

CHAPTER I

*Personal Relationships**Simon P. Keefe*

As a cosmopolitan man who travelled extensively from his early childhood years onwards, Mozart had opportunities to meet and get to know a broader range of people across Europe than almost any other musician of his generation. Sociable and with a lively sense of humour, Mozart enjoyed the company of family and friends at home in Salzburg and Vienna as well as abroad, a fact amply revealed in his correspondence.

At every stage of life, Mozart maintained a range of friendships – some close, others ostensibly more functional – with individuals from different echelons of society, the lion's share connected in one way or another with music. Probably the best-known friendship grounded in mutual musical respect was with Joseph Haydn. The composers may have first met in December 1783 at concerts put on by the Tonkünstler-Societät in Vienna (an organization that came to the aid of families of deceased musicians). They certainly became well acquainted in early 1785 when reading through together Mozart's first six Viennese string quartets. At one such occasion, on 12 February 1785, Haydn famously commented to Mozart's father Leopold, who was visiting the imperial capital: 'I say to you before God and as an honest man that your son is the greatest composer I know in person or by name. He has taste and more than that the greatest compositional knowledge.'¹ Mozart dedicated the quartets to Haydn a few months later, referring to him six times in a single paragraph of Italian text printed at the beginning of the first edition as a dear friend or best friend ('mio caro amico', 'migliore amico' and 'amico carissimo').² Meetings were apparently a regular occurrence in late 1790, including for renditions of Mozart's string quintets (according to theologian, musician and Mozart associate Maximilian Stadler). Haydn's early biographer

¹ See MBA, vol. 3, p. 373; LMF, p. 886 (16 February 1785). All translations from MBA are my own, unless otherwise indicated.

² For the complete dedication from the edition published by Vienna-based Artaria, see MDL, p. 220 and MDB, p. 250; MBA, vol. 3, p. 404 and LMF, pp. 891–92 (1 September 1785).

Albert Christoph Dies, who interviewed him repeatedly between 1805 and 1808, reports a poignant farewell to coincide with Haydn setting off for London on 15 December 1790: ‘Mozart on this day never left his friend Haydn. He dined with him, and said at the moment of parting, “We are probably saying our last farewell in this life.” Tears welled from the eyes of both.’³

When resident in Vienna during his last decade (1781–91), Mozart was on friendly terms with members of the nobility and with other influential people. They included Countess Thun, one of his main Viennese patrons and, as of spring 1781, ‘the most charming, dearest lady I have met in my life’;⁴ Johann Michael Puchberg, a textile merchant and fellow mason to whom Mozart directed at least nineteen requests for loans between 1788 and 1791 and with whom music was played and discussed; Baron Raimund Wetzlar von Plankenstern, a supporter, one-time landlord and godfather to the Mozarts’ first child (who bore his Christian name); and Baron Gottfried van Swieten, a diplomat, civil servant and longstanding admirer of Mozart, who integrated him into a Sunday-afternoon music circle in 1782 and a few years later commissioned from him reorchestrations of four of Handel’s major works. It would have been in Mozart’s financial and reputational interests to cultivate relationships of these kinds. He freely attributed friendliness with Johann Kilian Strack, a court official closely connected to Emperor Joseph II, to Strack’s perceived influence and explained carefulness not to visit too often as a fear of revealing his true motives.⁵ But vested interests did not preclude genuine affection for those of high rank. Baroness Waldstätten – a patron who lent him money, temporarily housed Constanze several times in 1781–82 and put on a lavish banquet to celebrate the Mozarts’ wedding – received sociable letters from him, including a humorously flirtatious one.⁶ Although Mozart may have benefitted from writing the aria ‘Mentre ti lascio, o figlia’ K. 513 for Gottfried von Jacquin and the ‘Kegelstatt’ trio K. 498 and the four-hand Piano Sonata K. 521 for pianist sister Franziska, not least by associating himself with a distinguished Viennese family, he also enjoyed a relaxed friendship with Gottfried: from Prague shortly before and after the premiere of *Don Giovanni*, Mozart joked about eventually

³ Vernon Gotwals (ed. and trans.), *Haydn: Two Contemporary Portraits* (Madison, WI and London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), p. 121.

⁴ MBA, vol. 1, p. 98; LMF, p. 717 (24 March 1781).

⁵ MBA, vol. 3, pp. 194, 201; LMF, pp. 794, 799 (23 January 1782, 10 April 1782).

⁶ For the flirtatious letter in question, see MBA, vol. 3, pp. 232–33; LMF, pp. 824–25 (2 October 1782).

receiving a letter from him, then gently and jovially advised him about the virtues of true love rather than transient obsession.⁷

The humour in letters to Jacquin and Waldstätten was a feature of Mozart's close friendships with a number of individuals. He teased virtuoso horn-player Joseph Leutgeb in works written for him: jocular annotations on the autograph score of the Horn Concerto K. 417 in E \flat (1783) express pity for a 'donkey, ox and fool'; similar notes on the autograph of K. 412 in D (1791) invite him to 'rest a little! . . . rest! . . . ah, the end please! . . . the finish? thank heaven! stop, stop! . . . You beast – what a noise [coinciding with f \sharp " that is difficult to hand stop]. Ouch! Alas!' He also subjected the hapless Leutgeb to a ruse in 1791: sending a message to say that an old friend from Rome had come to visit, Mozart was greatly amused at subsequently encountering Leutgeb dressed to the nines with hair elegantly coiffured.⁸ Franz Xaver Süssmayr, Mozart's assistant in 1791 and completer of the Requiem in 1791–92, repeatedly had his leg pulled as an 'idiot', an ox, 'Sauermayr' (a play on 'süss'/sweet and 'sauer'/sour), a 'real ass', and a 'shitter'.⁹ Anton Stoll, the choirmaster at Baden befriended by Mozart during visits to Constanze on her recuperative stays in the town, was also teased in rhyme, verse and scatology.¹⁰ And banter formed part of the friendship between Mozart and Emanuel Schikaneder, librettist of *Die Zauberflöte* (1791), creator of the role of Papageno, and director of the Wiednertheater where the opera premiered: Mozart even caught him out in one live performance by cheerily messing about with the placement of glockenspiel chords accompanying Papageno in an aria.¹¹ Mozart's letters to his cousin Maria Thekla Mozart, with whom he clearly enjoyed a rambunctious relationship in the mid to late 1770s, are virtuoso essays in clever and humorous nonsense. For one critic: 'Mozart sets up the stage of the jester and verbal acrobat, adopting principally the role of uninhibitedly bragging jokester. What had no doubt been produced, quasi improvisationally, in front of his cousin in direct interaction and had been tested for immediate effect, now continues in letters'.¹² We can only speculate whether the fourteen-year-old Mozart's short,

⁷ MBA, vol. 4, pp. 54–6, 58–9; LMF, pp. 911–14 (15–25 October, 4 November 1787).

⁸ MBA, vol. 4, p. 141; LMF, p. 956 (25 June 1791).

⁹ MBA, vol. 4, pp. 144, 147, 150, 158, 153; LMF, pp. 958, 961, 963, 967, 966 (2 July, 5 July, 7 July, 7–8 October, 12 July 1791).

¹⁰ MBA, vol. 4, pp. 132, 152–53; LMF, pp. 950, 965–66 (end of May, 12 July 1791).

¹¹ For the description of this practical joke to Constanze, see MBA, vol. 4, p. 160; LMF, p. 969 (8–9 October 1791).

¹² Ulrich Konrad, 'Mozart the Letter Writer and His Language' (trans. William Buchanan), in Simon P. Keefe (ed.), *Mozart Studies 2* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 1–22, at 2.

heartfelt relationship with a prodigious violinist contemporary Thomas Linley had a jocular dimension. They met in Rome in spring 1770 and became fast friends; Mozart wrote warmly to Linley a few months later.¹³

For a composer who could claim to be ‘stuck in music’ less than a month after one of the most traumatic events to affect him in young adulthood, the death of his mother Maria Anna on 3 July 1778 in Paris, it is no surprise that personal and musical relationships were sometimes cut from the same cloth.¹⁴ The aforementioned teasing of Leutgeb is reflected in music written for him, including a hesitant main theme at the end of the finale of the Horn Concerto K. 417 and a comically unpromising one, combined with playful solo material, in the corresponding movement of the Horn Quintet K. 407. Lighthearted references to the need for rest and for the end of the work on Leutgeb’s part poignantly mirror a series of increasingly less demanding horn concertos for him between 1783 and 1791, as age took its toll.¹⁵ (Leutgeb was fifty-nine in October 1791.) Converging biographical circumstances and musical experiences also brought together the personal and musical elements of relationships. Mozart became fond of the Mannheim-based Cannabich family in 1777–78, depicting daughter Rosa in the slow movement of a piano sonata (most likely K. 309 in C). When it became clear an appointment would not be forthcoming for him in Mannheim making departure inevitable, ‘[Rosa] played my sonata entirely seriously . . . I tell you, I could not contain my weeping. In the end, the mother, the daughter and the treasurer also had tears in their eyes. . . . [It] is the favourite [sonata] of the whole house.’¹⁶ Mozart fell in love with Aloysia Weber at around the same time, primarily discussing her musical qualities when writing to his father.¹⁷ Also, half of the text of Mozart’s one extant letter to Aloysia is devoted to musical matters, including advice on how to interpret several arias (with a promise of more advice in

¹³ For a description of their encounters and Mozart’s extant letter to Linley, see MBA, vol. 1, pp. 338, 388–89; LMF, pp. 129–30, 160–61 (21 April 1770, 10 September 1770). Linley died in a boating accident in 1778, aged 22.

¹⁴ For more on Mozart’s responses to his mother’s death, including detailed attention to musical experiences even at such a troubled time, see Simon P. Keefe, ‘Mozart “Stuck in Music” in Paris (1778): Towards a New Biographical Paradigm’, in Keefe (ed.), *Mozart Studies* 2, pp. 23–54, especially 25–35.

¹⁵ For discussion of Mozart’s works for Leutgeb, see Simon P. Keefe, *Mozart in Vienna: The Final Decade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), chapters 3, 11 and 12. See also Konrad Küster, *Mozart: A Musical Biography*, trans. Mary Whittall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 227–33.

¹⁶ MBA, vol. 2, p. 178; LMF, p. 414 (10 December 1777).

¹⁷ See MBA, vol. 2, pp. 226–27, 253, 286–87; LMF pp. 447–48, 462, 485–86 (17 January, 4 February, 19 February 1778).

a subsequent letter).¹⁸ Mozart's imagined future musical encounters with Aloisia are symbiotically linked to his love for her. And associations between the musical and the personal could work in negative as well as positive ways. It is reasonable to assume, for example, that Mozart's low opinion of composer Georg Joseph Vogler's music, performance and personality are not entirely unrelated.¹⁹

Mozart's deepest relationships were with family members. He and older sister Nannerl were close in childhood, sharing performing experiences among the great and the good across Europe as well as in more modest surroundings at home. In all probability the Concerto for two pianos in Eb, K. 365 (1779–80), was also written for the two of them to play together. While their relationship cooled somewhat after Mozart's move to Vienna in 1781, and was strained during the settlement of Leopold's estate in 1787, they seem to have enjoyed their three months together in 1783 when Mozart visited Salzburg with Constanze: Nannerl's diary from this period lists participation in a range of leisure activities and pastimes, including eating ices, drinking punch, shooting, bathing, talking walks, visiting friends and (of course) making music.²⁰ Constanze, younger sister of Aloisia and wife of Mozart from 4 August 1782 onwards, was apparently a good partner for him. Letters from husband to wife during trips to Leipzig, Dresden, Potsdam and Berlin in 1789 and central and southern Germany in 1790, and while Constanze was taking the waters in Baden in 1791, testify to a caring, affectionate and loving bond.

The best-documented family relationship is between Mozart and Leopold.²¹ When Mozart travelled to Germany and France in 1777–79, accompanied by his mother, father and son initially wrote to each other every few days (with contributions from Maria Anna until her death); letters from Mozart decreased to one every two weeks or so in the final months of the trip. In Munich from November 1780 to January 1781 to prepare for the premiere of *Idomeneo*, Mozart wrote sixteen times to Leopold in an eleven-week period and father to son on twenty occasions.

¹⁸ MBA, vol. 2, pp. 420–21; LMF, pp. 581–83 (30 July 1778).

¹⁹ For representative criticism of Vogler from Mozart, see MBA, vol. 2, pp. 101–02, 119–20, 135, 197, 227–28, and vol. 3, p. 187; LMF, pp. 356, 369–70, 378, 428, 448–49, 789 (4 November, 13 November, 20 November, 18 December 1777, 17 January 1778, 22 December 1781).

²⁰ See MBA, vol. 3, pp. 282–91, and (given in tabular form), in Ruth Halliwell, *The Mozart Family: Four Lives in a Social Context* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), pp. 408–23.

²¹ For differing critical perspectives on the relationship between Mozart and Leopold, see, for example, Halliwell, *The Mozart Family*; Maynard Solomon, *Mozart: A Life* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995); David P. Schroeder, *Mozart in Revolt: Strategies of Resistance, Mischief and Deception* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999).

Once in Vienna, Mozart corresponded regularly between spring 1781 and mid 1784, but less frequently in the ensuing three years up to Leopold's death on 28 May 1787. (While letters from Leopold to Mozart in the Viennese years have not survived, some of their content can be surmised from Mozart's.)

Here and there, disputes between father and son are a feature of the correspondence. During the 1777–79 trip, Leopold worried about distraction from practical responsibilities by Mozart's 'head full of notes',²² and doubted his judgment on (for example) musical opportunities, friends, and travel plans and timeframes. On one occasion, reading a Mozart letter from Mannheim (4 February 1778) with 'astonishment and horror' and unable to sleep from anxiety and frustration, Leopold responded apoplectically to his son's ambitious idea of accompanying Aloisia to Italy to help further her operatic career: 'Your proposal – I can hardly write when I think of it – the proposal to travel around with Herr [Weber] and, NB, his two daughters almost tested my sanity. My dearest son! How can you have let yourself be taken even for an hour by such abominable thoughts. Your letter is not unlike a novel. And could you really decide to move around the world with strangers?'²³ Shattered by his wife's death in Paris a few months later and by having to process it six hundred miles away in Salzburg, Leopold accused Mozart of paying insufficient attention to her wellbeing, also expressing frustration at the belated communication of full details of her demise. Leopold opposed Mozart's move to Vienna in 1781 and marriage to Constanze in 1782; judging by Mozart's responses to his father's letters, Leopold was fiercely critical of both.

But Mozart and Leopold's relationship was also a productive and positive one. While Leopold continued to teach and carry out court duties after coming to terms with the son he described as a 'miracle that God let be born in Salzburg', he also devoted considerable amounts of time and energy to planning and partaking in the lengthy European trips that were designed to promote Mozart's skills far afield. And the child Mozart responded affectionately, such as last thing at night by singing lullabies, kissing him repeatedly and promising protection in old age by putting him in a glass case.²⁴ In later years, father and son were at their best discussing specific musical and dramatic matters, including many about *Idomeneo* (1780–81): Leopold acted as intermediary between Mozart in Munich and

²² MBA, vol. 2, p. 194; LMF, p. 425 (18 December 1777).

²³ MBA, vol. 2, pp. 272, 276; LMF, pp. 474, 477 (11–12 February 1778).

²⁴ As remembered by Leopold in MBA, vol. 2, p. 273; LMF, p. 475 (11–12 February 1778).

Personal Relationships

9

librettist Giambattista Varesco in Salzburg, advancing his own arguments about the plot, text and music of the opera as well. And, irrespective of cracks and fissures in their relationship, personal contact and correspondence continued until Leopold's death: Leopold was delighted to witness first hand Mozart's popularity in Vienna in spring 1785; and Mozart wrote sensitively and sympathetically of death as the 'true goal of our life' and the 'truest, best friend of mankind' on learning of a serious illness for his father about eight weeks before he died.²⁵

By his own admission, Mozart was happiest expressing himself to Leopold in music: 'I cannot write in verse; I am no poet. I cannot arrange idioms so artistically that they provide light and shade; I am no painter. I cannot even express my views and thoughts through signs and through mime; I am no dancer. But I can do it through sounds; I am a musician. So tomorrow at Cannabich's I will play a whole congratulations for your name-day and your birthday'.²⁶ As so often in relationships, and interactions with the world in general, Mozart the man and musician merge seamlessly.

²⁵ MBA, vol. 4, p. 41; LMF, p. 907 (4 April 1787).

²⁶ MBA, vol. 2, pp. 110–11; LMF, p. 363 (8 November 1777).