

end of his life, he argued that Wagner's music was best heard not in the opera hall, but on the concert stage, without the "complicating and distracting stage actions" which Wagner had insisted was integral to his extravaganzas.

Furtwängler proceeded in the same manner with other incurably Romantic composers. For example, Lyndon LaRouche, in a 1988 interview with the Italian cultural review *Machiaavellico*, recalls how, while waiting to be shipped from India back to the United States following the war, he dug up a Furtwängler recording of a Tchaikovsky symphony—most likely the October-November 1938 EMI recording of the Symphony No. 6 ("Pathétique") in B minor, Op. 74, as we discover from Ardoin's discography. LaRouche recalls how "for the first time, I heard Tchaikovsky performed as if it were music! It was my first encounter with Furtwängler; it was electrifying." LaRouche dates his quest for identifying the intelligibility of creative discovery "between the notes," from that moment.

Let us therefore not be too quick to judge, smugly, that Furtwängler was wasting his time attempting to breathe Classical life into inferior Romantic works. For, if he succeeded in inspiring young LaRouche to his momentous 1951-52 breakthrough in physical economy, Furtwängler's efforts were certainly not in vain.

As to Furtwängler's controversial decision to continue to perform in Germany throughout World War II, there can be no doubt that it was morally motivated, and Ardoin's biographical material, albeit in a chatty, back-of-the-record-jacket way, stoutly defends Furtwängler against the British-dominated musical cabal which spared no effort to sabotage and blackball the German patriot both during and after the war.

Due credit is also given to violinist Yehudi Menuhin, for his unceasing efforts to defend Furtwängler against this cabal; and also to New York Metropolitan Opera director Rudolf Bing, who attempted unsuccessfully to bring Furtwängler to the United States in 1954.

Ardoin also documents how the Nazis promoted Herbert von Karajan, a Nazi Party member, with the specific intent of using Karajan as a means of keeping Furtwängler off-balance and preoccupied by professional rivalries. Most revealing is a quote from the diaries of Nazi propaganda chief Josef Goebbels: "Furtwängler is complaining about Karajan, who is getting too much fawning coverage in the press. I put a stop to this. Furtwängler is behaving very decently."

Other Nazis were more candid in their estimation of the great conductor. "There is no Jew, filthy as he may be, for whom Furtwängler does not stretch out a helping hand," complained Heinrich Himmler, who frequently petitioned Hitler to send Furtwängler to a concentration camp.

In the final analysis, Furtwängler has triumphed against both his Nazi and his British foes. Even if you do not read this book, do take the opportunity to hear and study Furtwängler's recordings.

—John W. Sigerson

From J.S. Bach to Mozart

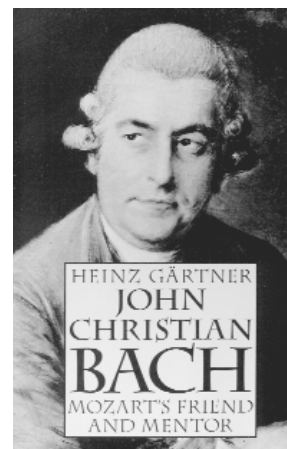
The powerful fusion of the contrapuntal and geometric inventions of J.S. Bach, with the beautiful singing of the Italian *bel canto* tradition, resulted most notably in Mozart's 1782-86 revolution in music and European culture. Johann Christian Bach's unique role—learning from his extraordinary father and brothers; moving to Italy to study with Padre Martini; and instructing the mind of the eight-year-old Mozart—is the underlying theme of Heinz Gärtner's amiable and helpful book. However, Gärtner never succeeds in making this fundamental theme sing.

Gärtner is well read in the literature circumscribing Mozart's life, and addresses the biographical gap for the generation between J. Sebastian Bach and Mozart. Previously, the only work in German or English on J. Christian Bach was Charles Sanford Terry's 1923 *John Christian Bach*, which was skimpy

on both Christian's education in Germany, and his subsequent teaching of the young Mozart in 1764-5.

Christian's 260th birthday is September 5, 1995. He was born in Leipzig, where his father was the cantor of the famous Thomas Schule, the eighteenth of twenty children. Only seven of them were alive when Christian was born. Interestingly, Gärtner suggests that his survival was in part due to the fact that the Thomas Schule, a school for poor students, provided beds for all, and separated Bach's classrooms from his dining room—hence reducing the amount of infection and disease where Christian grew up.

Gärtner allows his story to proceed, steering between the "Scylla" of the "dry, contrapuntal, learned, complicated" German school, and the "Charybdis" of the "flowing, singing, simple" Italian school. But all along the way, his



**John Christian Bach:
Mozart's Friend and Mentor**
by Heinz Gärtner
translated by Reinhard Pauly
Amadeus Press, Portland, 1994
400 pages, hardbound, \$29.95

interesting exceptions prove the contrary rule: that this is a false division. For example: (1) Bach, who was attacked for un-singable fugues and "excessive arti-

fice,” taught at the famous singing school in Leipzig. (2) Pisendel’s orchestra in Dresden, where Bach supporters gathered around Friedemann Bach, heard “a felicitous combination of Italian musical élan and German thoroughness. . . . Italians raved that whoever wanted to hear Italian music performed to perfection, should go to Dresden.” (3) Christian’s brother and teacher, C.P.E. Bach, defined the cantabile method as “to think through singing.” (4) Christian wrote his next teacher, Padre Martini, that “I have begun to study geometrical proportions, in order to be able to follow more adequately the thoughts expressed” in Martini’s *Storia della Musica*. Examples such as these, of instances where learning and beauty cohere, abound in the text.

Regarding such matters, Gärtner’s story gets muddled, as he fails to sort out the actual accomplishments of the period from the factioneering that intruded. For example, he conflates the above examples with a favorable account of King Frederick the Great’s confidant and controller, Francesco Algarotti—curiously called in from Venice, made a noble in Berlin, and assigned to run all matters cultural as a sort of King’s secretary.

Algarotti’s essay, the *Saggio sopra l’opera in musica*, praises beautiful opera for its “pleasing illusion,” only to then criticize “those gentlemen who today take charge of our pleasures,” for not coordinating text, music, dances, sets, and theater building properly. His solution for Frederick, was to “restore order in the musical realm . . . with discipline and authority.” Hence, Frederick’s penchant for running operas (according to Charles Burney) “like a field marshal in battle.” Gärtner ignores both this Venetian profiling of Frederick, and this substitution of order for truthful beauty.

The book’s strength resides in its attempt to elucidate Christian Bach’s role in educating the eight-year-old Mozart in 1764 in London, where Bach was the music master for Queen Sophie-Charlotte. Gärtner revives the studies of Mozart’s education by Théodore de Wyzewa and Georges de Saint-Foix from pre-World War I France. The young Mozart studied with Christian

for almost a year, re-working several of Christian’s compositions, including sonatas and symphonies. Gärtner speaks of “the ‘singing allegro’ manner that Bach bequeathed to his young friend.”

Years later, Mozart would write, “As an exercise I set the aria ‘Non so d’onde viene,’ which [Christian] Bach had composed so beautifully [in his opera, ‘Alessandro nell’Indie,’ which Mozart had heard in London as a child]. I know it so well that I can’t get it out of my mind. Therefore I wanted to see whether, in spite of this, I could compose an aria [to the same text] that would not resemble Bach’s—and mine turned out completely different.” Mozart, the adult, loved his teacher’s aria, and he loved deliberately freeing himself to go further.

A few months later, in August, 1778, he met Bach for the second and last time. It was for ten days, at the estate of the Duke Louis d’Ayen Noailles, the Marshal of France, and the in-law of the Marquis de Lafayette. Lafayette’s faction was planning an invasion of Britain. An agent of the Duke of Orléans, Baron Grimm, forced Mozart out of town after this meeting.

Bach had journeyed from London, even though France had recently allied with the American colonists in their war against Britain. Suspiciously, after this

trip, Bach’s next three years saw a series of setbacks in England, and an early death, with almost no one at his funeral. From the Marshal’s estate, Mozart wrote his father about Bach, “As you well know, I love him with all my heart, and I have the highest regard for him.” Even though Gärtner highlights this quote at the head of his book, he is oblivious to the historical and political circumstances.

Gärtner narrows down the significance of this meeting to Mozart’s father being concerned that Mozart might go to England, rather than back to Salzburg. He does not identify Grimm’s employer as the Duke of Orléans, mentioning instead a German Count Friese—who had employed Grimm twenty-five years earlier. He even misdates a Mozart letter of October, 1782 to October, 1778, implying that Mozart was somehow pro-English during the American Revolution.

Such an oversight would certainly have been caught, were it not for Gärtner’s overall blindness to strategic and cultural realities. Nevertheless, for a long-overdue biography of a key figure in the transmission of culture from J.S. Bach to Mozart, and for some suggestions as to the richness of the fight involved, the reader will find here an amiable story.

—David M. Shavin

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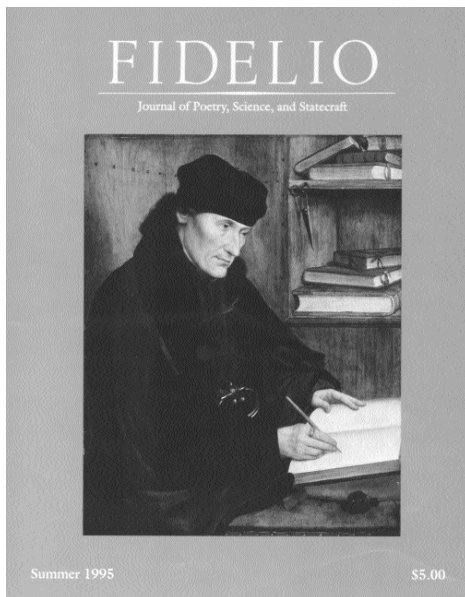


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