

MOZART IN CONTEXT

The vibrant intellectual, social and political climate of mid eighteenth-century Europe presented opportunities and challenges for artists and musicians alike. This book focusses on Mozart the man and musician as he responds to different aspects of that world. It reveals his views on music, aesthetics and other matters; on places in Austria and across Europe that shaped his life; on career contexts and environments, including patronage, activities as an impresario, publishing, theatrical culture and financial matters; on engagement with performers and performance, focussing on Mozart's experiences as a practising musician; and on reception and legacy from his own time through to the present day. Probing diverse Mozartian contexts in a variety of ways, the contributors reflect the vitality of existing scholarship and point towards areas primed for further study. This volume is essential reading for students and scholars of late eighteenth-century music and for Mozart aficionados and music-lovers in general.

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MOZART IN CONTEXT

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CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-18105-2 — Mozart in Context
Edited by Simon Keefe
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India
79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.
It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of
education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107181052
DOI: 10.1017/9781316848487

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First published 2019

Printed in the United Kingdom by TJ International Ltd. Padstow Cornwall

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

NAMES: Keefe, Simon P., 1968–

TITLE: Mozart in Context / edited by Simon P. Keefe.

DESCRIPTION: Cambridge, United Kingdom ; New York, NY : Cambridge University Press,
[2018] | Includes bibliographical references and index.

IDENTIFIERS: LCCN 2018042045 | ISBN 9781107181052 (alk. paper)

SUBJECTS: LCSH: Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus, 1756–1791. | Composers – Austria – Biography.

CLASSIFICATION: LCC ML410.M9 M7125 2018 | DDC 780.92–dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2018042045>

ISBN 978-1-107-18105-2 Hardback

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Preface

Mozart in Context provides musical, cultural and historical background for approaching and appreciating the output of one of Western music's most famous sons. Careful contextualization of Mozart's achievements through the refinement and broadening of scholarly content and methodology has been an important thrust of Mozart studies over the last half-century or so, in tandem with – and building on – philological and documentary discoveries. The time is right for a single volume from late eighteenth-century specialists capturing recent developments and simultaneously offering new perspectives on Mozart interpretation.

This volume is organized into five parts, each one representative of a different constellation of contextual themes. 'Personality, Work, Worldview' homes in on Mozart the man and musician, interacting with others, working and revealing views on music, aesthetics and other matters. 'Towns, Cities, Countries' looks at places in Austria and across Europe that shaped the life of a much-travelled musician, setting Mozart's activities in these specific locations into musical, cultural and historical relief. 'Career Contexts and Environments' puts the constituent parts of Mozart's livelihood into perspective, examining patronage, activities as an impresario, publishing, theatrical culture and financial matters. 'Performers and Performance' evaluates Mozart's engagement with individual musicians as well as his own experiences as a practising musician. And 'Reception and Legacy' surveys understandings of Mozart's music from his own time through to the present day, focussing on the cataloguing of works, his influence on nineteenth-century composers and the recording of his music in addition to more standard reception-related topics such as critical and biographical trends and impact on theoretical and analytical modes of inquiry. By probing diverse Mozartian contexts in a variety of ways, the contributors collectively hope to reflect the vitality of existing scholarship and to stimulate further study.

The nineteenth-century philosopher and Mozart devotee Søren Kierkegaard famously stated in *Either/Or* (1843) that ‘if ever Mozart became wholly comprehensible to me, he would then become fully incomprehensible to me’. There is no limit to our investigation of the contexts surrounding and informing Mozart’s oeuvre and consequently no restriction on how we try to process and understand his own world and, indeed, the worlds we have created for him and in reaction to him. If the results of studying Mozart in multifarious contexts sometimes make him seem more distant from us than closer to us, we need be neither disappointed nor frustrated. Our large and small philological, documentary, critical and hermeneutic findings, however we interpret and process them relative to past work and aspirations for future understandings, invariably enhance – rather than give cause to challenge – Mozart’s extraordinary status in western culture.

I am grateful to the Stiftung Mozarteum/Mozart-Museen und Archiv in Salzburg and Sotheby’s in London for permission to reproduce the images in Chapter 8.

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Abbreviations

- LMF Emily Anderson (trans. and ed.), *The Letters of Mozart and his Family*. 3rd edn. London: Macmillan, 1985.
- MBA Wilhelm A. Bauer, Otto Erich Deutsch and Joseph Heinz Eibl (eds.), *Mozart: Briefe und Aufzeichnungen, Gesamtausgabe*. 8 vols. Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1962–2005.
- MDB Otto Erich Deutsch, *Mozart: A Documentary Biography*. Translated by Eric Blom, Peter Branscombe and Jeremy Noble. 3rd edn. London: Simon & Schuster, 1990.
- MDL Otto Erich Deutsch, *Mozart: Die Dokumente seines Leben*. Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1961.
- NMA Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *Neue Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke*. Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1955–2007.
- NMD Cliff Eisen (ed.), *New Mozart Documents: A Supplement to O. E. Deutsch's Documentary Biography*. London and Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991.