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Edward Holmes

Frontmatter

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This 1845 biography of Mozart by the music journalist Edward Holmes was the first to be published in English. Holmes, who numbered the poet Keats and the publisher Vincent Novello amongst his friends, wrote extensively for periodicals including the Musical Times and The Atlas. A lifelong admirer of Mozart's work, Holmes's keen understanding of its significance is evident throughout the biography. It is based on a thorough study of the then available printed and manuscript sources, in particular many of Mozart's letters which Holmes translated and included as he 'endeavoured throughout to let the composer tell his own story'. He was also able to consult Mozart's own catalogue of his works, that compiled by the publisher Johann André and the Mozart autograph manuscripts bought by André from Mozart's widow Constanze. The work is written in a very approachable style and will appeal to anyone with an interest in Mozart.

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# The Life of Mozart

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THE

LIFE OF MOZART,

INCLUDING HIS CORRESPONDENCE.

BY EDWARD HOLMES,

AUTHOR OF "A RAMBLE AMONG THE MUSICIANS OF GERMANY."

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## P R E F A C E.

THE only biographical notice of Mozart in English is a translation from the French of Bombet (M. Beyle), itself a translation from the German of Schlicteggroll—a sketch too short and scanty to satisfy the interest of the subject, although quite enough to pique public curiosity. With the exception of occasional fragments in magazines and reviews, little more is known in England of the life of the musician, its struggles, varied incidents, and influence upon art; or of the brilliant reputations that clustered round him. The object of the following pages is to supply this deficiency.

To Nissen, who married the widow of Mozart, we are indebted for an elaborate collection (in the original German) of the musician's correspondence, in which his character and genius are revealed with the most charming candour and simplicity. But this work is valuable chiefly for its materials; the compiler undertook it in his old age, when he had lost his memory, and was incapable of reducing his papers to a systematic arrangement. He

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## PREFACE.

died over the book and left it in confusion. All the essential details of that publication are carefully preserved in their natural order in this volume; and the author's highest ambition will be gratified, if it be found that nothing of value or interest has been suffered to escape.

Every available source of information has been diligently explored to render this memoir complete; and the author has endeavoured throughout, as much as possible, to let Mozart tell his own story. By the collation of André's catalogue with Mozart's own catalogue, and other scattered memoranda, a full account of Mozart's compositions is here, for the first time, given to the public; the original MSS. have been personally inspected; various fresh channels of inquiry have been opened up; all published authorities, including incidental references in fugitive periodicals, have been consulted; and the narrative of his life, gathered from every quarter, is thus conducted uninterruptedly to the close.