no terrors'

In a letter written to his father, 4 April 1787, we find evidence of the impact Masonic philosophy made in his life: "*I have now made a habit of being prepared in all affairs for the worst. As death, when we come to consider it closely, is the true goal of our existence, I have formed during the last few years such close relations with this best and truest friend of mankind, that his image is not only no longer terrifying to me, but is indeed very soothing and consoling! ... and thank God that he gave me the happiness and the opportunity (you know what I mean) to learn to know Him as the key to true blessedness.*"

Bro. Mozart died of kidney failure at the age of thirty-five, 5 December 1791.

Another musical genius of a later generation, Franz Schubert (1797-1828), would say of him:

"O Mozart, immortal Mozart, how many, how infinitely many inspiring suggestions of a finer, better life have you left in our souls!"

HAPPY BIRTHDAY BRO. WOLFGANG

FURTHER READING ... all make reference to Mozart's active participation in Freemasonry

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Landon, H. C. Robbins. 1791 Mozart's Last Year. London: Thames and Hudson Limited, 1988. ISBN 0-500-01411-6

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Solomon, Maynard. Mozart: A Life. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1995. ISBN 0-06-019046-9

Till, Nicholas. Mozart and the Enlightenment: Truth, Virtue and Beauty in Mozart's Operas. London: Faber & Faber Limited, 1992 ISBN 0-571-16169-3

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