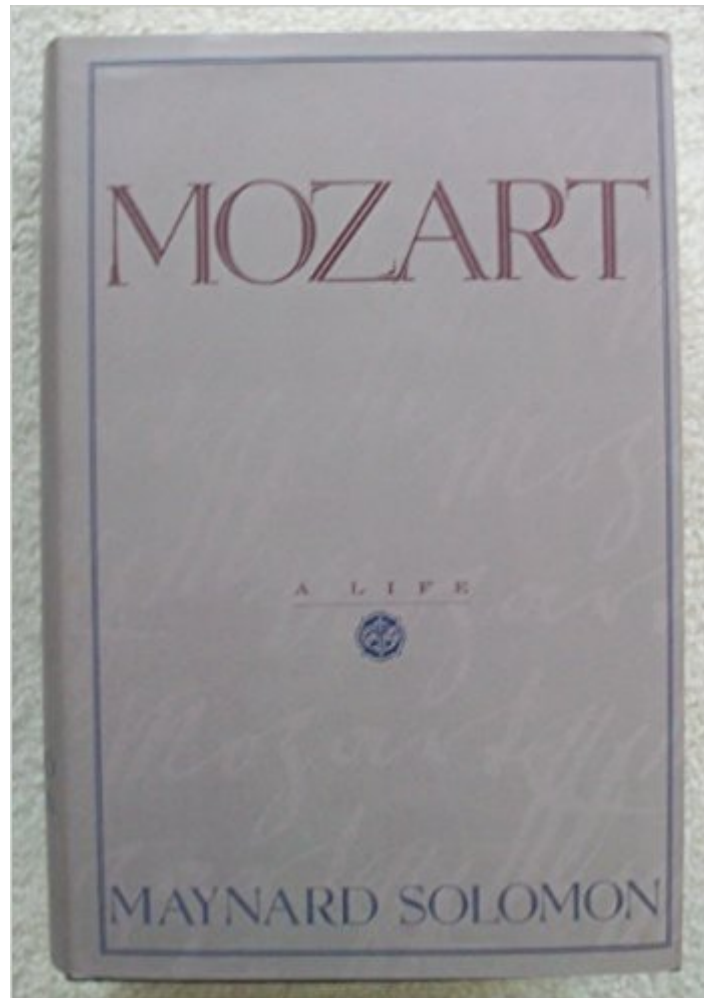


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Mozart: A Life



Synopsis

and revealing unknown aspects of his family relationships, a definitive biography utilizes bold interpretations and insights, as well as modern analysis to examine Mozart's personality in a new light.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Perhaps the most important Mozart biography ever written, this book is subtle, rich-textured, endlessly stimulating and provocative -- just like the man's music. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Beethoven biographer Solomon here presents a revisionist biography of Mozart, which his publisher claims is the first full-scale biography in nearly 40 years. Certainly it is a major work in terms of heft and range. Solomon will have none of the "divine child" approach, limning instead a man growing up under the shadow of an impossibly demanding father who was at once overprotective and jealous of his son's vast gifts. There is a great deal of psychological probing into the agonies of their relationship, much of it sensible; and Solomon paints an indelible portrait of Mozart's last years, begging for money, guilty about his deprived wife Constanze, resentful of being virtually cut out of his father's will, yet still heroically forging a new musical aesthetic. He also clears up much of the mystery about the bizarre Requiem commission, and the burial in the "pauper's grave." He is convinced that Mozart and his cousin "the Basle," recipient of many of the infamous smutty letters,

were lovers for a time; and the portrait of the composer that emerges is of an extraordinarily sensitive, liberal-minded (the Masonic material is superb), extravagant but responsible person who has been much belittled by biographers beginning almost immediately after his death. Solomon also writes acutely about what was daringly new, and wonderfully enduring, about Mozart's music. Only a certain lack of flow between the chapters suggests the origin of much of this material in lectures. Illustrations. BOMC selection. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Some people will love the way in which Solomon handles the subject, for me, at some stage in the book, almost everything seems to be related to Leopold. This could very well be the fact, but I got lost in the balance between the psychological background around the father-son relation and the actual information about the music.

A well written biography of master composer.

It's hard to fathom the sheer genius that was Mozart, a musician and composer capable of playing and writing music that will never be forgotten. This book goes a long way to helping to understand a complex and talented man who died at a young age but left such an astounding legacy. The difficult relationship with his father, his loving relationship with his mother and sister, his breakaway to Vienna, his marriage, all receive attention in this masterful volume. The Freudian jargon does detract at times from the story (and occasionally mystifies the reader with odd sentences and abstractions that seem meant for psychotherapists to argue about: was his use of an occasional nickname for himself of "Adam" in place of "Amadeus" really another way for him to see himself reborn with his mother as Eve??...well, I don't know or care, really). Solomon's extensive attention to Mozart's relationship with his father does have a nice way of bringing the story all together. Leopold comes across as nearly insane, a man who never comes to accept his son's obvious genius, pushing his son to consider lowly postings in Strasbourg in deference to his family, rather than go to Vienna to assume his place among the musical elite of Europe. Mozart's split with his father and sister comes through brilliantly. The reader can share his pain and ambivalence in moving to Vienna, knowing that his art and talent demanded it but suffering as a result. I have not read other Mozart biographies, but I am hard-pressed to imagine what I may be missing. This is a masterly and fascinating look at one of the millennium's most prodigious talents.

This is a very loooooong and somewhat dry chronology of Wolfgang Mozart's life, with much time and

narrative spent on his father and their interactions. As a 3rd person narrative, the individuals in Mozart's life are usually described in inanimate terms, as though they are merely cardboard cutouts. No one, other than Mozart's father, seems to have any kind of personality or human emotion...they just are. This gives the book its dry texture and makes it seem longer than it actually is. But if one is looking for Mozart life events including almost all of his compositions, and the order in which they happened, this is likely as good a source as you'll find.

Great details. A lot of information. I like the way the book rotates between personal history and musical history.

Solomon's seminal work on the life of Mozart is well-researched, thoroughly written, and entertaining. While not quite up to the standards of Solomon's, *Beethoven, Revised Edition* it is nonetheless a respectable resource. While shying away from some of the controversies of Mozart's life, Solomon nonetheless succeeds in considering the multifaceted life of Mozart and his music.

Suppose we went to a concert where a pianist was going to play a piano concerto, perhaps by Mozart. And suppose that before beginning the piece, the artist stood up and decided to tell us all about his horrible family life, how his mother died and his father emotionally abused him and all the sordid details about their financial difficulties and then pointed out how all this influences his playing and how the performance we are about to hear was shaped by all the biographical currents in his life. I don't know about you, but after a few minutes of this I would start looking for the nearest exit. But, I'm sorry to say, this is roughly the gist of the biography of Mozart by Maynard Solomon. Around Chapter 12 I just gave up. Solomon's book is very useful in some ways. For the first few chapters I was glad to learn about the context of Mozart's life. But at some point, the obsessive interest in the details of his relationships with his parents and love interests just got unpleasant. I wanted to say, "can't we talk a bit more about the music?" But when he started introducing pieces of music as if they were mere accompaniments to the emotional turmoil of his life, I started actively disliking the whole project.

Carefully researched with much new material. Great insights into Wolfgang's relationship with his Father and Sister. Solomon organizes the biography to keep readers interest. Mozart's life is even more astonishing!

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