

Introduction: Mozart the Performer-Composer in Vienna

Biographers from Otto Jahn (*Life of Mozart*, 1856) onwards have continually made connections between Mozart's life and music which are shaped by individual orientations, predilections and interpretations of available evidence. The proliferation of stimulating biographies over more than two centuries attests to a collective need to re-tell the story – in whole or in part – of Mozart's life and music. With a remarkable body of family correspondence, a large quantity of reception-related documents from the late eighteenth century, and some of the most revered music in Western culture, Mozart represents fertile biographical territory.¹

Vienna, seat of the combined Holy Roman Emperor and Austro-Hungarian monarchy as well as Mozart's place of residence for the last ten years of his life, also provides a rich backdrop for a biographical study of a late-eighteenth-century musician.² Cosmopolitan to its core, in spite of a considerably smaller population than London and Paris at around 250,000,

¹ Mozart's correspondence, together with other family letters, is published in MBA and LMF, and reception documents compiled in MDL, MDB and NMD. All translations from MBA and MDL are my own unless otherwise indicated. LMF and MDB references – in different translations – are also given. For selections of letters in English translation, see in particular Robert Spaethling (ed. and trans.), *Mozart's Letters, Mozart's Life* (London: Faber, 2000), and Cliff Eisen (ed.), *Mozart: A Life in Letters*, trans. Stewart Spencer (London: Penguin, 2006).

² For solid, informative introductions to musical life in Vienna in the second half of the eighteenth century, see Daniel Hertz, *Haydn, Mozart and the Viennese School, 1740–1780* (New York: Norton, 1995), pp. 3–78; Dorothea Link, 'Mozart in Vienna', in Simon P. Keefe (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Mozart* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 22–34; Mary Sue Morrow, *Concert Life in Haydn's Vienna: Aspects of a Developing Social Institution* (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1989), pp. 1–236; Morrow, 'Vienna', in Cliff Eisen and Simon P. Keefe (eds.), *The Cambridge Mozart Encyclopedia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 517–526; Andrew Steptoe, *The Mozart-Da Ponte Operas: The Cultural and Musical Background to 'Le nozze di Figaro', 'Don Giovanni', and 'Cosi fan tutte'* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), pp. 13–76; John A. Rice, 'Vienna under Joseph II and Leopold II', in Neal Zaslaw (ed.), *The Classical Era: From the 1740s to the End of the 18th Century* (London: Macmillan, 1989), pp. 126–165; Rice, *Music in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Norton, 2013), pp. 200–221. For an engaging account of Viennese music in historical and social context from c. 1790 to c. 1815, see David Wyn Jones, *Music in Vienna: 1700, 1800, 1900* (Woodbridge and Rochester, NY: The Boydell Press, 2016), pp. 72–149. General introductions to eighteenth-century Austria without an explicitly musical focus are found in Charles W. Ingrao, *The Habsburg Monarchy 1618–1815* (2nd edition, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); and Ernst Wangermann, *The Austrian Achievement 1700–1800* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973).

it offered an environment appealing to artists. For Baron Karl Philipp von Reitzenstein, visiting the city in 1789–1790, nowhere in the world outside Italy had more refined musical taste among amateurs and connoisseurs alike; music, he said, was a ‘dominant passion’ (*herrschende Leidenschaft*) embraced in every family home.³ The ruler from 1780 to 1790, Emperor Joseph II, was described by Michael Kelly, the first Don Basilio and Don Curzio in *Le nozze di Figaro*, as ‘passionately fond of music, and a most excellent and accurate judge of it’ at ‘perhaps the most brilliant [Court] in Europe’. Moreover, Kelly explained: ‘All ranks of society [in Vienna] were doatingly fond of music . . . and most of them perfectly understood the science.’⁴ According to Viennese chronicler and Mozart contemporary Johann Pezzl, a musician ‘possesses a certain cachet in society, where he is respected and welcomed, especially in the great houses’. The staging of a new opera, often a significant event, generated activity in town: ‘The stampings of the horses and the barking of the coachmen as they cross the Graben and the Kohlmarkt’ on the way to the theatre ‘combine to produce a hellish concert.’ In addition, Pezzl explained; ‘one can never enter any fashionable house or society without hearing a duet, a trio, a finale’ from one of Vienna’s popular opera buffe sung or played at the keyboard.⁵ For another writer,

³ Baron Karl Philipp von Reitzenstein, *Reise nach Wien* (Hof, 1795), pp. 244–246. Von Reitzenstein’s trip to Vienna took place in 1789–1790 (a large part of it in winter, p. 333). His account – a combination of undated recollections and reflections on places and activities, including music – was written at that time, as indicated by references in the present to a number of events: he first meets Emperor Joseph II (who died on 20 February 1790) when Joseph fell ill soon after returning from the battlefield; he subsequently documents further meetings with Joseph as well as the Emperor’s recurring health problems and eventual death; he mentions celebrations for the recent taking of Belgrade in the Turkish war (the siege concluding successfully on 8 October 1789); he refers to the Theater auf der Landstrasse (which opened in 1790) as being under construction but not yet complete; he states that the Kärntnertortheater had not staged operas ‘for several months’ (when it stopped doing so in spring 1788 and recommenced in autumn 1791); and he mentions Italian and German actors giving alternate performances, a practice that continued in one way or another at the Burgtheater until 1791. See *Reise nach Wien*, pp. 69, 91, 133–156, 179–181, 294–299, 342, 392–393, 398–400. On the alternating performances see Dorothea Link, *The National Court Theatre in Mozart’s Vienna: Sources and Documents, 1783–1792* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 14.

⁴ Michael Kelly, *Reminiscences of Michael Kelly, of the King’s Theatre, and Theatre Royal Drury Lane* (1826) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 2 vols., vol. 1, p. 197. For a magisterial study of Joseph II’s reign, which almost exactly coincided with Mozart’s decade in Vienna, see Derek Beales, *Joseph II: Against the World, 1780–1790* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). Joseph II’s earlier life, including the period of co-regency with his mother (1765–1780), is discussed in Beales, *Joseph II: In the Shadow of Maria Theresa, 1741–1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

⁵ See Johann Pezzl, ‘Sketch of Vienna’ (1786–1790), translated in H. C. Robbins Landon, *Mozart and Vienna* (New York: Schirmer, 1991), pp. 186, 84, 137. Pezzl’s account as a whole (pp. 54–191) includes information on Vienna’s size, cosmopolitan nature and strengths in the arts.



Figure 1 Map of Vienna, drawn and engraved by Maximilian Grimm (1783).

Johann Kaspar Riesbeck, reporting back to his Paris-based brother from Vienna (c. 1780), music received ‘excellent attention’, including from the supportive nobility, and orchestral performances were of an exceedingly high standard.⁶ And for Friedrich Schulz a few years later, music was the favourite Viennese pastime after the theatre, with probably more

⁶ Johann Kaspar Riesbeck, *Briefe eines Reisenden Franzosen über Deutschland an seine Bruden zu Paris* (2nd edition, Zurich, 1784), vol. 1, pp. 275–276. Like Pezzl’s ‘Sketch of Vienna’ and von Reitzenstein’s *Reise nach Wien*, Riesbeck’s nineteen lengthy letters from Vienna (pp. 181–395) contain wide-ranging observations and insights on Viennese life at the time of Mozart’s residency, including on the theatre (for example, pp. 257–271, 277–280). They were written around 1780. (See the reference on p. 301 to Maria Theresia’s death, which occurred on 29 November 1780.) Riesbeck wanted to speak to the ‘famous [Joseph] Haydn’ when Haydn was in Vienna for a concert, but was unable to do so (p. 357).

music lovers and true virtuosos than any other city and opportunities to attend public or domestic concerts every day.⁷ Von Reitzenstein also identified the very high quality of amateur instrumental playing in Vienna, especially among female pianists; such skilled performers could do justice to ‘the most difficult piece of a Mozart, a Paisiello’, he explained.⁸ Musical accompaniment to eating, drinking and card-playing in Vienna did not impress everyone,⁹ but bears witness to the important social role music fulfilled.

The jewel in the city’s crown was the emperor’s own National Court Theatre (Burgtheater), a venue for operas, plays and concerts frequented by the established aristocracy, the ‘new’ nobility (appointed barons, baronesses, etc.) and the high bourgeoisie, with a capacity of around 1,000–1,350.¹⁰ The Kärntnertortheater, also owned and operated by the court and with room for between 1,000 and 1,800,¹¹ together with smaller spaces suitable for concerts in residential buildings, restaurants and at the homes of aristocrats, provided further opportunities for musicians to develop profiles and generate income. The nascent music publishing industry in Vienna, including distribution in manuscript copies and the chance to take on affluent individual pupils, offered additional revenue streams. Vienna was known to Mozart before 1781, from several earlier visits: in 1762, when he played twice for Empress Maria Theresa; in 1767–1768, when he wrote his first opera buffa *La finta semplice* and first Singspiel *Bastien und Bastienne* and had a mass, a (lost) offertory and (lost) trumpet concerto performed; and in 1773, when he composed the string quartets K. 168–173 and the orchestral serenade in D, K. 185.¹² Three years before finally settling in Vienna, Mozart was encouraged to move there by family friend Joseph Mesmer, cousin of the eponymous instigator of the

⁷ Friedrich Schulz, *Reise eines Liefländers von Riga nach Warschau* (Berlin, 1796), vol. 6, p. 217.

⁸ Von Reitzenstein, *Reise nach Wien*, pp. 247–248, 251.

⁹ See Friedrich Nicolai, writing around 1780, as reported in Morrow, *Concert Life in Vienna*, p. 54.

¹⁰ On the Burgtheater, and the higher numbers quoted for the capacities of both court theatres (p. 14), see Link, *National Court Theatre*. For useful descriptions of the Burgtheater itself (which was demolished in 1888), see Mary Hunter, *Mozart’s Operas: A Companion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 177, and Dexter Edge, ‘Mozart’s Reception in Vienna, 1787–1791’, in Stanley Sadie (ed.), *Wolfgang Amadè Mozart: Essays on His Life and His Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 66–117, at 73.

¹¹ On the size and dimensions of the Kärntnertortheater, see Malcolm S. Cole, ‘Mozart and the Two Theaters in Josephinian Vienna’, in Mark A. Radice (ed.), *Opera in Context: Essays on Historical Staging from the Late Renaissance to the Time of Puccini* (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1998), pp. 111–145, at 132. Von Reitzenstein (*Reise nach Wien*, p. 342) reports the Kärntnertortheater as larger than the Burgtheater.

¹² On Mozart’s early trips to Vienna, see in particular Landon, *Mozart and Vienna*, pp. 9–44. For Leopold’s account of machinations and envy surrounding Mozart in Vienna in 1768, see MBA, vol. 1, pp. 254–258; LMF, pp. 80–83 (30 January–3 February 1768).

dubious hypnotic practice of Mesmerism parodied by ‘doctor’ Despina in the Act 1 finale of *Così fan tutte*. Promising free boarding and lodging in the city for as long as was needed, Mesmer wrote to Mozart’s father Leopold: ‘There is always decent room here for a great talent, only it sometimes does not happen straight away. But through the support of good friends one duly gets to one’s goal – and, all said and done, it is still best to live in Vienna.’¹³

Biographies like mine, orientated above all towards Mozart’s music, have a venerable history. As early as 1801, Johann Karl Friedrich Triest called for a ‘musical biographer . . . to dissect [Mozart’s] works and weigh their relative merits’; while Ignaz Arnold duly obliged in a short book published two years later, landmark nineteenth-century biographies such as those by Jahn and Alexandre Oulibicheff did not slant discussion primarily towards Mozart’s music.¹⁴ In the twentieth century, substantial tomes by Georges de Saint-Foix and Théodore de Wyzewa (5 vols., 1912–1946), Hermann Abert (1919–1921), Alfred Einstein (1945), Jean and Brigitte Massin (1959) and Konrad Küster (1996) entered the canon of musical biographies.¹⁵ In spite of innumerable, enduring critical insights, the first four are now (unsurprisingly) outdated in many respects. And Küster’s chronological survey of isolated works and groups of works is selective in coverage, compressing Mozart’s entire career into fewer than 400 pages.

More important, no biography – including Abert’s, probably the greatest of the twentieth century – has accounted substantively for a fundamental feature of Mozart’s musical career: his dual role as performer and composer. To take a single example, biographers implicitly or explicitly recognize (quite rightly) that the Viennese piano concertos owe their existence to

¹³ MBA, vol. 2, p. 243; LMF, p. 454 (as quoted in a letter from Leopold to Mozart on 29 January 1778). See also MDL, p. 154; MDB, p. 172.

¹⁴ See Triest, ‘Remarks on the Development of the Art of Music in Germany in the Eighteenth Century’, trans. Susan Gillespie, in Elaine Sisman (ed.), *Haydn and His World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 321–394, at 364; Arnold, *Mozarts Geist: seine kurze Biographie und ästhetische Darstellung seiner Werke* (Erfurt: Henningschen Buchhandlung, 1803); Otto Jahn, *Life of Mozart* (1856), trans. Pauline D. Townsend (London: Novello, Ewer & Co., 1891), 3 vols; Oulibicheff, *Nouvelle Biographie de Mozart* (Moscow: Auguste Semen, 1843), 3 vols.

¹⁵ Saint-Foix and Wyzewa, *W. A. Mozart: sa vie musicale et son oeuvre* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1912–1946); Hermann Abert, *W. A. Mozart* (1919–1921), trans. Stewart Spencer, ed. Cliff Eisen (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007); Einstein, *Mozart: His Character, His Work*, trans. Nathan Broder and Arthur Mendel (London: Cassell, 1945); Massin and Massin, *Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart* (Paris: Fayard, 1959); Küster, *Mozart: A Musical Biography*, trans. Mary Whittall (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

Mozart's status as a performer-composer, but have not yet adequately investigated the musical potential for his interwoven roles to transmit understandings and fuel interpretations of the works. Mozart often separated composition and performance in evaluating the music of others: he 'found little and missed much' in Herr Freyhold's performance on the flute, Freyhold's 'whole bravura [consisting] of double tonguing', but stated that Freyhold 'would not be a bad composer' if he 'learned composition properly'; and the oboist J. C. Fischer 'plays like a wretched student' with an 'entirely nasal' tone, writing concertos where 'each ritornello lasts a quarter of an hour – then our hero appears, lifts up one leaden foot after the other and stamps on the floor with each alternately'.¹⁶ He also implicitly separated performance from compositional activity when stating in 1778 that he would rather '*so to speak* neglect the clavier than composition, because the clavier is only my secondary thing, though thank God, a very strong secondary thing'.¹⁷ But vibrant continuities between the two were also a practical reality for Mozart from his formative years onwards: in his keyboard improvisations; in Leopold's promotion of him on the Grand Tour of 1763–1766 as a performer-composer; in his accommodation of specific singers' needs in his earliest arias; and in traces of performance activities and experiences left in his earliest published works, including exuberant virtuosity and ornamentation, and compositional impetuosity probably attributable to memories of early renditions.¹⁸ After leaving court service for the first time in late 1777 to seek fame and fortune in musical centres north of Salzburg, Mozart had a taste of life as an independent performer and composer responsible for promoting his own career in both areas. In the darkest period of his life so far, the six-month stay in Paris (24 March–26 September 1778) during which he experienced the death of his mother, came to detest the French capital and much of what it represented, fell out spectacularly with his host and advisor Melchior Grimm, failed to secure an acceptable appointment, earned insufficient income and was unsuccessful at procuring an operatic commission, Mozart continued to engage passionately with combined performing and composing activities, thereby inviting us to situate these combined activities at the heart

¹⁶ MBA, vol. 3, p. 301, vol. 4, pp. 40–41; LMF, pp. 867, 907 (letters of 20 February 1784 and 4 April 1787).

¹⁷ MBA, p. 264; LMF, p. 468 (7 February 1778).

¹⁸ See Simon P. Keefe, 'Mozart the Child Performer-Composer: New Musical-Biographical Perspectives on the Early Years to 1766', in Gary MacPherson (ed.), *Musical Prodigies: Interpretations from Psychology, Music Education, Musicology and Ethnomusicology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 550–575.

of the biographical enterprise.¹⁹ Writing to Leopold just hours after his mother's death and immediately after relaying news of her grave illness (while withholding news of her actual death), Mozart energetically expressed his desire to jump into the orchestra to snatch the violin from concertmaster Pierre Lahoussaye and lead the premiere of the 'Paris' Symphony K. 297 himself had it been poorly played, enforcing the role of performer-composer. (For Mozart, relating news of a good live musical experience – he was ultimately delighted by the orchestra's rendition of K. 297 and the audience reaction – was apparently the best substitute for an actual live experience, even at such a troubled moment in his life.) Less than a month later, with Maria Anna's death still raw for father and son, he wrote to Leopold: 'You know that I am, so to speak, stuck in music [*sie wissen dass ich so zu sagen in der Musique stecke*], that I am involved with it the whole day and that I like to plan, study, think [it] over.'²⁰

Mozart's Viennese decade, which provides the subject matter for my book, was the most significant period of his career as a performer-composer; with one or two notable exceptions, including *Idomeneo* staged in Munich (January 1781) immediately before the move to Vienna, Mozart wrote his finest music between 16 March 1781 and his death on 5 December 1791. Starting out in the city with no secure income, and without anyone to bankroll him (as Leopold had done on the 1777–1779 trip), Mozart's livelihood depended unambiguously on artistic and financial success as a performer and composer achieved through activities in both areas and including publishing (as well as a limited amount of teaching). *Mozart in Vienna: The Final Decade* therefore focuses on intersections between performance and composition in his Viennese oeuvre and general musical activities, looking in particular at ways in which issues around performance affected compositional processes. Since performance was an ever-present concern for Mozart – in operas, in informal, formal, public and private concert settings, and in music for publication – all of his Viennese works should bear its imprint in one way or another.

The wide range of performing contexts for Mozart's Viennese works encompasses his own participation and the involvement of others either known or unknown to him. At one end of the spectrum are works and

¹⁹ On this topic in the context of the Parisian stay, see Simon P. Keefe, 'Mozart "Stuck in Music" in Paris (1778): Towards a New Biographical Paradigm', in Keefe (ed.), *Mozart Studies 2* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 23–54.

²⁰ MBA, vol. 2, p. 427; LMF, p. 587 (31 July 1778). For discussion of Mozart's musical mindset in Paris 1778, see Keefe, 'Mozart "Stuck in Music" in Paris'.

musical experiences such as the piano concertos and keyboard improvisations in which Mozart's composition and performance is thoroughly intertwined: here 'the ideal of the composer-performer as a dual entity . . . ubiquitous in almost all eighteenth-century treatises on performance', and evident (for example) in Mozart's expectation that Georg Vogler would sight-read one of Mozart's pieces in such a way as to appear to have composed it himself, is especially apparent.²¹ Numerous critics witnessing Mozart in action found mutually reinforcing *what* he performed and *how* he performed it. Improvisations occupied a special place in this respect, demonstrating in equal measure fertility of compositional imagination and supreme performance dexterity and expression. The early Mozart biographer Franz Xaver Niemetschek (1798) reported his performance in Prague on 19 January 1787: 'Mozart at the end of the academy improvised alone at the pianoforte for more than half an hour and enhanced delight to the highest degree. And actually this improvising exceeded everything that we could imagine from piano playing, the highest degree of compositional art united with the most perfect skill in playing.'²² During Mozart's life and after it, writers related time and again the all-consuming nature of the improvisatory experience: 'What a richness of ideas! What variety! What changes in passionate tones! We swim away with him unresistingly on the stream of his emotions' (1785); 'This small man and great master [on 24 August 1788] twice *extemporized* on a *pedal piano*, so wonderfully! so wonderfully! that I didn't know where I was. The most difficult passages and the loveliest *themes* interwoven' (1789); 'inexhaustible ideas' rendered Mozart 'author and performer simultaneously' (1808); and the 'bold flight of his fantasy, to the highest regions and to the depths of the abyss, could not be adequately admired or wondered by even the most experienced musical master. Even now, an

²¹ For the quoted material, see Tom Beghin, "'Delivery, Delivery, Delivery!'" Crowning the Rhetorical Process of Haydn's Keyboard Sonatas', in Beghin and Sander M. Goldberg (eds.), *Haydn and the Performance of Rhetoric* (University of Chicago Press, 2007), pp. 131–171, at 152, and Beghin, *The Virtual Haydn: Paradox of a Twenty-First Century Keyboardist* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), p. 60. For Mozart's statement, see MBA, vol. 2, p. 228; LMF, p. 449 (17 January 1778).

²² Niemetschek, *Leben des K. K. Kapellmeisters Wolfgang Gottlieb Mozart* (1798), ed. E. Rychnovsky (Munich: Bibliothek zeitgenössischer Literatur, 1987), p. 27 (my translation). 'Aber dieser Zustand lösete sich dann, als Mozart zu Ende der Akademie allein auf dem Pianoforte mehr als eine halbe Stunde phantasirte und unser Entzücken auf den höchsten Grad gespannt hatte, in laute überströmende Beyfallsäusserung auf. Und in der That übertraf dieses Phantasiren alles, was man sich vom Klavierspiele vorstellen konnte, da der höchste Grad der Kompositionskunst, mit der vollkommensten Fertigkeit im Spiele vereinigt ward.' For a different translation, see Niemetschek, *Life of Mozart*, trans. Helen Mautner (London: Hyman, 1956), p. 36.

old man, I hear those heavenly and unforgettable harmonies resound in me' (1826).²³ Friend and associate Maximilian Stadler also claimed (pre-1830) that 'Mozart had no equal in the art of free fantasy. He improvised in such an orderly fashion, as if he had had them lying in front of him'.²⁴ Strong reactions are also witnessed away from improvisation specifically. For Niemetschek at the Prague academy in 1787: 'We did not know what we should admire most, whether the extraordinary compositions [probably including a piano concerto], or the extraordinary playing; both together made a complete impression on our souls similar to a sweet bewitchment!'²⁵ And for Leopold Mozart, experiencing a 'marvellous concerto' (*herrliches Konzert*) by his son at a concert in Vienna on 13 February 1785 and conveying the impact to his daughter Nannerl: 'I was only two boxes away from the really beautiful Princess of Wurtemberg and had the pleasure of hearing so splendidly all the interplay of the instruments that tears filled my eyes from sheer delight. When your brother left, the Emperor passed down a compliment hat-in-hand and shouted out "Bravo, Mozart!" When he came back to play, he was applauded.'²⁶

Mozart was fully cognizant of the mutually reinforcing impact of performance and composition, desiring and appreciating the kind of close attention to both activities that facilitated the impact. An announcement for the Burgtheater academy on 10 March 1785, presumably written by

²³ MDL, pp. 206 (Johann Schink), 285 (Joachim Daniel Preisler), 440 (Placidus Scharl), 480 (Ambros Rieder); MDB, pp. 233, 325, 512, 566. Karl Ditters von Dittersdorf also records Mozart's skills as an improviser – contrasting them with the lesser skills of his imitators – and universal admiration for Mozart's playing among musicians in general. See Karl Ditters von Dittersdorf, *Lebensbeschreibung. Seinem Sohne in der Feder diktirt*, ed. Carl Spazier (Leipzig, 1801), trans. by A. D. Coleridge as *The Autobiography of Karl von Dittersdorf* (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1896), pp. 44–45, 251. (In an interview with the emperor, relayed in the autobiography, Dittersdorf acknowledges having heard Mozart play three times by 1786–1787. See *Autobiography*, p. 251.)

²⁴ See MDL, p. 465; MDB, p. 543. Stadler went on to describe composer and organist Johann Georg Albrechtsberger's delight at an hour-long Mozart improvisation, which convinced Albrechtsberger that Mozart's improvisations were not pre-prepared. This anecdote also appears in Nerina Medici and Rosemary Hughes (eds.), *A Mozart Pilgrimage: Being the Travel Diaries of Vincent and Mary Novello in the Year 1829* (London: Novello, 1955), p. 168.

²⁵ Niemetschek, *Leben*, p. 27 (my translation). 'Er ließ sich dann auf allgemeines Verlangen in einer großen musikalischen Akademie im Operntheater auf dem Pianoforte hören. Nie sah man noch das Theater so voll Menschen, als bey dieser Gelegenheit; nie ein stärkeres, einstimmiges Entzücken, als sein göttliches Spiel erweckte. Wir wußten in der That nicht, was wir mehr bewundern sollten, ob die ausserordentliche Komposition, oder das ausserordentliche Spiel; beydes zusammen bewirkte einen Totaleindruck auf unsere Seelen, welcher einer süßen Bezauberung glich!' For a different (considerably looser) translation see *Life of Mozart*, p. 36.

²⁶ MBA, vol. 3, p. 373; LMF, p. 886 (16 February 1785).

Mozart himself, promoted a cocktail of new work, distinctive sound and improvisation: ‘He will play not only a *new*, just *finished Fortepiano Concerto* [K. 467], but will also use a particularly *large pedalled Fortepiano* [a keyboard played with the feet to reinforce low notes] in his *Fantasy*.²⁷ As he explained to his father from Paris (1 May 1778): ‘Give me the best clavier in Europe but an audience who understand nothing, or do not want to understand and who do not feel with me what I play, and I will lose all pleasure.’²⁸ Never immune to positive press or to an enthralled audience, he took particular pleasure in the rapt attention of listeners to his keyboard performances: the Mannheim elector who ‘sat down [. . .] beside me and remained motionless’; the French duke who ‘listened with all his attention’; and the Viennese audience’s ‘astonishing silence’ (with some ‘Bravos’ thrown in for good measure) at the Kärntnertortheater concert on 3 April 1781.²⁹

He was just as alert to performing matters when writing for others. As is well known, he tailored operatic and concert arias to the needs of individual singers.³⁰ And, according to Leopold, he adapted operas to the needs of orchestras as well as vocalists.³¹ Mozart wrote a number of Viennese instrumental works with specific performers in mind, highlighting their strengths, capabilities and predilections. It was undeniably in the interests of both Mozart and his singers and players to nurture mutually reinforcing appreciation of composition and performance wherever possible. As the critic Johann Friedrich Schink remarked in commending the composition and performance of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* at the original production at the Burgtheater in Vienna (1782): ‘The singers of the national stage here deserve praise: they have felt what they sang; they convey with their whole soul what Mozart wrote; their song also came from the heart; they did not just gurgle, but spoke . . . When composer and singers thus work with combined energy to fulfill the true purpose of music, so our hearts become interested as a result; and where art interests our hearts, there its impression is also constant and lasting.’³² Equally, Mozart would have

²⁷ MDL, pp. 212; MDB, p. 239. A few weeks later Leopold also reported to Nannerl the large and heavy pedal for the fortepiano: see MBA, vol. 3, p. 379; LMF, p. 889 (12 March 1785).

²⁸ MBA, vol. 2, p. 344; LMF, pp. 531–532.

²⁹ MBA, vol. 2, pp. 110, 344, and vol. 3, p. 103; LMF, pp. 363, 532, 722 (letters of 8 November 1777, 1 May 1778, 8 April 1781).

³⁰ We need also to bear in mind that sometimes Mozart may not have exploited an individual voice to the full, opting (for artistic and/or practical reasons) to write for a voice type instead. See Julian Rushton, ‘Buffo Roles in Mozart’s Vienna: Tessitura and Tonality as Signs of Characterization’, in Mary Hunter and James Webster (eds.), *Opera Buffa in Mozart’s Vienna* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 406–425.

³¹ See MBA, vol. 1, p. 440; LMF, pp. 199–200 (28 September 1771).

³² MDL, p. 186; MDB, pp. 210–211.