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Baum Cotton Henry Flaubert Turgenev Balzac Willis
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The Letters of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Volume 1

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Imprint

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THE LETTERS OF WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART. (1769-
1791.)
TRANSLATED, FROM THE COLLECTION OF LUDWIG NOHL,
BY LADY WALLACE.
WITH A PORTRAIT AND FACSIMILE
IN TWO VOLUMES. VOL. I.
New York and Philadelphia: 1866.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE THE LETTERS OF W.A. MOZART, VOLUME I

FIRST PART: ITALY/VIENNA/MUNICH 1770-1776 SECOND
PART: MUNICH/AUGSBURG/MANNHEIM SEPT. 1777-MARCH
1778 THIRD PART: PARIS MARCH 1778-JANUARY 1779 FOURTH
PART: MUNICH/IDOMENEO NOVEMBER 1780-JANUARY 1781

CONTENTS OF VOLUME I. [LETTERS LISTED BY DATE]

PREFACE

A full and authentic edition of Mozart's Letters ought to require no special apology; for, though their essential substance has already been made known by quotations from biographies by Nissen, Jahn, and myself, taken from the originals, still in these three works the letters are necessarily not only very imperfectly given, but in some parts so fragmentary, that the peculiar charm of this correspondence—namely, the familiar and confidential mood in which it was written at the time—is entirely destroyed. It was only possible to restore, and to enable others to enjoy this charm—a charm so novel, even to those already conversant with Mozart's life, that the most familiar incidents acquire fresh zest from it—by an ungarbled edition of these letters. This is what I now offer, feeling convinced that it will be welcome not only to the mass of Mozart's admirers, but also to professional musicians; for in them alone is strikingly set forth how Mozart lived and labored, enjoyed and suffered, and this with a degree of vivid and graphic reality which no biography, however complete, could ever succeed in giving. Who does not know the varied riches of Mozart's life? All that agitated the minds of men in that day—nay, all that now moves, and ever will move, the heart of man—vibrated with fresh pulsation, and under the most manifold forms, in his sensitive soul, and mirrored itself in a series of letters, which indeed rather resemble a journal than a correspondence.

This artist, Nature had gifted in all respects with the most clear and vigorous intellect that ever man possessed. Even in a language which he had not so fully mastered as to acquire the facility of giving expression to his ideas, he contrived to relate to others all that he saw and heard, and felt and thought, with surprising clearness and the most charming sprightliness, combined with talent and good feeling. Above all, in his letters to his father when travelling, we meet with the most minute delineations of countries and people, of the progress of the fine arts, especially in the theatres and in mu-

sic; we also see the impulses of his own heart and a hundred other things which, in fascination, and universal as well as artistic interest, have scarcely a parallel in our literature. The style may fail to a certain degree in polish, that is, in definite purpose in expressing what he wished to say in an attractive or congenial form,—an art, however, which Mozart so thoroughly understood in his music. His mode of writing, especially in the later letters from Vienna, is often very slovenly, evidencing how averse the Maestro was to the task. Still these letters are manifestly the unconstrained, natural, and simple outpourings of his heart, delightfully recalling to our minds all the sweetness and pathos, the spirit and grace, which have a thousand times enchanted us in the music of Mozart. The accounts of his visit to Paris may, indeed, lay claim to a certain aesthetic value, for they are written throughout with visible zest in his own descriptions, and also with wit, and charm, and characteristic energy. As these combined merits can only become apparent by an ungarbled series of the letters, I have resolved, after many long years of zealous research in collecting them, to undertake the work,—that is, to publish the letters entire that have come to my knowledge.

It now only remains for me to give some words of explanation as to the method I have pursued in editing them.

In the first place, this edition, (being transcribed closely from the originals,) if compared with the letters already published, will prove that the latter are open to many corrections, both in trivial and more important respects. I have forbore, however, attracting attention to the deviations from the original text, either in Nissen or Jahn. I have no wish to be punctilious about trifles, where, as in the case of Jahn, the principal points are correct. Further, by this faithful production of the letters, (nothing being omitted but the constant repetition of forms of greeting and subscription,) we find many an additional feature in the Maestro's life, and chiefly various facts with regard to the creation and publication of his works, which may serve to complete and to amend various statements in Dr. Ludwig Ritter von Kochel's "Chronological Thematic Catalogue of the Musical Compositions of W. A. Mozart," (Leipzig, Breitkopf and Hartel). This will be effected not only by the hitherto unpublished letters, though comparatively few in number, but also by passages being given in full, which have been hitherto suppressed as of no conse-

quence. I have referred to Nissen and Jahn only when, in spite of all my inquiries, I could not discover the proprietor of the original, or procure a correct copy.

I must also remark that all letters without a special address are written to his father. I have only adhered to Mozart's defective orthography in his few letters of early date, and in the rest adopted the more modern fashion. I did so for this simple reason, that these defects form a charm in his juvenile letters, from being in accordance with their boyish contents, while, with regard to the others, they only tend to distract the attention from the substance of the letters, instead of imparting additional interest to them. Biographers can, and ought always to render faithfully the original writing, because quotations alternate with the text of the biographer; but in a regular and uninterrupted series of letters this attraction must be very sparingly used, or it will have a pernicious effect.

The explanatory remarks, and also the supplementary Lexicon, in which I have availed myself of Jahn's catalogue, will make the letters more intelligible to the world at large. The Index, too, has been most carefully prepared to facilitate references.

Lastly, I return my best thanks to the keeper of the Archives of the Mozarteum in Salzburg, to Herr Jellinck, and to all the librarians and collectors of autographs who have assisted me in my task, either by furnishing me with copies of their Mozart letters, or by letting me know where I could procure them. I would also earnestly request all who may possess any Mozart letters to send me an exact transcript of them in the interest of Art; for those here given allude to many still unknown, which are no doubt scattered about here and there, waiting to be brought to light.

With respect to myself, the best reward I aspire to in return for the many sacrifices this collection has cost me, is, that my readers may do justice to the purpose which chiefly guided me throughout this publication,—my desire being not merely to benefit science, and to give a graphic description of the amiability and purity of heart which so distinguished this attractive man, (for such was my aim in my "Life of Mozart,") but above all to draw attention afresh to the unremitting zeal with which Mozart did homage to every advance in Art, striving to make music more and more the inter-

preter of man's innermost being. I also wished to show how much his course was impeded by the sluggishness and stupidity of the multitude, though partly sustained by the sympathy of kindred souls, till the glorious victory was won over routine and imbecility. Amidst all the fatiguing process of copying and collating letters already so familiar to me, these considerations moved me more vividly than ever; and no work on the Maestro can ever bring them with such force before the intelligent reader as this connected succession of letters, containing his own details of his unwearied artistic struggles and productions. May these letters, then, kindle fresh zeal in our artists of the present day, both in youthful genius and in laurel-crowned Maestri!—especially may they have the happiest influence on those who devote themselves to that phase of Art in which Mozart attained the highest renown!—may they impart that energetic courage which is derived from the experience that incessant efforts for the progress of Art and its appliances enlarge the limits of human intellect, and can alone insure an immortal crown!

LUDWIG NOHL.

MUNICH, October 1, 1864.

FIRST PART ITALY, VIENNA, MUNICH. 1770 TO 1776.

PART I.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born in Salzburg on the 17th January, 1756. His father, Leopold Mozart, belonged to a respectable tradesman's family in the free city of Augsburg. Conscious of being gifted with no small portion of intellectual endowments, he followed the impulse that led him to aim at a higher position in life, and went to the then celebrated University of Salzburg in order to study jurisprudence. As he did not, however, at once succeed in procuring employment in this profession, he was forced, from his straitened means, to enter the service of Canon Count Thun as valet. Subsequently, however, his talents, and that thorough knowledge of music by which he had already (according to the custom of many students) gained some part of his livelihood, obtained for him a better position. In the year 1743 he was received into the band (Kapelle) of the Salzburg cathedral by Archbishop Sigismund; and as his capabilities and fame as a violinist increased, the same Prince shortly afterwards promoted him to the situation of Hof-Componist (Court Composer) and leader of the orchestra, and in 1762 he was appointed Hof-Kapellmeister (conductor of the Court music).

In 1747 Leopold Mozart married Anna Maria Pertlin, a foster-child of the Convent of St. Gilgen. The fruits of this marriage were seven children, two of whom alone survived,—Maria Anna, (the fourth), called Nannerl, born in 1751; and the youngest, Wolfgang Amadeus Johannes Chrysostomus. The daughter at a very early age displayed a most remarkable talent for music, and when her father began to give her instructions in it, an inborn and passionate love of this art was soon evident in her little brother of three years old, who at once gave tokens of a degree of genius far surpassing all experi-

ence, and really bordering on the marvellous. In his fourth year he could play all sorts of little pieces on the piano. He only required half an hour to learn a minuet, and one hour for a longer movement; and in his fifth year he actually composed some pretty short pieces, several of which are still extant.

[Footnote: The Grand Duchess Helene Paulowna, a few weeks ago, made a present to the Mozarteum of the music-book from which Mozart learned music, and in which he wrote down his first compositions.]

The wonderful acquirements of both these children, to which Wolfgang soon added skilful playing on the violin and organ, induced their father to travel with them. In January, 1702, when the boy was just six years old, they went first to Munich, and in the autumn to Vienna, the children everywhere on their journey exciting the greatest sensation, and being handsomely remunerated. Leopold Mozart, therefore, soon afterwards resolved to undertake a longer journey, accompanied by his whole family. This lasted more than three years, extending from the smaller towns in West Germany to Paris and London, while they visited, on their way back, Holland, France, and Switzerland. The careful musical instruction which the father perseveringly bestowed on his son, went hand in hand with the most admirable education, and the boy was soon as universally beloved for his amiable disposition and natural simplicity and candor, as admired for his rare gifts and acquirements.

After nearly a year passed at home in unremitting musical instruction, and practice of various instruments as well as composition, the father once more set off with all his family to Vienna, — on this occasion with a view to Wolfgang paving the way to Italy by the composition of an opera, (Italy, at that time, being the Eldorado of music.) He succeeded in procuring the *scrittura* of an opera buffa, "La Finta semplice;" but, when finished, although the Emperor himself had intrusted the composition to the boy, the cabals of envious singers effectually prevented its being performed. But a German operetta which the lad of twelve also wrote at that time, "Bastien und Bastienne," was given in private, at the summer residence of the Mesmer family, in the suburb called Landstrasse. The father, too, had some compensation by the Emperor commissioning his son

to compose a solemn mass for the consecration of the new Waisenhaus church, which Wolfgang himself directed with the conductor's baton, in presence of the Imperial Family, on the 7th December, 1768.

Immediately on their return home, the young virtuoso was appointed archiepiscopal Concertmeister. He passed almost the whole of the year 1769 in Salzburg, chiefly engaged in the composition of masses. We also see him at that time eagerly occupied in improving his knowledge of Latin, although two years previously he had composed a comedy in that language,—*"Apollo et Hyacinthus."* From this study proceeds the first letter which is still extant from his hand:—

1.

Salzburg, 1769.

MY DEAR YOUNG LADY,—

I beg you will pardon the liberty I take in plaguing you with these few lines, but as you said yesterday that there was nothing you could not understand in Latin, and I might write what I chose in that language, I could not resist the bold impulse to write you a few Latin lines. When you have deciphered these, be so good as to send me the answer by one of Hagenauer's servants, for my messenger cannot wait; remember, you must answer this by a letter.

[Footnote: By a messenger of the Hagenauer family, in whose house, opposite the inn of "Den drei Allurten," Mozart was born, and with whom his family were on the most intimate terms.]

"Cuperem scire, de qua causa, a quam plurimis adolescentibus otium usque adeo oestimetur, ut ipsi se nec verbis, nec verberibus ad hoc sinant abduci."

[Footnote: "I should like to know the reason why indolence is so highly prized by very many young men, that neither by words nor blows will they suffer themselves to be roused from it."]

WOLFGANG MOZART.

The father's plan to go to Italy, there to lay the foundation of a European reputation for his son, was realized in the beginning of December, 1769, and during the journey, the boy, who was at that time just entering his fifteenth year, subjoined to his father's reports scraps of his own writing, in which, in true boyish fashion, he had recourse to all kinds of languages and witticisms, but always exhibiting in his opinions on music the closest observation, the gravest thought, and the most acute judgment.

2.

Verona, Jan. 1770.

MY VERY DEAREST SISTER, —

I have at last got a letter a span long after hoping so much for an answer that I lost patience; and I had good cause to do so before receiving yours at last. The German blockhead having said his say, now the Italian one begins. *Lei e piu franca nella lingua italiana di quel che mi ho immaginato. Lei mi dica la cagione perche lei non fu nella commedia che hanno giocata i Cavalieri. Adesso sentiamo sempre una opera titolata Il Ruggiero. Oronte, il padre di Bradamante, e un principe (il Signor Afferi) bravo cantante, un baritono,* [Footnote: "You are more versed in the Italian language than I believed. Tell me why you were not one of the actors in the comedy performed by the Cavaliers. We are now hearing an opera called 'Il Ruggiero.' Oronte, the father of Bradamante, is a Prince (acted by Afferi, a good singer, a baritone)."] but very affected when he speaks out a falsetto, but not quite so much so as Tibaldi in Vienna. Bradamante innamorata di Ruggiero (ma [Footnote: "Bradamante is enamored of Ruggiero, but"] — she is to marry Leone, but will not) fa una povera Baronessa, che ha avuto una gran disgrazia, ma non so la quale; recita [Footnote: "Pretends to be a poor Baroness who has met with some great misfortune, but what it is I don't know, she

performs"] under an assumed name, but the name I forget; ha una voce passabile, e la statura non sarebbe male, ma distuona come il diavolo. Ruggiero, un ricco principe innamorato di Bradamante, e un musico; canta un poco Manzuolisch [Footnote: Manzuoli was a celebrated soprano, from whom Mozart had lessons in singing when in London.] ed ha una bellissima voce forte ed e gia vecchio; ha 55 anni, ed ha una [Footnote: "She has a tolerable voice, and her appearance is in her favor, but she sings out of tune like a devil Ruggiero, a rich Prince enamored of Bradamante, is a musico, and sings rather in Manzuoli's style, and has a fine powerful voice, though quite old; he is fifty-five, and has a"] flexible voice. Leone is to marry Bradamante—richissimo e, [Footnote: "Immensely rich."] but whether he is rich off the stage I can't say. La moglie di Afferi, che ha una bellissima voce, ma e tanto susurro nel teatro che non si sente niente. Irene fa una sorella di Lolli, del gran violinista che habbiamo sentito a Vienna, a una [Footnote: "Afferi's wife has a most beautiful voice, but sings so softly on the stage that you really hear nothing at all. A sister of Lolli, the great violinist whom we heard at Vienna, acts Irene; she has a"] very harsh voce, e canta sempre [Footnote: "Voice, and always sings"] a quaver too tardi o troppo a buon' ora. Granno fa un signore, che non so come si chiamo; e la prima volta che lui recita. [Footnote: "Slow or too fast. Ganno is acted by a gentleman whose name I never heard. It is his first appearance on the stage."] There is a ballet between each act. We have a good dancer here called Roessler. He is a German, and dances right well. The very last time we were at the opera (but not, I hope, the very last time we ever shall be there) we got M. Roessler to come up to our palco, (for M. Carlotti gives us his box, of which we have the key,) and conversed with him. Apropos, every one is now in maschera, and one great convenience is, that if you fasten your mask on your hat you have the privilege of not taking off your hat when any one speaks to you; and you never address them by name, but always as "Servitore umilissimo, Signora Maschera." Cospetto di Bacco! that is fun! The most strange of all is that we go to bed at half-past seven! Se lei indovinasse questo, io direi certamente che lei sia la madre di tutti gli indovini. [Footnote: "If you guess this, I shall say that you are the mother of all guessers."] Kiss mamma's hand for me, and to yourself I send a thousand kisses, and assure you that I shall always be your affectionate brother.

Portez-vous bien, et aimez-moi toujours.

3.

Milan, Jan. 26, 1770.

I REJOICE in my heart that you were so well amused at the sledging party you write to me about, and I wish you a thousand opportunities of pleasure, so that you may pass your life merrily. But one thing vexes me, which is, that you allowed Herr von Molk [an admirer of this pretty young girl of eighteen] to sigh and sentimentalize, and that you did not go with him in his sledge, that he might have upset you. What a lot of pocket-handkerchiefs he must have used that day to dry the tears he shed for you! He no doubt, too, swallowed at least three ounces of cream of tartar to drive away the horrid evil humors in his body. I know nothing new except that Herr Gellert, the Leipzig poet, [Footnote: Old Mozart prized Gellert's poems so highly, that on one occasion he wrote to him expressing his admiration.] is dead, and has written no more poetry since his death. Just before beginning this letter I composed an air from the "Demetrio" of Metastasio, which begins thus, "Misero tu non sei."

The opera at Mantua was very good. They gave "Demetrio." The prima donna sings well, but is inanimate, and if you did not see her acting, but only singing, you might suppose she was not singing at all, for she can't open her mouth, and whines out everything; but this is nothing new to us. The seconda donna looks like a grenadier, and has a very powerful voice; she really does not sing badly, considering that this is her first appearance. Il primo uomo, il musico, sings beautifully, but his voice is uneven; his name is Caselli. Il secondo uomo is quite old, and does not at all please me. The tenor's name is Ottini; he does not sing unpleasingly, but with effort, like all Italian tenors. We know him very well. The name of the second I don't know; he is still young, but nothing at all remarkable. Primo ballerino good; prima ballerina good, and people say pretty, but I have not seen her near. There is a grottesco who jumps cleverly, but cannot write as I do—just as pigs grunt. The orchestra is tolerable.

In Cremona, the orchestra is good, and Spagnoletta is the name of the first violinist there. Prima donna very passable – rather ancient, I fancy, and as ugly as sin. She does not sing as well as she acts, and is the wife of a violin-player at the opera. Her name is Masci. The opera was the "Clemenza di Tito." Seconda donna not ugly on the stage, young, but nothing superior. Primo uomo, un musico, Cicognani, a fine voice, and a beautiful cantabile. The other two musici young and passable. The tenor's name is non lo so [I don't know what]. He has a pleasing exterior, and resembles Le Roi at Vienna. Ballerino primo good, but an ugly dog. There was a ballerina who danced far from badly, and, what is a capo d'opera, she is anything but plain, either on the stage or off it. The rest were the usual average. I cannot write much about the Milan opera, for we did not go there, but we heard that it was not successful. Primo uomo, Aprile, who sings well, and has a fine even voice; we heard him at a grand church festival. Madame Piccinelli, from Paris, who sang at one of our concerts, acts at the opera. Herr Pick, who danced at Vienna, is now dancing here. The opera is "Didone abbandonata," but it is not to be given much longer. Signor Piccini, who is writing the next opera, is here. I am told that the title is to be "Cesare in Egitto."

WOLFGANG DE MOZART,

Noble of Hohenthal and attached to the Exchequer.

4.

Milan, Feb. 10, 1770.

SPEAK of the wolf, and you see his ears! I am quite well, and impatiently expecting an answer from you. I kiss mamma's hand, and send you a little note and a little kiss; and remain, as before, your –
– What? Your aforesaid merry-andrew brother, Wolfgang in Germany, Amadeo in Italy.

DE MORZANTINI.

5.

Milan, Feb. 17, 1770.

Now I am in for it! My Mariandel! I am so glad that you were so tremendously merry. Say to nurse Urserl that I still think I sent back all her songs, but if, engrossed by high and mighty thoughts of Italy, I carried one off with me, I shall not fail, if I find it, to enclose it in one of my letters. Addio, my children, farewell! I kiss mamma's hands a thousand times, and send you a thousand kisses and salutes on your queer monkey face. Per fare il fine, I am yours, &c.

6.

Milan, Carnival, Erchttag.

MANY kisses to mamma and to you. I am fairly crazed with so much business, [Footnote: Concerts and compositions of every kind occupied Mozart. The principal result of his stay in Milan was, that the young maestro got the scrittura of an opera for the ensuing season. As the libretto was to be sent to them, they could first make a journey through Italy with easy minds. The opera was "Mitridate, Re di Ponto."] so I can't possibly write any more.

7.

Milan, March 3, 1770.

CARA SORELLA MIA, —

I am heartily glad that you have had so much amusement. Perhaps you may think that I have not been as merry as you; but, indeed, I cannot sum up all we have done. I think we have been at least six or seven times at the opera and the feste di ballo, which, as

in Vienna, begin after the opera, but with this difference, that at Vienna the dancing is more orderly. We also saw the *facchinata* and *chiccherata*. The first is a masquerade, an amusing sight, because the men go as *facchini*, or porters; there was also a *barca* filled with people, and a great number on foot besides; and five or six sets of trumpets and kettledrums, besides several bands of violins and other instruments. The *chiccherata* is also a masquerade. What the people of Milan call *chicchere*, we call *petits maitres*, or fops. They were all on horseback, which was a pretty sight. I am as happy now to hear that Herr von Aman [Footnote: The father had written in a previous letter, "Herr von Aman's accident, of which you wrote to us, not only distressed us very much, but cost Wolfgang many tears. You know how sensitive he is"] is better, as I was grieved when you mentioned that he had met with an accident. What kind of mask did Madame Rosa wear, and Herr von Molk, and Herr von Schiedenhofen? Pray write this to me, if you know it; your doing so will oblige me very much. Kiss mamma's hands for me a thousand million times, and a thousand to yourself from "Catch him who can!" Why, here he is!

8.

Bologna, March 24, 1770.

Oh, you busy creature!

Having been so long idle, I thought it would do me no harm to set to work again for a short time. On the post-days, when the German letters come, all that I eat and drink tastes better than usual. I beg you will let me know who are to sing in the oratorio, and also its title. Let me hear how you like the Haydn minuets, and whether they are better than the first. From my heart I rejoice to hear that Herr von Aman is now quite recovered; pray say to him that he must take great care of himself and beware of any unusual exertion. Be sure you tell him this. I intend shortly to send you a minuet that Herr Pick danced on the stage, and which every one in Milan was dancing at the *feste di ballo*, only that you may see by it how slowly people dance. The minuet itself is beautiful. Of course it comes from

Vienna, so no doubt it is either Teller's or Starzer's. It has a great many notes. Why? Because it is a theatrical minuet, which is in slow time. The Milan and Italian minuets, however, have a vast number of notes, and are slow and with a quantity of bars; for instance, the first part has sixteen, the second twenty, and even twenty-four.

We made the acquaintance of a singer in Parma, and also heard her to great advantage in her own house—I mean the far-famed Bastardella. She has, first, a fine voice; second, a flexible organ; third, an incredibly high compass. She sang the following notes and passages in my presence.

[Here, Mozart illustrates with about 20 measures of music]

9.

Rome, April 14, 1770.

I AM thankful to say that my stupid pen and I are all right, so we send a thousand kisses to you both. I wish that my sister were in Rome, for this city would assuredly delight her, because St. Peter's is symmetrical, and many other things in Rome are also symmetrical. Papa has just told me that the loveliest flowers are being carried past at this moment. That I am no wiseacre is pretty well known.

Oh! I have one annoyance—there is only a single bed in our lodgings, so mamma may easily imagine that I get no rest beside papa. I rejoice at the thoughts of a new lodging. I have just finished sketching St. Peter with his keys, St. Paul with his sword, and St. Luke with—my sister, &c., &c. I had the honor of kissing St. Peter's foot at San Pietro, and as I have the misfortune to be so short, your good old

WOLFGANG MOZART

was lifted up!