

Damaging Winds



Rumours That Salieri
Murdered Mozart Swirl in
the Vienna of Beethoven
and Schubert

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Venticelli (The Little Winds): “purveyors of fact, rumour and gossip”
Peter Shaffer, *Amadeus*

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This Book is Dedicated with Heartfelt Thanks
and Much Respect to the Two People Who Taught
me about Classical Music and Opera

Hugh Laurence and Bruce Salvatore

in the hope that someday I may be forgiven for burdening luncheon
conversation after luncheon conversation with Salieri.

“Are we to be spared nothing?”

A Word on Supplementary Materials

AT THE END OF THIS volume I have included some materials to enhance your reading experience. They consist of:

1. An historical note that seeks to put Salieri into context. Here I explain how I came to write the novel and my approach in doing so. I also outline what is true and what fiction.
2. Brief biographies of the many historical figures mentioned in passing in the novel.
3. Some suggested readily accessible books that you might wish to read to better understand the history of the period and the places and historical characters in the novel.
4. Music that you might want to listen to while or after reading each chapter.

Prologue

Berlin, Autumn 1862

THE RECEPTION FOR THE MUSICAL community filled the large hall. Dancing couples swirled about the middle of the floor, while those who wished to see and be seen bustled about at the edges. Above the dance floor a crystal chandelier glittered, sending rays of candlelight about the room. But the magical twinkling of that light barely reached into a far corner where a stately woman sat alone, a solitary spectator to the event. The woman's gaze swept the room. She knew this community well. Here she noted a leading conductor. There a famous pianist. Further away a wonderful composer and friend. Not long before she would have been out on that dance floor, a happy, vibrant member of that talented assemblage. But now it seemed life was dancing on, while she was cast into that dimly lit corner.

Her husband's death had changed everything. She gazed down crest-fallen at her plain, black satin dress, catching glimpses of the vibrant fabrics that waltzed around the dance floor. She so envied these women, but knew she owed it to her late husband's memory to disavow fashionable attire. Their gowns were not all she envied. She could not help but look longingly at their male companions, and think of the man who had doted on her for so many years.

Just then she noticed a handsome middle aged man making his way through the crowd. To her surprise, his eyes caught hers and he approached her. She immediately looked down, not wanting to appear overtly interested. She did not know what to make of him. He was a total stranger. What could he want of me, she asked herself? He must know that I cannot accept an invitation to dance. On reaching her, the

DAMAGING WINDS

handsome gentleman gave a brief bow. In heavily accented German, he apologized for bothering her and said "I am hoping that you might be A. Rochlitz, the noted music critic."

The woman looked up and smiled. "I am, although I am not accustomed to being addressed as such. My married name is Anna Klempner." He looked puzzled and she added, "I use my initial and maiden name when writing so as not to attract attention to my gender or to my late husband, who was a composer."

"Your husband was Herr Klempner, the musician and composer?"

"He was."

"I had not realized. You must allow me to convey my sincere condolences. I was sorry to hear of his passing. I have long been familiar with his works."

She nodded in acknowledgement.

"But to be candid it is your work that I most admire. Not that I do not think highly of your husband's music. It is just that I have long been an avid reader of your musical criticism. Your reviews are so well informed — so well founded in theory." She smiled and he added, "Surely you yourself must be a musician and composer."

She paused, considering how to respond, "Not really. I did of course study music and naturally I learned much from my husband, Herr ..."

A look of shame and embarrassment came to his face and he quickly said, "Oh, dear! Please forgive me. In my enthusiasm I have failed to properly introduce myself. I am so sorry. You must think me totally lacking in social graces. I am Edmond Michotte, a businessman ...and an amateur musician."

She offered her gloved hand and he bent and kissed it. Smiling she said, "I am pleased to meet you Herr Michotte. It is always a pleasure to encounter one of my readers, especially one who so appreciates my work."

Removing her hand from Michotte's, she clapped as the dance ended and watched as the milling crowds found new partners. The next dance began, an exuberant polka, and still Michotte remained at her side, shuffling his feet awkwardly. She looked up encouragingly and said, "I have always loved this music."

Michotte nodded in agreement, "I am so pleased that you are enjoying it." She smiled at him and, emboldened, he continued, "I must confess that as wonderful as your company is, I do indeed have another motive — an honourable one I assure you. I am hoping that you might give me

Prologue

the benefit of your knowledge — on a musical matter. As it happens I am a friend of another noted composer, Signor Rossini. As such, I was privileged to be in attendance in Paris two years ago when Herr Richard Wagner met Rossini."

"My goodness," she exclaimed, "our German firebrand met the old Italian?"

"Yes, indeed he did. Many people are sceptical when I tell them of the meeting. They find it hard to accept. How could it be, they say, that Signor Rossini, the first of the great Italian Romantic opera composers, would welcome into his home Herr Wagner, a German composer who has been turning opera on its head? But I assure them, as I now assure you, that he did just that. I was there. I transcribed the conversation."

The older woman's face lit up. "Really, so you could tell me what the two of them said to each other? I would be most interested to know."

"Yes, yes I can. That is in fact what I wished to discuss with you. I would be very happy to do so. As it happens," he said digging in the inner pocket of his jacket, "I have some of the transcript with me. I had hoped to be able to show it to you and to seek your opinion on whether it might be publishable." He then withdrew several sheets of folder paper. Studying the pages for a few moments, he asked, "Might I be so bold as to sit beside you as we look through it?"

"By all means, I am most anxious to see what you have."

After settling himself in a chair that he drew close to hers, Michotte turned to her and explained. "The visit took place in March, 1860. Herr Wagner would have been in his mid-forties I would think."

"Forty seven to be precise. I know his age only too well," she said and smiled demurely. "Like me he was born and raised in Leipzig — only he was born some years after I was. A few years ago I would never have admitted this to a man, but when you get to a certain stage in life it seems to matter less. Please, do continue, forgive me, I have interrupted your story."

The Belgian picked up his narrative without hesitation as if he had told the tale many times before. "Herr Wagner was then living in Paris in exile, as you probably know. He is very sensitive about his music, as you may also know." The woman nodded. "And as it happens several critical articles had appeared in the local Parisian papers. These articles purported to set out Signor Rossini's reaction to Wagner's music. The remarks attributed to Signor Rossini were unflattering to Herr Wagner

DAMAGING WINDS

to say the least. Wagner was offended and wanted to determine if they really reflected Rossini's opinion of his work. That is where I come in. You see I am acquainted with some people who are in Wagner's circle. They knew of my relationship with Signor Rossini. I was asked to play the role of intermediary. I, of course, was only too happy to oblige. And, as I have already told you, was able to arrange a meeting at Signor Rossini's home." Turning his attention to the pages of paper he held in his hands he said, "What I have here is but one part of the conversation, but I hope it gives you an idea of its worth as a piece of musical history. It begins with a discussion of cabals."

The older woman smiled knowingly. "I am not surprised."

Michotte then began to read the transcribed conversation to her.

"Signor Rossini told Herr Wagner 'What composer has not experienced cabals, even the great Gluck himself...'"

Michotte paused. "It goes on for some time about how to deal with cabals. I do not want to impose on your patience. With your permission I shall omit some of this." He skipped to another page of the transcript and then resumed reading.

"Rossini said, 'It was no different in Vienna when I arrived there in 1822 to mount my opera Zelmira.'"

At the mention of 1822, a look of surprise lit the woman's face and she became even more attentive. "How fascinating", she said.

Michotte, pleased that he had caught her interest, resumed reading.

"Rossini told Wagner, 'Carl Maria von Weber was also in Vienna. He had been railing against me in articles for a long time and he pursued me relentlessly after the performance of my operas at the Italian court theatre.'

"Wagner replied, 'Weber, oh! I know he was very intolerant. He became intractable above all when it was a question of defending German art. That could be forgiven him; so that — and this is understandable — you did not have friendly relations with him during your stay in Vienna. A great genius, and so prematurely dead! ...'"

Prologue

“They then discussed Herr Weber but let me get to the part about Herr Beethoven. That is a very interesting part. It was Wagner who brought up Beethoven, saying:

‘But did I not understand you to say that you met Beethoven?’

“Rossini replied, “That is true. We met in Vienna at precisely the time we were just speaking of, in 1822, when my opera *Zelmira* was produced there. I had heard some of the Beethoven quartets in Milan, I need not tell you with what admiration! In Vienna I attended for the first time a performance of his *Eroica* symphony. The music overwhelmed me. I had only one thought: to get to know this genius, to meet him, even if only once. I brought the subject up with Salieri, who I knew to have a rapport with Beethoven.’

“Salieri? Did you say that Herr Rossini discussed Kapellmeister Salieri with Herr Wagner?”

“Indeed I did and he did.”

“When Signor Rossini mentioned Salieri, Herr Wagner asked “Salieri, the composer of *Les Danaïdes*? ”

“Herr Wagner is familiar with *Les Danaïdes*? ”

“So it would seem,” the Belgian replied. “I take it that this surprises you?”

“Very much so. But please, please tell me more. This is becoming more and more fascinating — truly fascinating. Yes, please do go on.”

“When Wagner asked his question about Salieri, Rossini in turn replied,

“The very same. Salieri had settled in Vienna, where he lived a long time, much in the public eye owing to the fact that his operas, representative of Italian opera, were in vogue. He told me that he often saw Beethoven but that because of Beethoven’s dark, fantastical character, it would be no easy matter to know the man.

By the way, this same Salieri also had frequent contact with Mozart, after whose death it was suggested — and taken seriously — that he, out of jealousy, had poisoned Mozart.’

“That allegation was circulating in Vienna in my time as well,’ replied Wagner.”

DAMAGING WINDS

Michotte, noting tears welling up in the older woman's eyes, stopped reading. He looked at her with concern. "I fear that their discussion of Mozart's murder is upsetting you. That was certainly not my intention."

"Upsetting, yes, very." She dabbed her eyes with a handkerchief. Then composing herself, she said, "Do not worry yourself. It is not your fault. You see you are reminding me of friends past... and that summer so long ago."

"You were in Vienna in the summer of 1822? I had no idea."

"Yes. I am not surprised that you were unaware of it. How would you have known? But yes, I too was in Vienna that summer. You have brought it all back to me — Rossini, Weber, Beethoven and most definitely Salieri..."

"Salieri?"

CHAPTER ONE

Vienna 1822

“FIGARO, FIGARO, FIGARO, FIGARO, FIGARO” sang the coachman while tugging expertly on the reins to guide his coach into the roadway that ran past the Imperial Palace. As the coach clattered along the busy, cobble-stone streets on this cool, clear spring night in Vienna, the driver belted out the Rossini aria with enthusiastic vigour. Many people in the streets looked up as the coach approached, smiling and clapping at the musical interlude. Several joined in and sang along. Encouraged by his audience, the driver sang even more loudly. He took great pride in his fine bass voice and was completely oblivious to the irritation that his aria was causing his young female passenger.

“Rossini — that is all that you hear! Everywhere!” complained Anna Rochlitz, an attractive, petite blonde of 19 years. Seated opposite her was her uncle, Friedrich Rochlitz, a handsome man with a full head of hair, just starting to grey at the temples, and with eyes that even in the dull light of the coach seemed to sparkle with energy and intelligence. To the people of Vienna, he was a noted music critic visiting their fair city from Leipzig — the former editor of the *allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*. To Anna, he was far more, a father figure, musical mentor and until her recent coming of age, her guardian; a role that he had assumed following the death of her parents some years before.

Rochlitz turned to his niece and smiled indulgently. “So Anna I take it that it does not please you to hear the Viennese air filled with the flamboyant notes of Rossini’s opera?” When Anna nodded in agreement, he asked, “But what, my dearest niece, would you expect? We are in the midst of a Rossini Opera Festival. The famed Italian is himself in Vienna.”

“And his new wife, the prima donna Isabella Colbran,” Anna added.

DAMAGING WINDS

“Well yes, but let us not talk of her,” replied her uncle in obvious embarrassment. At that moment the driver’s deep voice rose in a final crescendo and, smiling as his niece’s expression soured, Herr Rochlitz continued, “It is only to be expected that the city would swell with the arrival of our visiting composer. He attracts attention and adulation everywhere he goes.”

Anna, noting her uncle’s use of the words “our visiting composer,” was quick to retort, “He is certainly not *my* visiting composer!”

Her uncle laughed and continued, “Like it or not young lady, Vienna is in love with Signor Rossini.” But Anna only scowled, leading her uncle to smile broadly and to lean towards her, patting her hand indulgently. “What is it exactly about his music that upsets you?”

Anna looked at her uncle as if nothing could be more obvious. “I did not come to Vienna to hear *Italian* music — not in the city that has fostered serious *German* music.”

“Need I remind you, Anna, that Vienna has heard its share of Italian opera?”

“Perhaps, but to me Vienna is, and shall always be, the city where Mozart lived for ten years at the height of his musical powers. Where Haydn spent his last years. Where Beethoven came to study and perform.”

“And to shock,” added her uncle.

“Yes, to shock — to shake music to its core as you yourself have said,” replied Anna. Her uncle nodded in agreement and she continued “Uncle, this is Vienna not Venice. I find it hard to accept that a German city would make all of this fuss over an Italian.”

Her uncle shook his head in disapproval. “Anna, Anna, Anna — how would you have the good citizens of Vienna treat their famous guest?” When Anna showed no sympathy for the point being made, her uncle chided her. “You really ought to be more tolerant. When I taught you the importance of German music, I did not intend that you stop appreciating the music of Italy... or France for that matter. Besides Anna — Signor Rossini is not just any Italian. Today, in the operatic kingdom, he reigns as king.”

“Pfff — empty virtuosity is the way I have heard his music described. Flamboyant, lively but without substance — joyful silliness.”

Her uncle laughed, “I thought that I was the music critic in the family.”

Anna looked hurt and disappointed. “Uncle, I am simply expressing an opinion. Have you not encouraged me to have my own opinions of music?”

“Ah,” her uncle replied as he raised his right hand with the thumb and forefinger together as if to physically grasp her point. Then moving his clasped fingers towards her to emphasize his words, he replied, “yes, your *own* opinions. Did you not just say that you had *heard* his music described in this way?”

Anna blushed and stammered, “Well, yes ...but I agree with what I have heard.”

“Do you now? Based, I assume, upon your many hearings of Rossini’s operas?”

“Well... not many hearings ...but some,” came back Anna.

Smiling at having put his niece on the defensive, he turned to her and asked, “If not Signor Rossini, who, dear Anna, would you put on the operatic throne? Might it be another visiting composer?”

Anna’s confidence came rushing back, “Can there be any doubt? To me, Herr von Weber is the epitome of the new opera composer,” she stated emphatically. “He should be the centre of attention Yes, Weber, a German, not Rossini, an Italian, deserves the accolades now being bestowed!”

Her uncle assumed a look of mock surprise followed shortly by puzzlement and after a moment asked, “You mean the Carl Maria von Weber whose new romantic opera, *The Marksman*, we happen to be on our way to see?”

Playing along, Anna laughed and replied, “The very same!”

Her uncle kept up his pretended puzzlement. “Would that be the same Carl Maria von Weber whose student, Otto, just happens to be engaged to marry you?”

“Indeed so, the very same!”

“Oh, that Herr von Weber,” her uncle said as if the scales had finally fallen from his eyes. “I thought that perhaps I had misheard you and that you had said Herr von Beethoven.”

Anna shook her head. “As much as I adore Beethoven’s music, no — not the king of opera. Of the symphony, perhaps.”

Her uncle smiled with pride at her perceptive comment but he was not yet finished with his little game. “And you are sure that you did not mean to say Herr Mozart? Do you not love his operas?”

DAMAGING WINDS

Anna smiled. "If I had been alive in the 1780s when he was writing his operas I would without doubt have said Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. But uncle this is May 1822 not May 1782!"

Her uncle feigned upset. "You say 1782 as if it were centuries in the past. I will remind you young lady that I was alive in that year — a mere boy of thirteen, of course." Her uncle paused and then with a twinkle in his eye he asked, "But what of your young composer, Herr Schubert?"

"Oh, Franz Schubert! You know how much I adore his German songs — wonderful, absolutely wonderful!"

"I know that only too well. It seems all that you play and sing."

"But they touch my heart." When her uncle chuckled, Anna glared at him. "Make fun of me if you like, but I can tell you that they speak to my generation in a way that other music does not. Such music!"

"But not king of the opera?"

"Oh, uncle you are teasing me. Has Franz Schubert even written operas?"

Her uncle smiled broadly, clearly pleased that he knew something of her favourite composer that she did not. "I will have you know, young lady, that he most certainly has — several. His *Twin Brothers* was staged here a few years ago, and his *Alfonso and Estrella* just recently completed its run. Neither very successful, unfortunately."

"How sad. He is so deserving of every success." Gazing out the window at the city moving past her, she sighed contentedly and said, "I can hardly believe that we are here in Vienna, *the* city of classical music. Just think, I might actually meet Beethoven and Schubert... in person."

"It is not only the music that makes Vienna so alluring," her uncle replied, "It was once the centre of the Habsburg Empire — a dynamic city, rich in history."

"I can hardly wait to see all of it" Anna replied. "Did you not tell me that only London and Paris are more important than Vienna?"

"I did," he acknowledged. "At the time of your birth, Vienna was *the* most important city in Europe. It had been, for centuries, the centre of the Holy Roman Empire — an empire that encompassed our own Saxony and many other German cities and states. You, of course, have no memory of that time."

"No, I don't," she admitted. "When I was growing up it was that awful man Napoleon who was referred to as the Emperor of Rome and never in a warm or kindly manner."

Her uncle glanced out the window as they passed the Augustiner Church. "I was here not ten years ago for the Congress," he said. Turning towards Anna, he continued, "What sweet irony that, less than a decade ago, so many leaders gathered here in Vienna to reshape a Europe destroyed by that tiny man's ambitions. The seat of the very empire Napoleon had sought to usurp. Here, in this very city, they gathered. The Hapsburgs had weathered the Napoleonic storm, as they have so many others in the past. Now, happily, Austria has persevered, and emerged as the leader of the new German Confederation."

The coach turned a corner and approached the Carinthian Gate theatre where Weber's *Marksman* was being performed. Anna leaned over to peer out the coach window. A throng of people made its way to the theatre's two large doors, while others waited expectantly in their carriages to be dropped off. Anna sat up impatiently, gazing constantly out the window as the carriage began slowly to approach the doors of the theatre.

"You'll be happy to know, my dear, that this theatre was once known as the German theatre. It was here that early German singspiels were performed."

"Oh, how interesting. Is this then where Mozart's *Abduction from the Seraglio* was first performed?"

"One would have thought so, but no. Mozart's work premiered at the Burg Theatre attached to the Imperial Palace. The little theatre that we passed a few moments ago. At that time the Italian Opera Company had been disbanded and the German singspiels had moved there. But enough history, we are here for a new opera."

"Ah, but one based on our Germanic traditions or at least on a folktale," Anna corrected. "Uncle," Anna continued slowly, "A few moments ago when I mentioned Herr Rossini's new wife, you seemed unwilling to discuss her. Might I ask why?"

"You may ask, but I am not sure that I wish to explain."

"You are always telling me that I am an adult now and have responsibilities. Surely with responsibility comes some privileges."

"Very well, if you insist, I shall explain briefly. My reluctance to discuss her arises from the fact that her marriage to Rossini may be new but their union is not. The marriage is long overdue — very long overdue. They have lived in sin for far, far too long. Their openly acknowledged liaison has been the scandal of Italy for years." He paused, arranging his gloves on his lap. Then twisting the gloves in his hand, he continued,

DAMAGING WINDS

“Anna, I know that you have grown to adulthood but I am still reluctant to discuss such matters with you.”

Knowing how difficult this topic was for her uncle, Anna did not push him further. Her uncle took both of her hands in his and added, “I am so pleased, Anna, that you have grown up to be the fine, principled woman that you are and that Otto is not one of the new generation of musicians who thinks that society’s rules do not apply to them.”

Anna blushed, thanking God that their coach’s interior was dark — that the light from the torches outside the theatre did not reach inside. She quickly changed the subject. “Uncle, tonight I feel so special. Not only am I accompanying one of Europe’s greatest music critics to Herr Weber’s new opera, but I am the betrothed of the young man who will conduct that opera.”

“Otto is to conduct?”

“Did I not tell you? Is it not wonderful? Otto dropped me a note late this afternoon explaining that Herr Weber had assigned the task to him.”

At this moment, the coach pulled up under the large semicircular awning that protected the arriving patrons of the theatre. Anna’s uncle, assisted by the coachman, climbed down and then turned to help Anna. She took her uncle’s hand and descended from the coach. Once down, she promptly straightened her dress, and doing her best to look composed and dignified, took her uncle’s arm. As she and her uncle entered the theatre, she thought how fortunate they were that Otto had arranged for them to view the opera from a private box. Her uncle presented their tickets to an usher who showed them the way to the stairs that led to the upper level boxes. As they entered the stairwell, Anna smiled to other patrons and tried to suppress her nervous energy. But as she accompanied her uncle up the stairs to the fourth level, her enthusiasm for the box began to wane. Holding her flowing gown up slightly to permit her to ascend the stairs proved more of a challenge than she had anticipated. Every flight of stairs seemed to be followed by another and another and another. Finally they reached the fourth level. As they walked down the aisle towards the boxes, she noted that her uncle, although a slim man without the excess pounds that many others in the theatre seemed to be carrying about, also seemed tired by their climb and happy to be nearing their destination.

Finally they found themselves outside their designated box. When they pushed aside the curtain that hung at the door and entered, whatever tiredness Anna had felt instantly evaporated. The view from the box was

striking. Not that the theatre was huge, or overly ornate. It was, nevertheless, impressive. The body of the theatre was illuminated by a series of chandeliers in which numerous candles burned brightly. The space was lofty, having five rings of boxes. Anna counted twenty-two boxes in each row not including the Imperial box which seemed to occupy much of the end of the theatre that looked directly on the stage. Their own box was high to the left of the stage, several boxes in from that stage. She thought it perfect. She could easily see most of the stage but, more important to her, she could look down and clearly see the pianoforte at the front of the orchestra pit, the pianoforte from which her fiancé Otto would soon be conducting the orchestra.

Anna was so deeply in love with Otto. She could not remember when she had not loved him. They had been lifelong companions whose child-like friendship had slowly and imperceptibly matured into romantic love. Otto was two years older but that age difference had never been of much importance. As they had grown up together in Leipzig they had been students of the same music teacher and shared a passionate love of music. But Otto had always been the better musician. He had excelled at every musical instrument that he picked up. For hours he would perform music for Anna, talking to her of music and helping her with her technique. Sometimes they would play duets, with Anna at the pianoforte and Otto on the violin. More often Otto would play and Anna would sing. But early on Anna had come to realize that it was not just Otto's skills that set them apart. Otto's interest in music was different than her own. He was never satisfied with being a performer. He had, from a very young age, wanted to compose and had always dreamed of performing his own works. Anna loved music but influenced by her uncle, she had come to see her future in writing about music or in providing the text for Otto's songs.

Then two years ago, everything had changed. Their happy little world of music lessons and duets had been shattered. Not by bad news, but rather by good. Otto's talent had secured him a position as a student of Weber. Initially they had both been ecstatic at the news, but it had not taken Anna long to realize that this good news, this favourable change in Otto's fortunes, had altered their lives considerably and would bring her much sadness. Otto's studies meant separation from her. He would be required to leave her behind in Leipzig to spend time studying composition in Dresden where Weber was employed. Their daily music sessions, followed as they had been towards the end of their time together by intimate ses-

DAMAGING WINDS

sions of love and affection, would be coming to an end. At these thoughts, her uncle's words about Rossini and his lover flashed through her mind. Was her physical love with Otto a sin? How could something so natural and so wondrous be wrong? She refused to think of it as such. What she did know, without doubt, was that when she had learned of Otto's studies with Weber, she had wondered if she could cope with daily life without him in it. His words of advice and encouragement had meant so much to her and the joy of lying in his arms had been beyond measure. Yet, she had known that she could not burden him with her sadness. Their future happiness had dictated that she make a sacrifice. As much as her heart had ached, she had known that this sacrifice would pay handsome dividends in their future. But, having given herself to him, she knew that she must ensure that they would indeed have a future together. He would be away. He would meet other girls — some more attractive than her and perhaps better musicians. She had resolved that he must not go to Dresden until their future marriage had been arranged. Getting Otto to promise that once he had secured employment as a composer he would marry her had not taken much coaxing. He too knew how much he would miss their time together. Her uncle had proved more of a challenge. They had approached him as her guardian for his blessing. Initially he had said no. It was not that he had any misgivings about Otto, he had assured them. He thought highly of Otto as both a person and a musician. He simply thought them too young to make such a commitment and he had confessed he was concerned that Otto was set upon a career in music. How can you, a music critic, object to a career in music, they had countered. He had responded that he knew first hand the difficulties that musicians and especially composers face. Finally after much cajoling and on the assurance that marriage was still long in the future, he had relented. And so Anna and Otto had become formally engaged.

Despite her joy at their betrothal, and her faith in the value that her sacrifice would bring, Anna had found the last two years incredibly hard. There had been letters and brief visits, of course, and a few — a very few — moments of true intimacy, but she longed for a time when they could again spend every day together. Then she had learned that both she and Otto would be spending the summer in Vienna; she as assistant to her uncle who was visiting to take in the Rossini festival, and he as assistant to Weber, who was staging his opera there. Finally here in Vienna they would have that chance to be together for which she had longed. They

could once more laugh and perform, plan for the wedding and perhaps even enjoy a few intimate moments away from her uncle's paternalistic gaze. She could not believe how much she looked forward to the months that they would spend together. Together again! Finally!

Anna's quiet reflection was shattered by the polite applause that marked Otto's entrance into the orchestra pit. The opera was about to begin. Otto had written to her of *The Marksman*. Knowing that Anna shared his love of German music, Otto had stressed to her that Weber's opera was German to its core, based as it was on a folktale and building as it did on the innovations of Beethoven. He had explained that *The Marksman* was a morality play — the story of hunters competing for the hand of a maiden in a shooting contest. In the quest for this ultimate prize one young hunter, deeply in love with the maiden, was approached by the dark side of the supernatural. What would he be willing to sacrifice to win his beloved's hand? The audience was led to wonder if good would triumph over evil. This was what an opera ought to be about, she thought to herself.

Anna noted that the crowd had quieted and she saw Otto signal the orchestra to begin to play the overture. Several sustained bass notes throbbed through the theatre, sending a shiver up Anna's spine. The music continued slowly, almost hauntingly, and then the horns entered softly, hinting at the hunting theme. After several moments of the horns carrying the melody, a series of isolated beats of the kettle drum led the strings, gradually increasing in intensity, subsiding and then increasing again. Anna was enthralled. Then the hunting horns brought a shift into a quieter, romantic section with oboe, other woodwinds and strings. Anna was full of emotion, and glanced at her uncle with a look of sheer ecstasy. Tears of joy and wonder flowed down her cheeks. The music was full of thrilling energy, offset by wonderful romantic moments and by the occasional sinister element. Every musical effect was followed by another even more thrilling and impressive. The drums thundered. The horns blared. The strings played frantically. Anna could hardly believe that this incredible music was being conducted by her very own Otto.

The curtain rose. The boom of the drums and horns was replaced by the strings playing kinetically. The stage was filled with a large group of men and women gathered for the hunting contest. A gun like sound startled Anna, and the crowd on stage broke into a wonderful opening Victory chorus. Again Anna was on the edge of her seat. As the chorus ended, thunderous applause filled the theatre. As the opera progressed,

DAMAGING WINDS

Anna was torn between watching the action on the stage and admiring Otto conducting the orchestra. He had learned so much from Weber. Scene after scene enthralled, impressed and greatly pleased her. The dancing and the drinking song of Act 1; the dark, disturbing depiction of the forces of evil in the depths of the Wolf's Glen in Act 2. The mixture of joy and sadness in the wedding preparations and the drama of the final shooting contest. And throughout the German folk tunes were a joy to behold and to listen to.

All too soon, in Anna's estimation, the opera came to a dramatic close. Applause thundered out and Anna, tears pouring down her cheeks, looked down at Otto and blew him a kiss. She could not have been more proud. It made her feel especially good that even at the height of the city's infatuation with Rossini, Weber's opera had been so well received. She was sure that this incredible opera would mark the beginning of a new era when Germans would replace Italians as *the* composers. Turning to her uncle, Anna tried to speak. She could barely get her words out, she was so overcome with joy and pride and emotion. "That confirms it — Viktoria, viktoria, viktoria is what should be heard throughout Vienna. Figaro, Figaro, figaro has been vanquished!!!"

"Perhaps" is all that her uncle said in response. He then took her by the arm and whispered in her ear "we must work our way down so that we can get backstage and congratulate Otto. He did a fine job."

"Yes! Yes! We must see Otto. But uncle he did much more than just a fine job! He was wonderful!"

"Fine. I stand corrected. Now we must go."

Anna and her uncle began to make their way back stage to see Otto and his mentor Weber. Although the opera had seemed to fly by, such was certainly not the case with the long journey down from the fourth circle and into the backstage area. Every step seemed an eternity to Anna. She so wanted to throw her arms around Otto and smother him with congratulatory kisses. Finally Anna and her uncle came into the hallway leading to the dressing rooms and the space where the large cast had gathered. When Anna first caught a glimpse of Otto she was taken aback. Her fiancé was surrounded by young women from the chorus. Their hands were on his back and arms, patting his head and neck, and their faces glowed with an admiration that showed all too much interest. You are being overly sensitive, she thought to herself. But she could not help feeling a deep sense of jealousy, and to some degree anger. Such

forwardness was simply inappropriate. But then Otto saw her and broke away from his crowd of admirers and quickly made his way to her. A broad smile broke out on Anna's face. He gave her a crushing hug and a kiss. Anna's uncle, standing just behind Anna, made it clear with a hum hum, that he thought the embrace too intimate and the young couple's open affection inappropriate. Reluctantly Otto took the not very subtle hint and released Anna.

Anna's uncle immediately stepped forward and took Otto's hand. "You are to be commended young man for a well conducted performance of what is clearly a monumental work." Looking about he asked, "Where is the Maestro? I wish to compliment Herr Weber on his marvelous opera."

Otto looked at Anna as if to apologize for ignoring her and answering her uncle. Bowing slightly to Anna's uncle he said, "Thank you Herr Rochlitz for your kind words. Herr von Weber, however, is not here. He was called away on other business. As odd as it may sound, I was pleased. You see, it means that he felt sufficient confidence in my abilities and could entrust his work to me, unsupervised."

Anna smiled and interjected, "Oh, Otto surely you had no doubt of his confidence in you. Certainly I had none."

"You, my dear Anna, are somewhat prejudiced in my favour. Or at least I sincerely hope that you are," he added with a broad smile. But then turning again to Anna's uncle he added, "Herr von Weber would be only too happy to entertain you at your convenience and to hear your comments. Like me he values your musical criticism." Returning his gaze to Anna, Otto took her hands in his and said, "And you my dearest, dearest Anna, are to accompany me in four days time to dine with Herr von Weber." Not wanting to in any way slight her uncle he quickly added, "And of course, you too Herr Rochlitz may join us."

"Nonsense" Anna's uncle quickly replied. "I would not for a moment think of intruding on Anna's moment with the Maestro. He and I can talk at another time. We are both here in Vienna for the summer."

Much to Anna's chagrin, Otto was then called away to share the post performance celebration with others. He kissed Anna's hand and begged her understanding.

Anna's uncle expected the ride back to the rooms that they had taken in the Minoritenplatz to be filled with Anna's enthusiasm but instead she stared off, ignoring him. She was clearly deep in thought and so he decided not to disturb her.

DAMAGING WINDS

Anna's mind was in a flurry. In just four days she was to meet a man that she must impress, another man who must give his blessing to her union with Otto. In only a few days she would have her chance to impress Weber — at a dinner party being given by him! Since Otto had mentioned it a few minutes before, that dinner party had taken on an importance to her that no other before had ever done. It was essential that she play her role at the event perfectly in every way. Weber was no mere music teacher. No man was more important to the musical career of her future husband and therefore more important to her. Otto's letters made it clear to her that Weber's opinion mattered to him on most things. She did not want to in any way come between Otto and his mentor or to have Weber be anything but enthusiastic about her marriage to Otto. Anna felt confident that her views on music were aligned with those of Weber, whose role as the champion of German music was widely known. Anna's uncle had taught her to believe in the importance of German music and to appreciate the importance of Germans knowing their musical past.

These thoughts ran through Anna's mind until the coachman opened the door and assisted her uncle and then her down. Although she tried to listen to her uncle as they made their way into their rooms, she found thinking about anything but the impending dinner party very difficult. She did, however, hear her uncle remind her that the next morning they were to attend mass at the Imperial Chapel.



The next morning was Whitsunday, the first day of Pentecost, and Anna and her uncle made their way on foot to the Hofburg, as the Imperial Palace was called. When it had become known that the famed music critic would be in Vienna, the Emperor had invited him to attend high mass at the Imperial Hofkapelle, the Emperor's very own chapel in Vienna. Anna had been pleased that she could accompany him. On their arrival they had been shown to the stairway that led up to the chapel. More stairs, Anna had moaned to herself. The long, trying stair climb of the night before was still very much in her mind and in her quad muscles. This upward journey proved more pleasant; there were far fewer flights of stairs and none of the crowds of last night's theatre. Shortly after beginning their climb they seated themselves in the small chapel. As Anna

looked about her, she could not help but feel disappointed. The Emperor was not present and the chapel had none of the grandeur she had expected. It was in a stark, largely unadorned, Gothic style. Its interior had none of the ornamentation of many Baroque chapels that she had seen. It featured a single, rather modest altar with a large crucifix above it. The chapel was not even as big as their own St. Peter's Church in their native Leipzig. It was about as wide but somewhat shorter. The music, too, was disappointing to her. It had neither the flair of Weber's opera of the night before, nor the dramatic force of a mass by Haydn. Like the chapel, it seemed unadorned.

After the service, she and her uncle left the little chapel, descended to ground level and emerged into the sunlit inner courtyard of the palace. They strolled along enjoying the sun's warmth and admiring the Renaissance architecture of the buildings. Anna was especially intrigued by a clock that graced one end of the courtyard. Above it was a copper multi-level Baroque cupola, but what drew her attention was that below the clock was a sundial built into the stone of the upper level of the building. Just as she was asking herself why one would have both a clock and a sundial, her uncle turned to her, "The music of the mass was so beautiful — simple, but dignified. There was none of the blaring, roaring instruments that often accompanied mass elsewhere!"

Anna reluctantly turned her mind back to the music of the mass. She could not bring herself to agree with him. "I acknowledge that it was pretty but I very much like high masses like those of Haydn that feature trumpets and timpani. The kettle drum mass and the Nelson mass are so uplifting. Today's music was too simple for my taste," she responded.

"But, Anna, consider the chapel. The space could not tolerate such orchestration. No, I expect that the music was specially written for this particular chapel. I found it very moving. The Gradual "Veni Sancte Spiritu" especially touched me. There was such a simplicity of style. Simple, but powerful."

Before she could share her opinion, she and her uncle were joined by a dignified, middle-aged, gentleman whom Anna had seen at mass. He introduced himself to her uncle as Franz Xavier Gebauer, the organist and choirmaster of the nearby Augustinerkirche.

"Herr Rochlitz", began Gebauer, "I would be most interested in your opinion of the music that we have just heard."

DAMAGING WINDS

Anna's uncle smiled and gave a telling glance to Anna. "I was just sharing my views with my niece. She does not agree, but what struck me and greatly impressed me was how perfectly the composition suited its environment and the occasion: neither brilliant nor flashy; a pure, highly selective style, and yet, absolutely uncomplicated artistically. A faithful, tender expression of the words of the liturgy. It served the celebration of the service perfectly."

"Kapellmeister Salieri would be very pleased to hear you say so."

At the mention of Salieri's name Anna frowned and turned away.

Gebauer, noting Anna's reaction, addressed her. "I take it young lady that you do not share your uncle's enthusiasm."

Anna, flattered to be asked her views, was quick to comment. "I thought that it lacked the majesty and dramatic flourishes that I would have expected of an Imperial Chapel. There were no timpani or trumpets of the sort that might be used for imperial fanfares and that have been used to such good effect in masses by Haydn, for example."

"True," Gebauer replied, "but this was not a missa solemnis. Here in Vienna we reserve such orchestration for special events and those events are usually held in other larger churches like my own. You must realize that the Imperial Chapel is for the private worship of the Emperor and his courtiers. There is no need for the fanfares and flourishes of more public events where the music and surroundings are meant to impress the masses with the importance of the event and to enhance the dignity and reputation of our beloved Emperor."

Her uncle, in an effort to redirect the conversation, interjected, "I thought that the music might have been written by Kapellmeister Salieri. I assume that it was also he who structured the chapel orchestra and choir for the space."

Gebauer nodded, "Just so. It is Herr Salieri's belief that often less orchestration is more effective."

At this moment a courtier appeared at Gebauer's side, and begged him to accompany him. The choirmaster gave a slight bow, excused himself and left to take up his duties. Anna and her uncle returned to their lodgings in the nearby Minoritenplatz.

Anna's thoughts turned once again to Otto and to his teacher Weber. She had so much to do to prepare for the dinner party with Weber. She found herself unable to think of much else. So much hinged on that com-

Vienna 1822

ing event. She must make a good impression on her fiancé's mentor. She simply must.

CHAPTER TWO

An Unexpected Visitor

TWO DAYS LATER, IN THE morning, Anna went shopping for a suitable outfit for the upcoming dinner party. Her companion, Felix, a tall Viennese servant who had come with the lodgings, was soon overburdened by her numerous purchases. When she returned home three hours later, Anna found her uncle preparing some notes.

“Oh uncle, what a wonderful spring day! The sun has been shining on me and on my shopping venture. Wait until you see the many wonderful things that I have been able to get. At first when I went out with Felix, I was concerned that I didn’t have another woman with me who could offer comments and guidance. But Felix knows so many people. He was able to bring me to just the right shops. And the shopkeepers were so helpful in making sure that I knew the latest trends and would look my very best. You were so right to encourage me to update my wardrobe for Vienna. Did you know that the empire waist is no longer in fashion? Checked fabrics are all the rage now it seems. I got a checked dress in a wonderfully soft fabric, lavishly trimmed with ribbons and flowers. It is off my shoulders, so it is only for evening wear, but it will be perfect for the dinner party with Herr Weber. And don’t worry, I can cover my shoulders with a beautiful cashmere shawl that I was able to get. And I got a wonderful little chapeau that will sit on my head at a rakish angle. Oh, it looks just right and its trim matches the trim of the dress! I can hardly wait till you see it. And I got a beautiful wide brimmed sun bonnet with lace and a ribbon that will tie smartly under my chin. It will be for walking during the day. And I couldn’t resist another hat — a wide Florentine hat with flowers and ribbons”.

An Unexpected Visitor

Her uncle smiled, his eyes still on his notes, and said, "I am sure you will look beautiful in everything that you have purchased." Then looking up at his niece, he said archly, "I hope that you have not spent all of my money".

"Oh, uncle, of course not. I have been exceptionally careful to keep to the budget that we discussed. But I absolutely must look my best for the dinner party."

"Yes, yes, I know." Then returning to the notes he was holding, he added, "The sun has been shining on my morning as well. While you were away I was visited by one of the most influential composers in Europe".

"Beethoven?"

"No, no. Not Beethoven."

"Herr Weber then?"

"No, not Weber either."

"The Italian Rossini?"

"Anna, if you would stop interrupting me I would happy to tell you. Our distinguished visitor was none other than the First Imperial Kapellmeister, Herr Anton Salieri."

"Salieri?"

"Yes, his visit was a revelation for me. He is such an amiable and fascinating old man."

Anna who had catalogued the Mozart letters given to her uncle by his widow, Constanze, and by Nannerl, his sister, had heard Salieri's name mentioned many times, "But did not Mozart write to his father that the Italians are always pleasant to your face while they are plotting against you behind your back?"

"You will be able to judge for yourself because I have arranged to conduct a series of interviews at the Kapellmeister's home and you are to accompany me."

The colour drained from Anna's face and she quickly turned away in an unsuccessful effort to hide her reaction.

"Anna, is this more of your aversion to Italian composers? I would point out, my dear, that although Maestro Salieri is Italian by birth, he has lived here in Vienna for more than fifty years. His music is really quite German."

"Oh, uncle it is not just that he is Italian. You must have heard the stories of his monstrous treatment of Mozart. Otto tells me that even if he has some doubt about whether he is a murderer, there is no doubt that he is an Italian schemer!"

DAMAGING WINDS

"Anna, do not be so quick to judge."

"But Otto..." Anna started.

"Otto has no more knowledge of the truth than you or I."

"But his teacher, Herr Weber, has shared the truth about Salieri with him."

"You mean he has shared his opinion. What do we really know about what happened all those years ago? The one thing that I can tell you, from my own first hand experience, is that Herr Salieri is charming and friendly." When Anna continued to look uneasy, he added, "Think about what we can learn from this man about Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven and so many of the composers you so admire."

"Oh, uncle, I cannot...I simply cannot bring myself to deal with him." Anna could only think of what Otto and Weber would think. She turned from her uncle and walked to the window. Outside the city was still glowing in the warmth of the spring sunshine, but a cold shiver coursed through her. She could think only of Salieri.

Her uncle came up beside her and wrapped a reassuring arm around her. "Perhaps if I could share with you what happened in your absence, you might come to appreciate my enthusiasm for our unexpected visitor."

When she continued to stare out the window, he squeezed her more tightly and bending down whispered in her ear, "Anna, please hear me out."

Reluctantly she assented and, at her uncle's request, took a seat in the parlour. He looked at the notes that he had been holding in his hands the entire time.

"It began shortly after you left. I looked up from my work and a short, distinguished old man with a pleasant face was standing before me. He had entered unannounced. Felix was, of course, out with you buying checked dresses and hats." Smiling her uncle continued. "I did not recognize him. To me he seemed but a messenger; he was dressed conservatively, but well. He was very proper and polite. He handed me this rolled-up scroll." Picking up a scroll, he untied its ribbon and unrolled it. "It is the score of the Gradual that we heard the other morning at mass. The one I so admired. Is it not beautifully written? Look here on the title page in Italian are the words: 'In Remembrance of Pentecost in Vienna, 1822, Antonio Salieri.' I am embarrassed to admit it, but when it was handed to me I turned to him and said, 'And you, sir, are ...?' Her uncle laughed and carefully rolled up the scroll. Anna could not even manage a smile.

An Unexpected Visitor

“Apparently he was not offended. ‘I’m old Salieri.’ he replied with a smile. I was so relieved that he had not taken offence and that I had not lost my chance to speak with him.”

“And of course that would have been a tragedy,” Anna sarcastically interjected.

“In fact it would have been. Whether or not you respect him and his music, he is, and has long been, Vienna’s most powerful and influential composer. You clearly do not fully appreciate Salieri’s importance,” her uncle countered.

“Oh, I have heard of his power and influence and about how he misused them to the detriment of Mozart and others of more talent,” Anna replied.

“Anna, Anna. Did I not just say that we do not know what happened all those years ago? To hear you speak, one would think that you had been alive at the time and had seen this first hand. I listened patiently as you described your many purchases. Please do me the small courtesy of letting me share my afternoon with you.”

Anna, still grim faced, nodded, and her uncle resumed. “We talked for hours about music, his mentor Gluck and many other things. He was amused that I considered his *Gradual* among the finest of the *modern age*, as he does not feel a part of that age. He said, ‘I, who once was honoured by half of Europe, am forgotten; others have come and are the objects of admiration. Whether they are deserving of that admiration is another matter. In my day, music was written with precision, distinction, separated into classes of works in strict conformity with agreed upon principles. Principles that I still consider both respectable and laudable. The modern style is a mixture of everything.’ It seems that Gluck taught him that compositions should be the expression of pure nature, free from all the eccentricity that he said is common among most composers nowadays. I shall never forget his wonderful turn of phrase. ‘Eccentricity joins and confuses the tragic with the comic, the agreeable with the repulsive, heroism with howlings and the holiest of events with harlequinades’”

“So he is an old man who does not like the direction that modern music has taken,” Anna said with derision.

“Yes, he openly confessed his dislike of modern trends, but he did so with intellect and feeling, and in no way with hostility. He noted, for example, that it has become so common in recent times to have constant and glaring changes of key. He had a very funny line. ‘Modern composers

DAMAGING WINDS

are like people who jump out of the window to get to the street.' I could not help but smile.

"But what a jumble of languages the old man used! His German was halting at best. When German words escaped him, he used Italian, mixed with French and the occasionally Latin. At one point, my face must have made clear my puzzlement at this polyglot approach to communication. Smiling, he excused himself: 'I have only been in Germany for more than fifty years! How could I be expected to have mastered the language?' I could not help but laugh. Anna, I could not believe how amiable the old man is."

"But uncle how can you forgive the fact that he cannot properly speak our language? After more than fifty years! What does that tell you?"

"Anna, it tells me that he is a product of Vienna. To a large extent Salieri's multi-lingual speech reflects the Tower of Babel that is Vienna. As you know, French is the language of the Imperial Court. Latin is the language of the church. Italian is the language of opera. Young lady, do not look at me like that. Where are your manners? Besides, you know full well that what I am saying is true. You yourself, I remember, commented to me on the fact that Hungarian, Czech and numerous other languages are spoken here on the streets and in the pubs."

"Those are peasant dialects. German is the language of the cities, of commerce and of government."

"True but I just want you to appreciate that the Empire is quite cosmopolitan and that not everyone is fluent in German. I have heard it said that the great Gluck himself spoke in this multi-lingual fashion. Perhaps this is one more thing that Salieri learned from Gluck!"

"That is neither something of which he should be proud nor you so tolerant. German is the official language of the Empire and he is the Imperial Kapellmeister. Surely he should be able to speak the official language."

"Perhaps but does his lack of fluency in German mean that we should ignore the fact that he personally knew such musical giants as Haydn? He spoke of Haydn's works with the benevolent appreciation of an old man but the cheerful love of a youth. He declared his favourites among Haydn's works to be the string quartets and Haydn's *Creation* oratorio. He told me that he had a special place in his heart for that particular oratorio since he was fortunate enough to have played the harpsichord at its very first performance and to have conducted it often thereafter including at the gala performance in 1808 when Haydn made his last public appearance."

An Unexpected Visitor

"Well at least he and I agree on something. I love Haydn's *Creation*. That gala performance must have been very special," Anna conceded. "But what of Haydn's symphonies?" she asked.

"Oh, when I asked of them he kissed the tips of his fingers."

"And Mozart? What is his view of Mozart's works?" she inquired.

"He did not speak of him. But he had much to say about his teacher Gluck. He told me that from his earliest youth he had been a passionate admirer of the great genius and magnificent works of Gluck. For several years he had been placed in charge of preparing Gluck's operatic works for the stage in Vienna. Imagine Anna, being charged with preparing works like *Orfeo*, *Alceste*, *Paride ed Elena*, *Iphigenia in Tauris* for the stage. If that was Salieri's only accomplishment he would be worth interviewing. He explained that he considered Gluck to have been the greatest opera composer because he alone portrayed characters most richly in tones, and knew how to bring about the greatest effect with the fewest notes. Quite a contrast, he noted, between Gluck's approach and recent times when people are no longer deeply moved by what he called 'the most monstrous masses of tone'."

Anna felt that she had to interrupt. "But Uncle, Mozart used extensive orchestration. The same holds true for Beethoven and many others. Is he saying that this is wrong?"

"Yes, to some extent he is. He explained by way of example that Herr Weigl, one of his students, in imitation of Mozart, tried to fill every page with notes."

"The composer of *The Swiss Family*?"

"Yes. He is now the opera Kapellmeister here in Vienna."

"I so enjoy *The Swiss Family* — it is a wonderful singspiel. So romantic and so charming."

"Well, apparently when Herr Weigl was a student, he believed that every page of the score should be full of notes."

"I find that hard to accept. I know the music of *The Swiss Family* well. It is lightly orchestrated."

"That my dear girl is the point. Salieri taught him when to use full orchestration and when not, where one had to consider the singer, where one could play around with instrumentation, and so forth."

"Hmm," is all that Anna said in response.

Thinking that he was finally making some headway with Anna, her uncle smiled and continued. "All students must learn that one must write

DAMAGING WINDS

for the voices of various singers and become familiar with the effects of instrumentation. Salieri's goal, he explained to me, is to ensure that his students learn to recognize what the singer is in a position to do, how declamatory singing should be handled, where the instrumentation can be powerful, where the vocal part should be delicately accompanied, where the expression should be intensified and so forth."

Her uncle paused for a moment, deep in thought. "I was just thinking that Herr Weigl is someone who probably knows whether the rumours about Mozart and Salieri are true. He was a student of Salieri but he also helped Mozart rehearse his *Marriage of Figaro* and *Don Giovanni* and if I am not mistaken *Cosi fan tutte* as well. I must remember to talk to him about that.

"But getting back to my story, Salieri and I talked for almost two hours. At that point he noted the time and said that he had to leave. He told me that he had much yet to do today and wanted to be sure to rest up before this evening. Interestingly he informed me that he is in the habit of meeting Rossini and his wife in their rooms for dessert after their evening meal. Tonight they are being joined by Giovanni David and Andrea Nozzari of the opera company. Apparently Salieri writes humorous canons, you know rounds where each singer sings the same part but they start at intervals."

"I am not entirely ignorant of music, my dear uncle," Anna interjected in an offended tone.

"Of course you're not, her uncle laughed. You must remember, I am not always blessed with a learned audience. In any event, apparently Rossini and his wife sing Salieri's canons much to his great amusement.

"When Salieri was preparing to leave, I asked if I might call upon him tomorrow. There is so much more that I knew could be learned from him. I suggested you, my dear, could join me and take record his comments and stories."

"You seem to have done a remarkably good job of recording his visit today," Anna noted sarcastically.

"More a case of a good memory than good note taking. You will be able to do much better than I. In any event, he liked the idea of you taking notes of the interview. It seems that he is in the process of collecting materials on his life for Ignaz Mosel, the assistant Kapellmeister for the opera. Mosel has offered to write his biography. Your notes, he thought, would be a valuable way of collecting his thoughts and recollections.'

An Unexpected Visitor

“So now you have me helping someone do his biography?”

“It will not be any more work for you.”

“That is not the point and you know it. So when is this next interview supposed to take place?” Anna asked.

“Not tomorrow. Tomorrow is one of the three days each week that he dedicates to his students. He did say, however, that we could come in two days and talk further. He explained that he lives with two of his daughters in the Seilergasse next to the Gottweiher Hof. He has work in the Chapel in the morning that day but he will send a servant with word as to the best time to visit in the afternoon.

“Anna, I am so excited. No sooner had the old man left than I began to plan for the interviews. This is the opportunity of a lifetime. But I cannot do it alone. I need you with me.”

She could not imagine spending hour after tedious hour in the company of someone who might have murdered Mozart. But neither could she disappoint her uncle who had been so good to her since her parents had died. What was she to do? For the moment the only words that came to her lips were “Can we discuss it later?” And with those words Anna, her recent enthusiasm now completely trampled, trudged up the stairs to her room, deep in thought. She was tired from her shopping and knew she had much to do before she and Otto dined with Weber. And now she had to waste time considering what to do about the Salieri interviews.

“It will not be as bad as you think” her uncle called up the stairs after her.

How can it not be, she asked herself. What could be worse? Just then Anna heard a loud thunder clap and within moments the sound of a spring rain hitting the windows. How appropriate, she thought.

"Where there is smoke..."

EARLY THE NEXT MORNING, ANNA forced herself out of bed. Although she felt exhausted, there was no purpose to be served in remaining there any longer. She had tossed and turned all night. Before falling asleep she had made the mistake of looking again at her notes of Mozart's correspondence. His letters had brought none of their usual joy. Normally she loved re-reading them; getting carried away, imagining she was his dearly beloved sister Nannerl, left behind in Salzburg. She would wait patiently for news as he made his name in the world impressing kings and emperors and yet never succeeding as he so richly deserved to do. But, last evening the letters had cast a dark shadow. She had focused on what the letters said about Salieri and the tale was not a happy one. Mozart had settled in Vienna in 1781 with such hopes and dreams only to find that he had entered a world where Salieri, an inferior Italian composer, had undeservedly become dominant. He learned soon enough that it was no longer enough to be a superb composer, but he was ill-suited to this world of plotting and court intrigue. Salieri, on the other hand, was a master at it. He and the other Italians knew how to make life difficult for the talented new German arrival.

Anna had set her notes aside and tried to sleep but she could not get Mozart's comments out of her head. All night his words had buzzed through her mind in an endless repetition. "These Italian gentlemen are very civil to your face, but...", "if he is in league with Salieri, I shall never get anything out of him", "and now for a trick of Salieri's", "I shall tell you when we meet about a trick of Salieri's". Tricks, cabals, intrigue, Salieri, Salieri, Salieri.

When her uncle had talked to her of accompanying him to Vienna, she had imagined meeting Beethoven and perhaps her much admired

Schubert, seeing where Mozart had lived, attending Weber's opera. She had never thought that she would find herself forced to sit for hour after trying hour listening to the ramblings of old Salieri, this mischievous schemer who had made Mozart's life miserable and who was likely responsible for his death. What could her uncle be thinking? And yet she knew that she could not deny him what he asked.

To make matters worse that very evening she was to meet her fiancé's mentor, a man who made no attempt to disguise his disgust towards Salieri. As she dressed, she rehearsed in her mind how she would explain her predicament to Otto. Surely he would understand. He knew the debt that she owed to her dear uncle. She and Otto could together raise this with Weber. Or was it better that they saying nothing? Could they safely ignore this and hope that he never learned of it? No, she knew that they could not do that. How would it appear if Weber heard of it from others? It was much better that they shaped how he learned this news rather than take the chance that he would learn of it independently without explanation.

Throughout the day variations of these thoughts played out in her mind, as she ate, as she put her hair up and teased the strands around her face into tight little ringlets, as she tried on her new evening gown and chose her accessories, this handbag, those gloves, that pendant, these earrings — at every stage of her day.

Finally the evening came and with it the arrival of her fiancé Otto. When she heard the clatter of the horses' hooves on the cobblestones outside, she looked out of the upstairs window and saw Otto descend from the two seater cab and approach their door. He looked even more handsome in his evening dress than she remembered. His tall, lean frame was fashionably decked out for the evening with a dark blue frock coat with long tails coming to his knees, a starched, pointed collar, colourful cravat, waist coat with horizontal stripes and ankle length trousers. A tall top hat covered his blond, wavy hair. When Felix came upstairs to announce Otto's arrival, it took all of Anna's concentration to resist the desire to rush down to him. She took each step as demurely as possible. But, when he smiled widely on seeing her and put out his arms, she could no longer keep her feelings in check and ran to him, bestowing on him a big hug and a long, deep kiss. Eventually he broke the kiss and reminded her that they must not be late for the dinner with Herr Weber. Otto did what he could to move her along into her evening cloak but she insisted on taking her time in front of the large hall mirror to get the angle of her

DAMAGING WINDS

petite chapeau just right. Finally, and somewhat impatiently, he ushered her out to the waiting cab.

It was only after the driver had helped Anna into the enclosed cab and they had been sitting for a few minutes listening to the horses' hooves clatter on the streets that Anna had the courage to tell Otto of Salieri's visit to her uncle, the planned interviews and her proposed role. "I know what you and Herr Weber think of Salieri. I, too, share your feelings. But my uncle insists that these interviews are very important to him and you know that I owe him so very, very much. It is my duty to assist him."

"Of course I understand." Otto assured her.

Anna noticeably relaxed and smiled. She knew he would be sympathetic and understanding.

Otto continued, "It is not as if you have a choice. I am sure that Carl shall realize this as well."

"Otto, you are on a first name basis with Herr Weber?"

"In private moments he permits me this privilege. In public, of course, I show him due deference. You ought to address him as Herr von Weber — he is very particular about people using the formal mode of address. Perhaps you should call him Kapellmeister. Yes, that might be best. And please avoid using the word Maestro. To him it epitomizes the dominant position that Italians have long held in German speaking lands. Our very word for a musical composer is Italian, he would point out." Anna listened attentively and nodded her understanding. Otto then added, "I shall inform him at the appropriate time tonight that this most unpleasant task has been forced upon you." Then taking both of her hands in his, he added, "Do not worry further about it."

On their arrival at the building in which Weber and Otto had taken rooms, Anna turned to her fiancé and asked in a serious, somewhat worried tone if she looked her best. "I do so want to make a good impression upon him," she explained. "And you are sure that he will not be offended that I am to be spending my days with old Salieri?"

"I do not think so, but please let me bring up Salieri and explain why you will be working with him. It is a matter to be handled delicately." Then retaking her hands in his he looked her in the eyes and said, "And yes you look wonderful. You need have no fear of him. He will be a gentleman in every respect and I am sure that he will be as impressed with you as I am."

A few moments later Otto and Anna were shown into an austere drawing room. Anna could not help but notice that everything in the

"Where there is smoke ..."

room seemed to have been carefully placed to create a perfectly ordered environment. Based on the descriptions of him that Otto had shared with her, she recognized Weber in the middle of the room. He was standing as if a military officer at attention speaking with another, more relaxed gentleman. As she and Otto were announced, Anna studied Weber. He was in his early thirties, thin, almost emaciated, with striking features. His face was long and narrow with a sharp, pointed nose. These features were further emphasized by his thin, wire frame glasses and by the fact that he combed the hair on the sides of his head forward in a seemingly careless but carefully combed fashion so that it came to a series of points on each side of his forehead. It gave Weber a romantic air and set him apart from the somewhat younger, more demure gentleman with short curly hair and large bushy sideburns who was introduced as the celebrated pianist and composer, Ignaz Moscheles. Anna knew that Moscheles was then regarded by many as the supreme piano virtuoso of the day but tonight all of her attention was focused on Weber. He was the man whom she had come to meet — the man whom she must please and impress.

As the couple approached, Weber took a few steps towards them. To Anna's surprise Weber walked with a quite noticeable limp. "Otto tells me that you attended a performance of *The Marksman* here in Vienna. I assume that you enjoyed it," Weber stated.

"Oh, yes, yes. It was marvelous," Anna gushed. "So German! Foresters vying in a shooting contest for the hand of the head forester's daughter. And your use of German folk songs! Marvellous. I especially enjoyed the frighteningly dark scene in the Wolf's Glen. And the wedding preparations with the evil omen. The use of the flowers to foreshadow the troubles to come was so clever. It was truly marvelous."

"Some of your praise is best directed to my librettist, Johann Kind. I shall take credit for choosing the folktale and setting it to music. I assume you enjoyed the music?"

"Oh yes, of course. It is what gives the story its majesty, its emotional force, its power to move people."

"Unfortunate, however, that you saw it here in Vienna. The conservative Viennese and their silly laws have ruined it. Can you believe that the theatre censors made me change the shooting scenes so that the hunters use crossbows instead of rifles? It seems that they have gun control laws. Fearful of what happened in France I suppose. Don't want an armed citi-

DAMAGING WINDS

zenry. In any event, they did not want me to depict the hunters as outlaws defying these laws."

"Otto mentioned this to me but, to be honest with you, I did not think that it mattered. It was still quite wonderful."

"But it does very much matter! In my orchestration I simulate the sound of a rifle firing. A crossbow does not make such a sound!" Then, forcing a smile, he said, "No, I refuse to let their silly changes ruin my mood." But his forced smile belied his words. Then, looking at Anna with a piercing gaze, he said, "I am pleased to finally meet this person whom Otto is always going on about."

"It is I who am pleased to meet you, Kapellmeister. Honoured", she corrected herself.

Weber smiled.

"Otto and I are both of the view that your teaching will prove an immense help to his career."

"Of course", Weber replied.

Such arrogance, Anna thought, but she bit her tongue. Instead in her most solicitous tone she said, "And I understand that congratulations are in order. Did your wife not recently give you a son?"

"Indeed, I was so blessed."

"I trust that she and your son are doing well?"

"As best I know."

"Yes it must be hard on you and her that you are here while she and the new baby are in Dresden."

"Without doubt, but separation is something that you must learn to accept if you are to be the wife of a composer. Ours is a life of commitments and travel."

"I can assure you, Kapellmeister, that I am becoming well versed in that lesson," Anna noted. "I work with my uncle in Leipzig while Otto studies with you in Dresden. My hope is that after we are married I can travel with him, at least until the children come."

At this point, a servant suggested that they move to the dining room where their meal was ready to be served. Like the parlour, the dining room was impeccably ordered. Anna was ushered to her place just to the right of Weber who occupied one end of the table. She settled into the chair only to find its straight back and hard seat unwelcoming. She did her best not to show any of the discomfort that she was feeling. Everything must go well, she reminded herself. As the dishes were served, each

"Where there is smoke ..."

was shown to Weber for his approval before being offered to the guests. Anna noted that every dish was traditional German fare. It was as if she had not left her native Saxony.

As Anna watched, Weber spread his hands on the table in front of him. She smiled with self-satisfaction. She had been right. His hands were very large. She had known that they must be. When she had re-reviewed the piano works that Weber had written, some of the chords, especially those in the A flat sonata, had seemed impossible to play. She had surmised that they would only have been playable and could only have been written by someone with extremely large hands. And now she had confirmed her conclusion. He had large hands — and little consideration for the difficulties of those who did not.

As she was savouring her perceptiveness, Weber turned to her, "Otto tells me that you see yourself following in your uncle's footsteps and becoming a music critic."

"Yes, being raised by him, it seems only natural to me. I love music. It is my passion, but I know that I lack the talent to be a musician myself. I read music and play the pianoforte passably but I do not see myself as either a composer or a musician. But I can write about music, especially German music."

"An admirable goal. Yes, indeed an admirable goal. But do you think that you can combine this with marriage and a family?"

"I sincerely hope so." Then looking at Otto with a knowing smile, she added, "One of the things that I so prize about Otto is that he will not make me choose between marriage and my writing."

Anna's smile, however, was cut short by Weber who said in a mocking tone, "And you think you can write critically about the composition and performance of music when your husband will be a professional musician? One who may well be working with the people whom you are critiquing?"

"I agree that at times it may present challenges."

"Insurmountable hurdles I would say," Weber replied.

"I do hope not," she responded. For a moment a dark cloud seem to hover over her but then her face lightened and with a smile she said, "But if I cannot be a music critic then perhaps I can be a librettist. Otto and I have often joked about writing an opera together. I would be the poet and he the composer — I could be his Lorenzo Da Ponte and he my Mozart."

"A moment ago did you not say that your goal was to promote *German* music? Da Ponte is an Italian and his librettos were written in Italian.

DAMAGING WINDS

Besides he was also something of a rogue priest with many women friends and a serious gambling problem. He seems an odd role model for a proper young German woman, especially one who purports to be so dedicated to German music." Purports, Anna muttered to herself.

Otto interjected. "Kapellmeister, you must understand that Anna adores Mozart and greatly admires the Da Ponte operas — *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Don Giovanni* and *Cosi fan tutte*."

"I am related to Mozart by marriage and I too worship his musical genius. But to my mind the fact that he had to write operas in Italian to gain even moderate success in Vienna is a symptom of the bias that has plagued the Viennese court. If you cannot be an Italian, you must pretend to be one!"

Anna had never thought of it in that way, but before she could give the point much consideration Weber continued. "Anna you were born more than a dozen years after Mozart's death. How did he become such a favourite?"

"I, of course, first heard his music in the German adaptation of *Don Giovanni* done by my uncle."

Again Otto interjected. "Kapellmeister, you need to know that some time ago Anna's uncle was given copies of the letters that Mozart wrote to his father and his sister. She reads them over and over. She likes to compare herself to Mozart's sister Nannerl."

Anna, piqued at Otto's frequent interruptions, gave him a meaningful glare. I can speak for myself, she thought but out loud she said, "To my mind Nannerl was the true tragic hero in the Mozart family. She was as talented as her brother. It was the same musical genius that flowed through her veins as through his. But being a woman she had to give up her career to look after her father and then to raise her own family."

"But is that not the natural order, Anna?" asked Weber.

"Need it be so?" Anna responded.

Turning to Otto, Weber said in a stage whisper, "My dear man, you shall have an interesting time after your marriage. And challenging too I suspect. You are engaged to a strong, independently minded woman."

Anna did not know whether to be flattered or insulted but before she could decide Otto responded.

"But even Anna has to bend her will to that of others and to do unpleasant things." Otto then glanced at Anna and with a raising of his eyebrows suggested to her that he was about to bring up the subject of her

"Where there is smoke ..."

work with Salieri. She nodded her agreement and he addressed himself to Weber.

"Kapellmeister, Anna finds herself in a most disagreeable position. As we have been discussing her uncle, Friedrich Rochlitz, is a music critic. It seems that her uncle recently met Herr Salieri and has arranged a series of interviews with the Imperial Kapellmeister. He insists that my Anna act as his secretary for these sessions."

Weber turned to Anna and placing one of his large, skeletal hands over hers, said, "You have my deepest sympathy. What a waste of your precious time. Why, pray tell, does your uncle wish to interview the old Italian?"

Anna was quick to respond. "It is not so much that he is interested in Salieri per se but rather in the many people with whom Salieri has come into contact in his long career — Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven..."

Weber looked sceptical. "But surely he has heard of how shamefully Salieri treated Mozart. How he misused his position at the court to frustrate Mozart's career. The Italian threw roadblock after roadblock in his way." Weber looked around the table and asked, "Did Mozart not have a total grasp of dramatic truth?" Everyone nodded in agreement. "Why then was he, this German musical genius, unable to secure a position at the German Imperial Court? Why? Did he not know music like no one else?" Again everyone nodded yes. "Why then was he unable to secure employment as a teacher of our aristocratic children? Why? And would you not think that Vienna ought to have been the site where his *Don Giovanni* was first staged?"

Anna, trying to demonstrate her knowledge of Mozart's letters, replied that Mozart had been expressly commissioned to prepare *Don Giovanni* for the Prague theatre by an impresario there.

"Ah," Weber replied with a sly smile and a wag of his finger. Then, looking intently at her he added, "But Anna the question is why did Vienna not give him such a commission? Why were the court officials and the Viennese impresarios not lined up at his door? Why did our inimitable Mozart have to go to Prague for such work? Why did he have to accept a commission there?" Weber's questioning gaze swept the room taking in each person at the table. Then once again turning to Anna he continued. "And when he did, what happened? Your old Italian, Salieri, called your librettist Da Ponte back to Vienna before *Don Giovanni*'s opening night on some false premise. Imagine, the composer being denied the assistance

DAMAGING WINDS

of his poet on the eve of his opening. These are just some of things that Salieri and his Italian cabal did to Mozart. And for what reason? Because the 'Maestro' was both jealous and fearful of Mozart. Because Mozart was a truly talented German composer who appeared in Vienna just at the time when the Emperor was promoting German musical theatre. Salieri recognized both the Emperor's preference for things German and Mozart's superior talent. Salieri knew that if given a fair chance Mozart would cast his own inferior works into the shadows. In fact, Mozart had already demonstrated his superiority with his *Abduction from the Seraglio*. Salieri, faced with the closing of the Italian opera, had tried his hand at a German Singspiel. His *Chimneysweep* had some modest success but was quickly swept aside when Mozart's much better work was put on the stage." Weber smiled broadly at his clever remark which he emphasized with a series of sweeping gestures. "Yes Salieri's work was swept away and Salieri and his Italian mob were forced to resort to dirty tricks. What could be more typical of the Italians in our midst? For decades we have invited them into our lands on the false assumption that we Germans are incapable of truly great music. We have accepted their assertion that our singspiel cannot compete with their 'great' Italian operas. Mozart put the lie to these assumptions and demonstrated the potential for truly superior German music and opera. His *Abduction from the Seraglio* is without equal. Beethoven and others have proved that he was no freak of nature and yet even today I, as a German composer, find myself struggling to stage my operas in German cities like Dresden and Berlin and even here. Why? Because Italians like that empty-headed Rossini continue to dominate our court theatres with their backroom dealings and their intrigues."

At this point Otto asked, "Kapellmeister, do you believe the rumours that Salieri poisoned Mozart?"

Weber replied without hesitation and in a forceful tone. "Yes, I do. Whether by his own hand or at his bidding, I do not know. One thing about the Italians is that they stick together and are happy to conspire with one another to get ahead. As a result, I for one, refuse to have anything to do with Salieri and his ilk. I met him in 1803 and in my youthful naiveté, I even produced one of his operas in Dresden. But that was before I learned the truth of his foul treatment of Mozart. I now know better. I shall never talk to him. Never. Recently I refused to join a social club of which he was a member."

Moscheles, who had sat quietly to this point, interjected. "Carl, I know how strongly you feel about Salieri's complicity in the cabals against Mozart, and I know that you believe the rumours about his role in Mozart's death, but I feel that I must provide a different perspective for these young, impressionable people. I agree that Salieri hurt Mozart by conspiring against him doubtlessly poisoning many an hour for him. I very much doubt, however, that the Kapellmeister actually poisoned Mozart. True, he considers Gluck the greatest of all composers and cannot abide Mozart or his compositions. But I do not believe him capable of murder. Besides, he had no needed to resort to so depraved an act to eliminate any threat that Mozart might have offered to him. Mozart could be so much more subtly dealt with. Salieri, after all, had the ear of the Emperor and knew all of the tricks of the court."

Before Weber could respond, Otto interjected, "But Herr Moscheles if you truly believe as you have said that Salieri conspired against Mozart, how could you bring yourself to accept his tutelage?"

"Ah, now that is a fair question, and one for which I have a ready answer. It requires, however, the telling of a story. One day when I was much younger and not yet established I was required to drop off a document for the Imperial Kapellmeister. I was admitted to the foyer of his home by his servant but was told that the Kapellmeister had just gone out and could not receive me. As I was considering what I ought to do, I happened to notice a calling card lying on the hall table. Written on that card were the words that led me to accept Kapellmeister Salieri as my teacher."

Anna impatiently asked, "What were these words that so moved you?"

Moscheles paused dramatically, gazing around the table at his listeners again, "Ah, yes, the words. 'Your pupil Beethoven called upon you.' Moscheles hesitated a moment and looked at both Anna and Otto. He then continued, "Those were the words that made me stop and think. 'Your pupil, Beethoven, called upon you.' If the great Beethoven thought that he could learn from Salieri, how much more could I learn from him. And so I became Salieri's pupil and for three years I served as his assistant at the opera, a post that allowed me to visit the theatre every day free of charge."

"And did what you learned make up for your ethical sacrifice?" interjected Weber. "How much did you gain from your deal with the devil?"

Moscheles laughed. "My, my Carl you are so melodramatic. As devil's go, Salieri is the most charming, and the most helpful. To answer your

DAMAGING WINDS

question, I learned a great deal and enjoyed every moment of it. You must really join me in a visit to the Kapellmeister."

Weber seemed genuinely offended by the suggestion and pounding the table he almost shouted, "Absolutely not. I intend to have nothing to do with him. Nothing! I do not care how charming he is. I judge him by his actions not his demeanour. I care about what he did to our musical genius. I remind you Moscheles that the devil cannot always be perceived to be such. Beware the wolf in sheep's clothing."

Turning to Anna, Weber softened his tone and said, "But you, my dear, have been denied the choice that I enjoy. I for one fully understand. Who knows, perhaps something good might come of your forced exposure to the Italian conspirator. Perhaps you will be given the opportunity to learn the truth behind these rumours. Then you can share it with me so that I can better deal with those like Moscheles who continue to associate with him. I assure you that where there was smoke there was fire. Perhaps you can stumble upon at least some of the smouldering embers."

Later that night, after Anna had kissed Otto good night at the door and had gone to bed, she could not get Weber's words out of her head. For a second night she tossed and turned but this time the words that played in her mind were those of Weber. "Perhaps you will be given the opportunity to learn the truth behind these rumours. Then you can share it with me." Perhaps indeed. Why could she not seek out the truth? She already had read the Mozart letters. She could do further research in the papers of the day and she could interview people like Weigl who had known both Mozart and Salieri. If she was able to show her uncle the sort of man Salieri really was, she could convince him to drop the interviews. At least he might agree to not publish them to his embarrassment and hers. And she could win favour with Weber by sharing her discoveries with him.

When she awoke from her fitful sleep the next morning, she resolved to start her investigations that very day. She and her uncle were to meet Salieri in the afternoon. She would listen carefully to his comments for clues about what really happened between him and Mozart and begin to plan her own set of interviews, not *with* Salieri but *about* him. There would be a second set of Salieri interviews, she thought proudly. Her interviews, however, would reveal the true Salieri. She now looked at her afternoon's work as an opportunity rather than a loathsome chore. She arose invigorated despite her lack of sleep. She was going to get at the truth.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Very Devil

THAT AFTERNOON, ANNA AND HER uncle made their way to the Salieri residence on Seilergasse. But not directly there. When Anna had learned that Salieri lived just south of the magnificent St. Stephen's Cathedral, she had insisted on visiting the impressive medieval structure. She descended from the cab and looked up, marvelling at the South Tower that soared more than 400 feet above her. This, she thought to herself, is how I ought to be experiencing Vienna — not sitting taking notes of a conversation with a murderer. When they entered the church, she went to the main aisle, genuflected and crossed herself. Her gaze fell on the spectacular, high altar at the far end. Her eyes swept the interior, the massive, towering pillars, the fine vaulting high above her, the many statutes. Then her gaze settled upon the intricately carved stone Pilgrim's Pulpit just ahead to her left. Its beauty took her breath away. She moved into a pew, knelt and crossed herself and said a prayer for the success of her secret mission. "Oh, please do give me strength and your aid", she whispered softly. "I shall need it so very soon."

Her uncle, feeling that he had indulged his niece as long as time permitted, ushered her from the church. Leaving St. Stephen's, they walked across the large square and past the broad entrance to Kartner Strasse and turned left into Seilergasse. Her uncle stopped in front of a large, stately building. No poor musician struggling to make ends meet, thought Anna.

Just as her uncle approached the door to the Salieri residence, it opened and a flamboyantly dressed man of about thirty in a red beret with a colourful neckerchief emerged. He bowed and greeted Anna's uncle in Italian. "Buongiorno, Senior Rochlitz, come sta?" Anna's uncle replied, "Benissimo, grazie, e lei, Signor Rossini?" With great dramatic flair, the

DAMAGING WINDS

man took Anna's uncle by the shoulders and leaned to whisper in his ear. Then bowing to Anna, he strode off down the street, laughing.

Anna realized that the man striding away was none other than the composer Rossini. She was not offended that he had ignored her but she was very curious to know what he had shared with her uncle. "Uncle, what ever did Herr Rossini tell you."

"Oh, nothing, nothing of any importance."

"If it is not important, then you will not mind sharing it with me."

"If you must know, he said that we should be safe. The Kapellmeister is not in a murderous mood today." Seeing the surprised look on Anna's face, her uncle quickly added, "He was just joking."

Anna turned and stared after Rossini. She could not believe that the Italian would joke about such a serious matter. Meanwhile her uncle, noting her reaction and fearing that she might say something to those in the home they were about to enter, took her hand and tried to reassure her, "I share your belief that this is an inappropriate subject about which to joke. It is best that we just forget what we have just seen and heard. Let us put it out of our minds."

But Anna could not do as her uncle bade her to do. What little confidence she had mustered left with Rossini. She wondered if she could make herself walk through the now open door where a servant awaited them patiently. Still holding her hand in his, Anna's uncle guided her into a large vestibule where numerous doors lead into adjoining rooms. Their hats and light cloaks were taken and they were bidden to wait while the servant announced their arrival.

Deeply affected by her conversation with Weber of the night before and Rossini's insensitive remark and feeling like a spy in the enemy camp, Anna could barely control her body. Her stomach was in knots. Her hands were shaking. She felt light headed. Her uncle, noticing, took her arm lightly and urged her to take a deep breath and relax. Just at that moment a short but elegantly attired middle aged woman arrived to greet them. She introduced herself as Catarina, one of the Kapellmeister's daughters. She then showed them into a parlour where a small, elderly gentleman was sitting at a pianoforte. He could not have been much over five feet tall, a mere wisp of a man, with thick salt-and-pepper hair arranged in a fashionable cut. The room had the look of a working study. None of Weber's orderliness, Anna thought to herself. The walls were lined with bookcases containing what seemed to be an endless collection of musical

scores and books. Several pieces of the soft upholstered furniture had musical scores carelessly left on them, reinforcing the impression that this was the old composer's work room.

Anna's uncle knew that etiquette required that he immediately introduce Anna but he also knew that he had to give her a moment to collect herself. Leaving Anna just outside the parlour door, he entered and walked over to the old composer. Bowing he said, "Herr Salieri, how pleasant to see you again. We met Signor Rossini on our way in. I trust that your meeting with him was enjoyable."

"Ah yes, a very pleasant time," replied Salieri. But then the old composer noticed Anna standing back behind her uncle at the door and said, "Oh, you have been kind enough to bring your niece. Please have her come in."

Anna took a few halting steps into the room, casting furtive glances at her uncle and at the little, old composer who rose from the pianoforte bench and approached her. She was struck by his beady, flashing eyes, always full of movement. Addressing her, he said, "I am so very pleased to meet a member of Herr Rochlitz's family, especially such a radiant flower of youth." He bowed in her direction and then, turning to her uncle, said in a stage whisper, "Bellissima."

Anna remained near the doorway, in obvious discomfort. "Mia cara Anna, please do come in", Salieri encouraged. The Italian words of endearment succeeded in only putting Anna more on edge. "Come, come, mia cara Anna, I am but a little, old man. As you learn more of Vienna you shall encounter many more noble people and," casting a look at his short, slim body, "many more intimidating than I. Please do take a seat at the table in the corner. Catarina, who thinks of everything, has set out a pen, an ink well and paper for your note taking."

Anna glanced over at her uncle who gave an encouraging nod. She gave a little curtsy and said, "Yes, Herr First Imperial Kapellmeister."

"No, no that will not do. Such formality — it will not do. There is no need for you to be so formal." Smiling, he said, "You shall call me Maestro. Perhaps, after you have become more relaxed in my company, you will come to call me Papa as my students do."

Papa! How, Anna asked herself, could she ever use that term for the old composer? She did not even use that term of affection for her uncle who was the closest thing to a father that she had. And Maestro! After listening to Herr Weber the night before, she could never bring herself to

DAMAGING WINDS

use the Italian term in addressing the Imperial Kapellmeister. “May I call you Kapellmeister? Would that be acceptable?”

Salieri nodded. “Yes, you may call me Kapellmeister.”

Anna breathed a sigh of relief.

“And I shall call you mia cara Anna.”

Anna did not know how, or if, she should reply. Her uncle gave her an intense stare that made it clear that he wished her to accept this and move on. She merely nodded, sat down at the table provided and dropped her eyes to the note paper.

Her uncle took the opportunity to assure Salieri that Anna would be fine and immediately tried to turn the topic back to Rossini. “Maestro, had you met Signor Rossini before his current visit to Vienna?”

Salieri, turning away from Anna, replied, “Not at all. I, of course, knew of him and of his music. Even I, who seldom attends the theatre any more, could not ignore it and I must say that some of it is very fine opera if a touch excessive and exuberant.”

Turning to Anna, her uncle asked her to begin taking notes. Anna struggled to get her emotions under control. Her job was to seek out the truth, which she knew she could only achieve if she relaxed and concentrated on her note taking. She did not want to put the old man on his guard. He would never open up if he learned what she really had in mind. Concentrate on your note taking she repeated to herself.

Salieri, now focusing his attention on her uncle and his question, began to pace about the room. “No, I met Signor Rossini for the first time recently. Shortly after his arrival in Vienna, he called upon me accompanied by my good friend Giuseppe Carpani, the Imperial Court Poet. Rochlitz, you will undoubtedly know Carpani’s book on Haydn.” Anna’s uncle nodded. “Well he tells me he is well along on a new, revised edition and he is planning a similar volume on Rossini. In any event, it seems that Rossini had attended several of my operas and wanted to pay his respects. He tells me that he especially liked my *Grotto di Trofonio*. In fact he informed me that he had a short duet from that opera in his head when he wrote the “Figaro, Figaro, Figaro” sequence for Figaro’s opening aria in *The Barber of Seville*.”

“They say that imitation is the most sincere form of flattery,” noted her uncle.

Smiling, Salieri replied, “I was, for a time, frequently so flattered, even by Mozart. It is good to know that there remain some who know and appreciate my operas.”

“Are you saying that Mozart borrowed from your works?” Anna’s uncle inquired. What could Mozart have wanted to borrow from the old Italian? Anna thought.

“Are we not talking of Signor Rossini?” replied Salieri.

It did not escape Anna’s attention that the old composer was seeking to deflect the conversation away from Mozart. She was disappointed and somewhat irritated when her uncle accepted the composer’s direction and returned the conversation to Rossini.

“How did you find Rossini?”

“It was not hard. His rooms are close by and I know Vienna well,” Salieri said matter of factly. When Anna and her uncle looked puzzled, he added, “I am sorry, I was just being playful.”

Catarina, who was in the process of leaving the room, called back over her shoulder. “Papa, you are always trying to make a joke. There is a time and place for everything and now is not the time for jest.”

Pausing briefly and nodding in Catarina’s direction, Salieri continued, “I shall be serious.” Returning his attention to Anna’s uncle, he said in an exaggerated formal tone, “My dear Herr Rochlitz, I find Signor Rossini jovial and witty and altogether charming.”

Catarina looked at her father scoldingly. “Father!”

The old man smiled broadly at the effect that his teasing had elicited and said to Anna’s uncle in a more normal tone of voice, “My daughter forgets every now and again who is the parent and who, the child.”

Catarina, throwing up her hands, left.

The old man smiled and then turning to Anna’s uncle addressed his question. “Rossini, his wife and their performer friends humour me by singing my canons and I humour them by making the canons fun to sing. The end result is that we all enjoy ourselves. Ah, but as a journalist, you ought to be asking me why he is now deeply in my debt.”

“How so, Maestro?” her uncle asked.

“You see, Signor Rossini, like so many visitors to Vienna, including the two of you I suspect, wanted to meet my former pupil, Ludwig von Beethoven. No small task to arrange, I assure you. Initially, even I was unsuccessful both because Beethoven is not particularly social now, not

DAMAGING WINDS

that he ever was, but also because he has been ill. Nevertheless, Carpani and I were eventually able to arrange the much sought after meeting. Rossini has just informed me that Ludwig apparently advised him to stick to buffa, more Barbers of Seville, and to give up opera seria."

"But Rossini has done so many serious operas. He must have taken that as a mixed compliment."

"I'm sure of it but he, like so many others, was thrilled to merely be in the presence of such a great composer Perché? People are odd creatures. They are flattered to be in the same room with Beethoven the composer, even if they find it hard to deal with Beethoven the man."

"Maestro, I shall certainly want to hear more about Herr von Beethoven but for the moment let us continue with Signor Rossini. Besides Beethoven, what did you discuss with Signor Rossini?"

"Music, opera — what we both know and love. As you learned a few days ago, I am never reluctant to talk music and with a fellow opera composer there is so much to discuss. Librettos, dramatic approaches, the right key for a particular aria to create the correct effect, staging, sequencing and on and on. He asked to see some of my music. He took special interest in my *Cublai* overture and could not believe that because of politics it had never been produced. Yes, it was enjoyable talking with him. You know, some of my favourite moments in life have been in the company of my fellow composers talking about our trade. I have had wonderful discussions with Haydn, Cherubini, Paisiello and even, on occasion, with Mozart."

Anna's uncle replied, "Perhaps we could speak of Mozart?" Yes, Anna thought to herself. That would be wonderful.

But Salieri replied, "Not today." He paused, walked to the pianoforte and straightened the sheet music that was cradled there. "Yes, Signor Rossini can be quite amusing. He noted that I had used German when speaking to his servant on my entry. He congratulated me on having learned something of the language." Salieri, noting the look that this comment elicited from both Anna and her uncle, laughed. "That was what he said. Your language is the very devil for us Italians."

The very devil indeed, Anna thought to herself.

Salieri continued, "He told me that the only words of your language that he ever managed to remember or pronounce after a heroic effort are 'I am well pleased.'¹ He stressed to me that he was very proud of these

1 Ich bin zufrieden

The Very Devil

words, and while in Vienna he intended to use them on every occasion, public or private." The old composer laughed again, but neither Anna nor her uncle joined in. Instead Anna's uncle tried to return to Mozart, but Salieri ceased laughing and said firmly, "Another day."

"As you see fit, Herr Salieri," accepted Anna's uncle.

Anna, however, jotted a note on her page of clues. He avoids all discussion of Mozart. She could easily imagine why.

While she wrote this note, her uncle said, "Perhaps it is better in any event if we should start at the beginning."

Nodding, Salieri settled back into his seat at the pianoforte. A new energy and enthusiasm gripped him and suddenly he launched into a rapid paced monologue with frequent musical interludes. "Eccolo. If we are to have a dramatic telling of my life story ought we not to have an overture? What do you think would be suitable?" Salieri looked at his two guests. "Don't be shy. I am seeking your assistance in composing the overture to my life. What mood do we want to create? Ought it to be loud and stormy like my opening of *Cesare in Farmacusa* in D Major?" He played a series of powerful, bass notes, that thundered through the room. "We would of course use full orchestration — timpani, horns and trumpets to heighten the effect." Turning to his guests Salieri looked questioningly at Anna's uncle and then Anna. "Well?" When neither immediately responded, he rushed on concluding, "No, I think not. Overly dramatic and stormy for a life of relative joy and happiness." Then turning back to the pianoforte he said, "Perhaps frenetic and harried like my opening of *La fiera di Venezia*." He played a series of the same two alternating notes in very fast tempo. "In many ways that has been my life. Court composer, we need a fanfare tomorrow for a visiting monarch. Kapellmeister, we need a march in two days. Salieri, we need an opera in four days. And by the way have you recruited those new musicians and oh, we also need more singers. What, they are not yet trained? And what is this I hear? Our new prima donna is unhappy with your latest aria. Make her happy — very happy! And have you not chosen an opera to stage next week? What of Paisiello's this or Martin Soler's that?" When once more his guests did not immediately respond, he pushed on alone, "But no, although true it is not the aspect of my life that ought to be first and foremost."

Anna's uncle finally found his voice. "Perhaps it should be imperial as befits the Imperial Kapellmeister."

DAMAGING WINDS

“Yes, of course. Now you are being helpful. It could begin with a dramatic imperial fanfare with horns and drums like my overture for *La secchia rapita*.” Laughing he said, “What delicious irony that would be — my life story sharing the same overture as the tale of a battle over a stolen bucket. Much ado about nothing! Oh, Shakespeare — perhaps I could adapt my *Falstaff* overture, the story of a blowhard, a conniving schemer who gets his come-uppance.” Looking at Anna’s uncle he said, “Would not my critics think that appropriate! Speaking of critics, what about the dark, somber overture to *La Grotta di Trofonio*? Those who spread those nasty rumours about me would undoubtedly think it well-suited.” He paused and lifted his wrinkled little hands from the well worn keys of the pianoforte. Then looking questioningly at his guests, he said. “You two have been of little help. No opinions, mia cara Anna?” Anna overwhelmed with the flood of words and music and not knowing what she could say that would not offend her uncle sat quietly and said nothing. Salieri, shaking his head in mock disapproval, continued, “Oh well if you leave it to me I think I favour going in an entirely different direction.”

He then played a few bars of a simple, strikingly beautiful piece unknown to either Anna or her uncle. “That is the opening of the larghetto movement of my piano concerto in C Major. It is serious, somber yet lyrical. A few notes played piannissimo, joined periodically by the strings being plucked. I have long wanted to reuse this piece. I wrote it over 50 years ago at a time when I thought that I might try my hand at instrumental music. This might be the time to resurrect it.” He paused, deep in thought. “Then again, perhaps it is too soft and quiet a piece for the overture as a whole. An opening in a minor key — a few bars of pianissimo strings in the lower register perhaps, like I did in my *Armida* overture.” Again he paused. Then a smile lit his face. “Of course, *Armida* would be perfect! Absolutely perfect! Rochlitz do you know the piece?” When Anna’s uncle indicated that he did not, Salieri explained, “It begins with the strings playing softly in C minor depicting the fog surrounding *Armida*’s island. The same notes might well reflect my life’s beginning. In my youth, I found myself sad and alone despite the large family into which I had been born. You see my mother died when I was twelve. Then my father, a merchant in Legnago, in the Venetian territories, engaged in a dangerous overseas trading mission that failed. His fortune lost, he worried himself to his grave. My brothers and sisters and I were left to make our own way. I found myself an orphan with little but a musi-

The Very Devil

cal gift. An opening of pianissimo strings playing in the lower register could capture this well. Then the full orchestra would enter with oboes, horns, bassoons, trombones and strings playing allegro in C Major. This would signify my move to Venice where I was taken in by the Mocenigo, a wealthy family. The music would be tentative for a time, building to a conclusion never reached. Then the blare of horns joined by the orchestra with great energy would signal the arrival in Venice of my musical saviour Kapellmeister Gassmann who was to rescue me and take me to Vienna. The overture would introduce my life's early trials and tribulations, my road to Vienna and then come to an end with a lyrical andantino grazioso also in C to announce the deliciously tranquil serenity that I found in my adopted land here in Vienna. I like that. I think it works."

"Maestro, is this how you work?" inquired her uncle.

"To an extent. I have been toying with you. But if you are truly interested in how I set my operas to music, perhaps I should share with you some memories that I have been collecting for my memoirs. They tell the story of the first of my operas to be put upon the stage."

"We would be most pleased to hear it but you must promise to come back to your childhood."

"Yes, yes, of course. But let me find my notes and share with you my first love, the writing of musical theatre. Oh, here we are." Salieri returned from his search for the notes and sat himself down in an armchair near Anna's uncle. "Let me set the stage for you. It is 1769. I am a lad of 19, still very much a student. My teacher, Herr Gassmann, is away in Italy. Giovanni Boccherini, a dancer in the theatre has written a libretto."

"Boccherini — might he be a relation of the Spanish court composer Luigi?" inquired Anna's uncle.

"Indeed so", replied Salieri. "A brother." Then, returning his attention to his notes, he continued. "In Gassmann's absence, the theatre impresario thought that perhaps I, being Gassmann's protégé, might rise to the occasion. I, of course, jumped at the chance." Turning to Anna he added. "You, mia cara Anna, can best imagine my excitement. I was about your age and here I was being given a chance to compose my first opera for the stage." Anna merely nodded and gave a weak smile. She thought about how much Mozart had already achieved at that age.

Salieri, unaware, pushed on. "Yes, I was so excited. Quickly I asked Boccherini to bring his libretto and tell me his story. Together we consid-

DAMAGING WINDS

ered the strength and weaknesses of each available singer and distributed the roles accordingly. Boccherini exits."

"So you did not write any music until you had considered the voices available to you," Anna's uncle interjected.

"How could it be otherwise? What is the point of writing music that cannot be sung?" A puzzled look emphasized his point. "Once this was done, I locked myself in my room, telling the maid to say that I was not at home. My face was aflame as happens to me whenever I am excited. I reread the libretto several times. After the third reading, I set out, as Gassmann had taught me, to determine the key that best matches the nature of each aria. I spent the remaining hour before lunch thinking out the melodies for certain passages. After lunch, as is my custom from childhood, I napped; then took a walk on the city walls."

Noting the look on his face, Salieri turned to Anna's uncle and added, "It does wonders for your mind. You should try it. I have had marvelous walks. I remember many a pleasant hour with Lorenzo da Ponte. You might remember him, Rochlitz."

"I certainly do and I might add he is known to Anna through Mozart's operas."

"I am pleased to hear it, but I am equally glad that Lorenzo never actually met the bellissima Anna. That man had no self control around women. Yes, you are both fortunate that no such meeting took place." Realizing that this was no topic for a young lady like Anna, he moved on. "In any event, on my return home I could not resist setting the introduction to music. As I visualized the character and circumstances of the protagonists, a phrase for the orchestra would come to mind. I imagined myself in the theater's orchestra seats hearing my concepts being performed. If they seemed full of character, I wrote them down. When darkness fell I was still working. I had candles brought. In the next three hours I formed a plan of the rhythm and keys suited to the work as a whole without writing a note. Soon I was back at my writing desk where I began my outline and, when midnight came, I went to bed happy. But my head was full of music and poetry. You know what it is like when you go to bed excited or worried about something. You cannot get your mind off it and you toss and turn all night."

Anna nodded knowing the problem only too well of late. She wondered how the old man would react if he knew what had been keeping her awake.

The Very Devil

Of course old Salieri knew nothing of this and, taking her nod as affirmation, he continued, “I heard a singular harmony in my dreams. But I could not capture it because it was at such a distance and so confused. By four in the morning I was fully awake and decided that I might as well resume my work. I lit my candles and looked through all that I had sketched out the day before. Satisfied, I returned to my outline. By eight, I was halfway through the first finale. To my surprise, my poet entered the room. He could hardly believe that in so short a time I had sketched the entire introduction and half of the first finale. I played what I have written for him on the pianoforte; he was very pleased, gave me a hug, and seemed even more delighted than I was.”

Anna’s uncle interrupted asking, “May I trust that this marvelous tale accurately reflects how you set your first opera to music?”

“You may — at least my first opera that saw a stage. I had written others that were never performed. They have long since been confined to the trash bin where they deserve to reside.”

“How long did it take you to finish the work?”

“Working with enthusiasm, I had about two-thirds written in score and orchestrated within four weeks.”

“And it was performed as you wrote it?”

“To my surprise, yes. I had intended to have Gassmann review it on his return from Rome, but things worked out differently. The impresario was unhappy with the opera then being presented in the theatre. He needed a replacement quickly. I was called to the theatre where both Maestros Gluck and Scarlatti awaited me. I sang and played whatever was finished, with the two Maestros joining in where there was a call for multiple voices. Gluck, who had always encouraged me, immediately demonstrated his satisfaction. Scarlatti, who now and then criticized small errors, nevertheless praised each aria generally. In the end, both masters told the impresario that if the unfinished sections could be completed, the opera could be rehearsed and performed promptly. Gluck stated ‘the work contains enough to entertain the public.’ Simple words but they resonate in my memory. When I realized that they intended to put my work on the stage as written, I promised them my very best efforts to complete it. I wrote day and night, ran to the rehearsals, went through the vocal parts with the singers, corrected the copyists, worked with Boccherini on the costumes and sets. The general rehearsal took place the day before the first performance. That evening, I went into the theater with my heart thump-

DAMAGING WINDS

ing. They announced my opera: ‘Tomorrow the Italian operatic company will have the honour to produce a new opera entitled *Le donne letterate*, poem by Herr Gastone Boccherini, music by Herr Antonio Salieri; the first work of both.’ Several persons in the audience applauded which gave me sweet confidence. Next morning, as early as I thought that the bills would be posted on street corners, I went to see my name in print for the first time. What a great thrill!” Laughingly he added, “But I was not satisfied with seeing it once. I ran all round the town to read it everywhere.”

“And the performance, it went well?”

“Yes, but not before I had endured some of the most stressful moments of my life. As the hour of the performance arrived my joy changed to fear. My cheeks glowed until my entire face was scarlet. As I entered the orchestra there was applause which in some degree restored my courage. I bowed to the public, seated myself at the spinet from which I would conduct. The opera began. It drew applause! In places, much applause! When the performance was over I gave Boccherini a bear hug and hurried away to mix with the audience as they left the theatre. I hoped to hear their opinions. ‘Not bad,’ said one. ‘I found it pleasing,’ said another. I could have kissed that one. ‘For a pair of beginners, it is no small thing,’ said a third. ‘For my part,’ said a fourth, ‘I found it very tedious.’ Oh, that hurt. I struck off into another street for fear of hearing something still worse. But what I heard were new praises of both poet and composer. I returned to my lodging exhausted, but full of joy.”

“That is a wonderful story and so very instructive,” Anna’s uncle stated. “But I do want to discuss your childhood. You mentioned that your father was a merchant. How did you come to choose music as a profession?”

“I can thank the good Lord that my oldest brother, Francesco, was a violinist who studied under the great Tartini. He was thirteen years my senior — we had a large family. In any event, when Francesco saw that I was musically inclined he took it upon himself to teach me to play the harpsichord and the violin and to read music. He also noted that I had an excellent soprano voice and saw to it that I had singing lessons. Later, Giuseppe Simoni, the organist at the Cathedral in Legnago became my musical instructor.”

“Did your father support your musical training?”

“Let us just say that while he did not share my enthusiasm, he did not stand in my way. Being the tenth child he had no great ambitions for me.”

The Very Devil

Salieri looked very pleased with himself and continued “Rochlitz, I don’t know when you first became a music critic, but I developed a critical ear for music quite early on (or at least I prided myself on this). I can remember one occasion when my father and I, having attended a high mass at our local church, met the monk who had played the organ. My father talked a few moments with him but I treated him with coldness. My father turned to me saying ‘Why didn’t you greet that monk with due respect?’ I replied ‘I would have greeted him properly if he was not such a bad organist.’ My father looked at me harshly saying ‘How can you, a mere boy, judge such matters? You have hardly begun to study music?’ I replied, ‘True I am only a beginner but in his place I would play with much more solemnity.’ I have not lost my critical ear over the years but I would like to think that I have developed more diplomacy in dealing with such matters. But then again, not always,” he said laughing. “I have been known to have the occasional heated outburst!”

What a curious combination of modesty and self congratulation Anna thought to herself.

“After your parents died you somehow ended up in Venice. How did that come about?”

“I spent some time with a brother who was in holy orders but I very much wanted music to be my future. I was fortunate that a friend of my father, a wealthy merchant, learned of my circumstances and brought me to Venice to live with his family. I was accepted into one of Venice’s foremost monastery schools. I was made first soprano in their choir and as such I received room, board, and an education, as well as further instruction in music. I resolved to dedicate my life to music.”

“And then along came Herr Gassmann?”

“Yes, it was in Venice that I first met my mentor, the man who was destined to change my life forever. Il ciel ci donò!” Returning to the pianoforte, he played a series of notes in imitation of an Imperial fanfare. “Herr Gassmann was the Imperial Court composer. He was German-speaking but knew Italian well and each year came to Venice to oversee the performance of one of his Italian ballets or operas. For a period of time in the late 1750s or early 1760s he resided in Venice, serving as choir-master in a girls’ conservatory. He then went to Vienna to become the court ballet composer and later chamber composer to the Emperor. He was in Venice rehearsing for his opera when he heard me sing. I was then

DAMAGING WINDS

15. Impressed with my voice and being told that I had an aptitude for music, he brought me to Vienna to teach me composition."

Anna's uncle then interjected, "I recall that a celebration was held here in Vienna in 1816 for the fiftieth anniversary of your arrival. That would mean that you came in 1766."

"I recall it well — June 16, 1766, a Monday." Looking at Anna, Salieri asked if she could take notes were they to take a cab elsewhere. When assured that she had a notebook and a pencil, the old composer called for the servant and asked him to arrange for a cab. "If we are to embark on this journey of recollection I insist that we do it properly. Let us go where it all began so many years ago. Our destination is but a short distance from your rooms as you shall see."

Salieri told the cab driver that he wished to go to Minoritenplatz via the New Market. Turning to his guests he explained that the route he had asked the driver to take was somewhat longer but there was more to see. As they left Seilergasse and entered the New Market he pointed out that they were taking the ceremonial route used each year for the Corpus Christi procession. Pointing ahead to a large, impressive, if somewhat severe, building at the southern end of the market square he noted, "That is the Schwarzenberg Palace where Haydn's *Creation* was first performed in the spring of 1798. Papa Haydn, may he rest in peace, was kind enough to ask me to play the harpsichord for that performance. *The Creation* became one of my favourite works to conduct. Not only does it feature heavenly music but it has been the number one money maker for our widows and orphans pension fund concerts. We brought in almost 5,000 gulden the first time we performed it at an advent concert!" The carriage turned right through the Kapuzinerkloster into Spitalplatz and proceeded down the road running beside the Imperial Palace complex.

Salieri pointed to their left as they approached Josefsplatz where the road widened into a large square. He asked the driver to slow down as they entered the plaza and then as they drew near to the equestrian statue in the middle of the plaza he asked the driver to stop. "That is my dearest mentor, Dominus meus, Joseph II. I was at the unveiling ceremony in November 1807 when the statue was formally dedicated. It had been assembled during the summer. The horse and the rider were separately cast and assembled here in the square. It was then hidden behind scaffolding and a canvas cover to await the formal unveiling. What a grand occasion! Heaven knows I needed some cheering up that fall — mia cariss-

sima donna, my dearest wife, died in August 1807." Before Anna or her uncle could express their sorrow, the old composer pushed on as if the memory was too painful to dwell upon even after 15 years. Anna noticed tears forming in the old man's eyes. "When the moment of the unveiling came the Emperor Franz gave a signal, a bell rang, the canvas cover was lowered and the wooden scaffolding moved aside. The bells rang out, the trumpets and drums played my fanfares and 100 guns thundered. It was such a moving spectacle for the man who was my first Imperial benefactor. I was so touched, I had a bust of Joseph II made for my home as you may have noticed."

With tears gleaming in his eyes Salieri asked the driver to move on. A short distance further they passed under the arch that linked the Winter Riding School of the Hofburg Palace on the left with the stables for the Lipizzaner stallions on their right and came to the Michaelerplatz. Once more Salieri asked the driver to stop. Motioning to their left he pointed out the modest looking Burg theatre where many of his operas and those of others, like Mozart, had first been performed. Then motioning to their right he indicated a large building just beyond St. Michael's church. "That is the large Michaelerhaus where the famous poet Metastasio was staying when he taught me proper declamation. It is also the building where young Haydn lived in a fifth floor garret."

Salieri indicated to the driver that they ought to move on and a few moments later they arrived at the Minoritenplatz. Salieri, however, did not stop the cab when it reached the building in which Anna and her uncle had taken rooms. He asked the driver to go to the end of the plaza farthest away from the Hofburg Palace. The cab pulled up and stopped in front of a large Gothic church. Its massive, imposing walls rose before them. When they descended from the cab, Salieri took Anna and her uncle by the arm and steered them towards the set of three doors that made up the entrance to the Minorite Church. Although the main doors were impressively marked by a set of progressively smaller, recessed Gothic arches each with a carved stone statute, the structure had an unfinished, unadorned look. It had none of the elaborate sculptures and other decorative flourishes that adorned St. Stephan's Cathedral. Nor did it have the typical shape of a Gothic church. There was neither a central bell tower nor the twin towers found on many such churches. It was almost pyramidal in shape at this end, where the entrance doors stood. A single somewhat stubby tower stood on the right side as they faced the

DAMAGING WINDS

structure. Rather than add to the beauty of the church, it threw off the otherwise perfect symmetry of the structure at that end. As Salieri led the way to the entrance, he informed his companions that the church had once had a high central tower but it had been destroyed during the Turkish bombardment of the city in the previous century and had been replaced with a pyramidal roof.

"It is nevertheless an imposing edifice" Herr Rochlitz noted. "Anna and I have seen the other end of the church from our rooms, but have not had the occasion to come to this end or to enter it."

"Entra, ed osserva!" the old composer said as he ushered Anna and her uncle into the medieval church. "I acknowledge that it is less impressive than St. Stephens or Karlskirche, but it is a church that means a great deal to me. It is the official church of the Italian community in Vienna. My patron, Emperor Joseph II, declared it so. You mentioned earlier that you recall my 50th Anniversary day in 1816. That day began here. Evviva la goija! My four daughters and I left our house in the Seilergasse and made our way here for Sunday morning mass much as we have just done. The Church was filled with white flowers strung on silver bunting. From the tower a high bell tolled. How suitable, I thought, that my special day should begin in this very church where my professional life began. When Gassmann and I entered Vienn, I was two months shy of my sixteenth birthday. The next day, my master brought me here to offer my devotions. As we were going home he said to me, 'I thought it my duty to begin your musical education with God. Now it will depend upon you whether its results shall be good or bad; I shall have done my duty.' Men of that sort are rare! I promised him eternal gratitude for all the good he should do me and, praised be God, I have the right to boast that I honourably proved myself grateful to him as long as he lived and, after his death, to his family."

As they left the church and walked to their rooms Anna's uncle asked, "What instruction did you receive from Herr Gassmann?"

"He focused on vocal composition especially for the opera. But he knew that I would need language skills to succeed. As you know, many cultures have a place in Vienna. Its theatres then featured symphonic and vocal works by Italians, Austrians, Hungarians, Spaniards and English and works in German, Italian, French and Latin. French was, of course, the language of the Imperial Court and German the language of the government so I received daily instruction in both."

The Very Devil

You must not have been paying close attention to the German lessons, Anna thought to herself.

Salieri, oblivious to Anna's silent criticism, continued. "A priest, Don Pietro Tommasi, gave me lessons in Latin, Italian and in poetry. Father Tommasi was directed to devote a part of every Latin lesson to the translation of a passage from Fux's *Gradus ad Parnassum*, that celebrated work which Gassmann made the basis of his system of instruction. With a young Bohemian, I continued my studies in thorough bass, in the reading of scores, and the violin. At the same time, Gassmann himself taught me counterpoint.

"Gassmann insisted that I confine myself entirely to musical theory and that I resist the temptation to compose. But the longing to compose was beyond my ability to resist. When alone, I wrote an instrumental and then a vocal piece, composing my own text for the latter. Although I tried to hide my compositions in my bed, Gassmann discovered them and gave me a stern lecture and forbid me taking note paper into my room."

Anna's uncle surprised, said, "He favoured pure musical theory?"

"No, not all. He knew that books and scores were not enough. But he thought that I should learn the application of the theoretical rules and forms that I had been studying by attending the theatre. He took me regularly to the theater. Gassmann would conduct each of his new works only three times, after which he turned the task over to me as his apprentice. I would sit at the spinet or harpsichord then in use in the theater and would conduct the orchestra from there." Anna thought of Weber and Otto but said nothing.

"You speak with such reverence for the man. He must have been a great teacher."

"A great teacher and a great man. I owe so much to him. That is why I was so pleased last year to be able to adapt his opera *La Betulia* for presentation."

"Yes, that was part of the 50th anniversary celebrations for his widows and orphans pension fund, was it not?" Anna's uncle interjected.

"Just so, one of his many legacies. Yes, Herr Gassmann did so much more for me than just teach me to compose. It was he who introduced me to my greatest benefactor, the Emperor, Joseph II."

"How did that happen?" Anna's uncle inquired.

"You see three times a week Herr Gassmann participated in the Emperor's chamber wind ensemble. Somehow the Emperor learned that he

DAMAGING WINDS

had brought a promising youth from Venice, and expressed a desire to see me. Gassmann, of course, took me to the palace where I was very kindly received by the Emperor." Salieri looked off into the distance as if reliving the moment in his mind. He smiled and continued. "I can recall the event as if it was yesterday. The Emperor greeted me with the words, 'Ah, good morning, how are you pleased with Vienna?' As if my opinion of his capital city mattered to him.

"Frightened, embarrassed, and accustomed in Venice to the title of Excellency, I replied: 'Well, your Excellency!' I could immediately tell from the reaction of the others in the room that I had made some faux pas and instantly added by way of correcting my mistake: "Extraordinarily well, your Majesty!" A number of the musicians laughed at my embarrassment and simplicity: but Joseph went on asking me about my home, my family and so on, and, having fully recovered myself, I answered all of his questions with great discretion, and embraced the opportunity to express to the Emperor my gratitude toward Gassmann, who was of course present, and whom I presented as my second father. Joseph then required me to sing and play something from memory, which I did to his satisfaction. They then went on with the customary chamber concert. The music that day happened to be vocal pieces from Hasse's opera *Alcide al bivio*. I sang not only the alto in the choruses, but several solos with ease and correctness at sight from the score. This pleased Joseph very much and he ordered Gassmann always in the future to bring me with him which he did. And so began my service at the Imperial Court, never to be interrupted to this day."

At this point the trio arrived at the rooms taken by Anna and her uncle. Salieri bid them goodbye but not before arranging another interview session in a few days.

That night, as Anna prepared for bed she thought to herself that the little man was certainly not the ogre that she had expected. How cleverly he hides his true nature, she said to herself. She was reminded of Mozart's words, "These Italian gentlemen are very civil to your face". She must be on her guard and not let herself be fooled by the old man's charm. She needed to delve more deeply to discover the evil that she knew lurked beneath the surface, the evil that had led Salieri to make Mozart's life difficult. As Weber had said, it does not matter how charming he is. Beware the wolf in sheep's clothing, she repeated to herself.

Seeking the Truth

WHEN OTTO CAME TO TAKE Anna for a walk the next day, she told him of Rossini's poisoning joke. "He seemed to say it in jest but I have my doubts. It does not seem the sort of thing that one would joke about."

"I agree." Then after pausing for a moment and staring off into space, Otto continued. "No, it is clear to me that Rossini was testing your uncle to see how he would react. I am sure that what it really means is that even Italians like Rossini believe that Salieri did Mozart harm." Then turning back to look at Anna, he asked, "How did Salieri act when your uncle told him the story?"

"My uncle would never repeat such remarks. He insisted that we put it out of our minds."

Smiling understandingly, Otto replied, "Did the old man say anything about Mozart?"

Anna shook her head. "Not really, he changed the subject when my uncle asked to discuss Mozart further."

"Ah ha. More evidence of his guilt and shame. I can imagine that the guilt must be eating away at him."

"If it is, he is a master at not showing it. He was all grace and charm. But it is only a matter of time before he will let his guard down." Taking a hold of Otto's arm, Anna said with deep sincerity, "Otto, do you not agree that I shall be in a unique position over the next while to gather evidence of Salieri's guilt. Not only can I watch and listen for clues from Salieri himself, but I can use my uncle's reputation and the excuse of doing background research for him to interview other people myself. My uncle said the other day that Herr Weigl might know the truth. Apparently he was not only a pupil of Salieri but also worked with Mozart in staging his operas. You must have met him in helping with *The Marksman*." Otto

DAMAGING WINDS

nodded. Anna continued, "Through him and others, I am determined to seek out the truth and to share it with you and Herr von Weber."

"What?" A look of shock and concern appeared on Otto's face. Shaking off her hand on his arm, he took her by the shoulders and he said in a forceful tone, "Where did you get such a crazy idea? Carl was only making conversation. Anna, you are a young woman alone in a strange city. He is the Imperial Kapellmeister! You cannot and, I must emphasize, should not undertake any such task. What makes you think that Herr Weigl, who works closely with Salieri, would tell you anything negative about him? Investigating Salieri will not be easy. You are in no position to go digging about for dirt and even if you were, it is too dangerous. We are talking about a well connected court official who has already used desperate measures against a rival. You must drop this wild notion immediately. Your job is to sit at your uncle's side and take notes. That is all you should concern yourself with."

Later, after Otto had left, Anna sat in her room and gave his words of caution much thought. She appreciated his concern for her safety and well being. But did that mean that she had to abandon her task? Surely not. No, she was determined to seek out the truth. She owed that to her uncle. He had been so good to her. If she could save him the embarrassment of publishing an interview about Mozart's murderer, she had to do so. Besides, uncovering the truth about old Salieri could also help Otto by winning the favour of his mentor Weber.

She knew that she could not abandon her task, even if Otto, bless his heart, advised against it. But how was she to proceed? First, she knew that she must obtain a letter of introduction from your uncle. She knew only too well that she would not be permitted entry to many homes without one. Her thoughts turned to what such a letter ought to say and how she might convince her uncle to give it to her.

The next day Anna approached her uncle seeking the letter. "Uncle, a letter of introduction would permit me to assist you by doing some background research on Kapellmeister Salieri to supplement your interviews."

Her uncle looked puzzled at first, wondering why such a thing was necessary. Anna assured him that it was not that she planned any particular activity but if the need arose it would be of use to have the letter. "And think of the experience it would give me."

"What would you want this letter to say?"

Seeking the Truth

“Here is a draft that I have prepared. Of course, you may revise it as you see fit.”

Her uncle read her letter.

“To Whom It May Concern, the young woman bearing this letter is my niece Anna. She acts as my secretary and assistant. I am currently conducting a series of interviews with the First Imperial Kapellmeister Antonio Salieri in the hope of writing several articles for the *allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* on the Kapellmeister’s life and the people with whom he has worked over the years. I would greatly appreciate it if you would grant her an audience and deign to answer a few questions posed by her on your relationship with the Kapellmeister. I should be forever in your debt, your obedient servant, Friedrich Rochlitz, former editor of the *allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*. ”

“I shall sign the letter but I want your assurance that you will not bother people unduly.”

Anna, anxious not to lie to her uncle chose her words carefully in responding, “Uncle, you know me better than that. I would never bother people unduly. My only goal in seeking the letter is to be of assistance to you.”

“And I want to approve all proposed interviews.”

Anna nodded half-heartedly.

Later in the day with Felix at her side and the letter of introduction in hand, Anna appeared at the Court theatre asking to see Joseph Weigl, the director of the Italian opera. After some time, she was shown into an office where Weigl awaited her. He had a long, handsome face with a cleft chin and short, well groomed hair. He held himself straight with a confident, patrician air. His manner was quite formal and his German stiff and very precise.

Anna had intended to start her interviewing by praising his *Swiss Family* singspiel but before she could do so Weigl explained that he was quite busy and had very little time that he could spare for her. He had granted her a brief audience because of his respect for both her uncle and his mentor Salieri. On hearing these last words Anna questioned whether it was worth proceeding. Would someone who described Salieri as a mentor tell her anything about the Kapellmeister’s ill treatment of Mozart? But her uncle had said that he had also worked with Mozart. She decided to press on. She explained that she was especially interested in talking to him because he had worked with both composers.

DAMAGING WINDS

“Herr Weigl, what was it like to work with Herr Mozart?”

“It was both a joy and a constant trial. Mozart was a brilliant composer but he could also be a very demanding and difficult man. He had very definite ideas of how he wanted his work performed and presented. He insisted, for example, that his work be played and sung exactly as he had written it, note for note. He would not tolerate the taking of liberties — no improvisations or embellishments and certainly no skipping of notes or changes in rhythm. As the person who was assisting him in the rehearsals, he looked to me to impose his views on the performers and to insist on their meeting his high standards. With Mozart it was clear that he was in charge in all respects. The librettist played a role but Mozart was in command.”

“And Herr Salieri was different?”

“Very much so. He too could be demanding and wanted the work performed as written but his approach was more to consult, cajole and adapt. As the theatre master he was clearly in charge but nevertheless he greatly respected the words and the vision of his librettist. He saw his job as bringing the words and vision of the poet to dramatic life with the help of his music. It is one of the reasons that he had an excellent relationship with his librettists — other than the occasional falling out that he had with Signor Da Ponte, but those flare-ups were the exception rather than the rule. And the singers — there too Salieri took a different approach. He worked with them to take advantage of their strengths and to disguise their weaknesses. He believed that you had to adapt your music to the people singing. If a singer was incapable of singing the music as he had written it, he would adapt his music. A replacement aria would be written.”

“So, if I understand, Herr Weigl, you are saying that Salieri made his music easier to sing, to help the singers.”

“That is not at all what I said. The Kapellmeister believes in pushing each singer to the extent of his or her capabilities. Some of his arias are amongst the most difficult there are to sing. I was talking of the capability of each singer. If the range of a soprano’s voice was narrow, the Kapellmeister would not ask the singer to sing an aria that was written for someone with a wide range. But if he was writing for someone whom he knew had an excellent voice and the skills to use that voice he would write as difficult an aria as he thought the artist could master.”

“Was it this difference in personality and approach that created the tensions between Herr Mozart and Herr Salieri and led them into conflict?”

“Fräulein Anna, your question presupposes that there were tensions and conflicts.”

“But were there not?” Anna asked.

Weigl’s tone became even more formal and serious. “Undoubtedly you have been influenced by the vile rumours being circulated about the Kapellmeister. Those rumours are not worthy of serious discussion. They are gross exaggerations and utter nonsense. The Kapellmeister is a kind, gentle man who has done great service to the Imperial family and the Empire. He has been a boon to music and musicians in Vienna and elsewhere. His free instruction to students, his willingness to help other composers and especially his long years of service to our musicians’ widows and orphans pension fund and his efforts to organize the Society of the Friends of Music — these are the things that you should focus upon. I strongly recommend that you pay no attention whatsoever to these wild accusations. Certainly I shall not discuss them with you. If that is what you wish to discuss, I am afraid that I can be of no help to you.”

Anna rushed to assure Weigl that she would respect his wishes and not discuss the matter of the rumours further. Fearing that she had offended him, she apologized for any offence that she had given and suggested that she had bothered him enough. She thanked him profusely for granting her the interview and for sharing his experiences and left. She was shaking as she and Felix walked the short distance back to Minoritenplatz.

Felix seeing her ashen face and quivering hands, asked her if she was feeling unwell.

“I have made a very bad start I am afraid.”

“A bad start?”

Anna did not respond directly. She just shook her head and said softly to herself. “Oh, I felt sure that I could learn something from Herr Weigl.”

Felix, thinking she was talking to him, stated, “Herr Weigl is very well respected as a musician. I am sure that there is much that he could teach you about music if that is your wish Fräulein.”

“What?”

“I was simply pointing out Fräulein Anna that Herr Weigl does take music students.”

“Felix, what are you talking about?”

“Forgive me Mistress. I thought that you had addressed your remarks to me. I now realize that you were talking to yourself. I shall be suitably silent.”

DAMAGING WINDS

“Oh Felix, it is I that ought to apologize to you. I know that you were only trying to be helpful. I was so absorbed in my troubles that I did not realize that I was speaking out loud.”

“If you have troubles Fräulein Anna, perhaps I might be of some assistance.”

“If only you could be, but I do not see how you can assist in this instance.”

“You will never know if you do not ask.”

“Well, as you may know my uncle has asked me to play the role of dutiful scribe as he interviews Kapellmeister Salieri. I feel very uncomfortable participating in these interviews. I have heard rumours — the most dreadful rumours — that Herr Salieri, out of extreme jealousy, conspired against Mozart. He made Mozart’s life very difficult. He may even have poisoned him. Poisoned! I am determined to find out the truth behind these rumours. To do so I need to do some investigating and interviews of my own. Herr Weigl, having worked with both composers was my first interview and it went very badly.”

“If your task is to ascertain the truth, I may indeed be able to assist. My position brings me into contact with many people who knew Mozart and who know the Kapellmeister. Through these contacts, I might be able to arrange interviews for you.”

“Oh, could you? That would be very helpful. I would appreciate it if you could do me this favour.”

“Mistress, I am puzzled. You refer to this as a favour that I, the servant, would do for you. You need not ask my acquiescence — you may assume it.”

Anna blushed.

“Ah, I think I understand. You do not intend to tell your uncle that you are undertaking this task.”

Anna sheepishly nodded her agreement.

“You realize that I cannot lie to your uncle. Were I to do so and should it come to his attention I would be in serious trouble.” Sensing Anna’s disappointment with his answer, Felix paused. A thoughtful look came across his face and he continued. “Perhaps there is a way. I do have a duty to protect you and to act as your city guide.” Anna sensing where he was going, nodded her agreement. Felix continued, “In fact, your uncle has told me as much several times.” He paused. “And he has never asked where we go. He has relied upon you to tell him.” Anna again nodded.

“And to exercise your own good judgement.” Again he paused, “In light of this, I shall agree to do as you ask.” Anna’s face lit up but Felix in a serious tone stated, “But only on condition that you agree to let me decide whether you ought to visit certain parts of the city and at what times of day. Also, should it come out that you have been doing this behind your uncle’s back you must say that you told me both that you had your uncle’s consent and that he had told you to take me to act as your protector and guide.”

“Oh I agree. I agree. I shall meet your conditions,” Anna gushed, barely able to contain her joy and gratitude.

“I do, however, have one further condition.”

Somewhat warily Anna asked what it was.

“You must honour your uncle’s frequent admonition that as a reporter and music critic you keep an open mind. I too have heard the rumours of Maestro Salieri and although I am too young to have known the truth, I have never believed them. Maestro Salieri is and has always been highly regarded by the Emperor and the court officials. But if he is guilty of such actions, which I do not believe, but if he is, then it is only right that it be made known.” Anna smiled.

“If we are to work together, Fräulein Anna, perhaps you might share with me why you think that your interview with Herr Weigl did not do well.”

“Herr Weigl refused to discuss Herr Salieri’s relationship with Herr Mozart and seemed to take offence at my even hinting that there were tensions between the two.”

“You should not be surprised. Herr Weigl owes his current position and much else to the Kapellmeister. Salieri was not only a teacher to him, but a mentor and a friend.”

Anna thought to herself that Felix might well prove useful. Although a servant, he seemed to know so much about the people of Vienna. With his help she could better prepare for her next interview and choose her questions more carefully. Certainly she had learned something of both Mozart and Salieri from Weigl, but she was sure that there had been so much more to learn. She vowed to be more subtle in future and to seek the truth through gentle probing rather than direct questioning, at least until she learned more about the attitudes and prejudices of her interviewee.

DAMAGING WINDS



The next day while Anna was planning her investigation, Felix came into the room with a short, elderly man. Anna did not know what to make of him. He was impeccably dressed in a black frock coat and matching pantaloons, with a short, colourful waistcoat and an elaborately knotted cravat. Before Felix could introduce him, he walked over to her. "Forgive me for interjecting myself into your investigation but I wanted to introduce myself. I believe that I can be of assistance in better understanding Maestro Salieri. I am Giuseppe Carpani, the Imperial Court Poet."

Startled, Anna, did not immediately respond. Then gathering herself, she rose and gave a small curtsey. She extended her hand and he bent to kiss it. "Herr Carpani, your visit is an unexpected pleasure. I am, of course, familiar with your work. I have enjoyed Herr Beethoven's setting of one of your poems and I have read some of the things you have written about Herr Haydn. But I must admit that I am surprised that you would have any interest in my work. I am merely acting as a scribe for my uncle's interviews with Kapellmeister Salieri. It is he that you should be seeking and I am sorry to say that he is away at the moment."

"No, it is you that I am here to see."

"Me?"

"Yes. I understand that you are doing background research on Kapellmeister Salieri to assist your uncle." When Anna nodded, he continued, "and you have a special interest in the terrible rumours circulating about his relationship with Herr Mozart and the insane suggestion that the Kapellmeister poisoned Mozart." Anna was again taken aback. This time she was less successful in masking her surprise. He added, "For all its grandeur as the Imperial capital, Vienna is a small community. You cannot discuss such a prominent figure as Maestro Salieri and not come to the attention of those interested in preserving his reputation. Herr Weigl mentioned your meeting with him yesterday and your servant Felix, whom I have known a long time, confirmed what you are intending."

Anna glared at Felix and then turning back to Carpani quickly pointed out, "I can assure you that I am only interested in facts and not rumours."

"I understand that you too are interested in preserving another's reputation, in your case that of your uncle. You fear that if there were any truth to the rumours, it could greatly impact on your uncle's work with

Herr Salieri and the appropriateness of publishing a set of articles about him." Anna again glared at Felix. "I can understand your concern, but I can assure you that there is no truth whatsoever to the rumours. I have also taken an interest in these rumours and I too have decided to conduct an investigation. Kapellmeister Weigl thinks that if you ignore these rumours that they shall die away. I know better. One must deal with such matters or they shall blossom and grow and two hundred years from now people will remember Maestro Salieri not as a great composer but rather as the bitter, jealous rival of Mozart. So I am determined, as you are, to seek the truth. Although I am confident that such truth shall exonerate Signor Salieri and I suspect that you are less inclined to think so, I still believe that we may be of some use to each other."

When Anna continued to look troubled and doubtful, he noted. "Let me illustrate how I can be of help. Had you told me that you intended to interview Weigl, I would have pointed out to you that he was Salieri's pupil and long time assistant. He regards the Maestro as his second father. In fact, he has been working on a poem to appear on Salieri's headstone. Just the other day he asked me to read and comment on it. I think I still have the text here somewhere." As he rummaged in his pockets, he said. "It is unlikely that anyone who would compose such a memorial poem would have anything but good things to say about the Maestro." Then pulling a folded, somewhat dog-eared piece of paper from his pocket and smoothing it out, he read,

Rest in peace! Uncovered by dust
Eternity shall bloom for you.
Rest in peace! In eternal harmonies
Your spirit now is dissolved.
He expressed himself in enchanting notes,
Now he is floating to everlasting beauty.

What words to commemorate a murdering schemer, Anna thought to herself.

While Anna was lost in these thoughts, Carpani continued, "I know that you are thinking that I am an Italian and a friend of the Maestro and that I will be biased and try to convince you of his innocence. I assure you that I in no way fear the truth and I believe that I can be of use to you." Carpani hesitated before continuing. Anna could see that he was searching for the right words to express his next thought. "Now I do not

DAMAGING WINDS

want to offend you. Nothing could be further from my intention. But I feel that I must suggest to you that you are not capable of undertaking the investigation that you have planned." Carpani could see from Anna's expression that he had indeed offended her. "The simple fact is that access to certain people and materials is not likely to be available to any young woman, even one as lively and attractive as you. But this is where I can be of assistance. By virtue of my position as an official of the Imperial Court, I have the access that you need. If I can be assured of your good intentions and openness to the truth, I am happy to share with you what I learn and to make available to you certain materials and to introduce you to certain people."

When she still looked unconvinced, he added, "But why you ask would I offer my aid? The fact is that I need your help. Because of who I am many people are afraid to share with me their suspicions about the Maestro. This makes it difficult for me to address their concerns. Think of this as an exchange of information. I have told what I shall share. You in turn could share with me what you hear people saying about Maestro Salieri."

Before she could answer, Felix softly asked if he could have a word with her. Together they withdrew to a far corner of the room.

Anna was the first to speak. In a loud whisper she said, "How could you betray my trust in this fashion? You have told him everything!"

Felix, in a calm soft voice admitted that he had. "What I have done was with your best interests at heart. After our discussion, I soon realized that to do what needed to be done required the assistance of Signor Carpani. Even with your letter of introduction from her uncle, I would not be able to gain you access to people that you ought to interview or to any court files. But through Signor Carpani these people and these files could be opened to you." When Anna remained unconvinced, he informed her in a whisper that he and Carpani were not strangers to clandestine activities. During the Congress of Vienna he had been placed by Metternich's secret police in the English delegation's residence in Minoritenplatz because he read and spoke English, Italian, and French as well as German. He was expected to report periodically on what took place there. The person to whom he had reported was Carpani. He was the spy master. Felix looked at Anna and explained that Carpani could be of immense value as an ally but as an enemy, he could make her investigation impossible to conduct.

Anna did not know how to react. She was being told that she ought to ally herself with a key member of the secret police and an Italian friend

of Salieri at that. She looked beyond Felix at the dapper, little man who awaited her reply. She found it hard to believe that this elfish, old fellow could have ever played the role that Felix had attributed to him. Like Salieri, there seemed to be more to Herr Carpani than met the eye.

Felix could see that Anna seemed more troubled than ever. He again bent to whisper in her ear. "I did not wish to suggest that Carpani is to be feared. He is a gentle and helpful man who will honour his word. What I wanted to convey is that he can be of great assistance."

Anna began to seriously consider the offer of help from Carpani. After a moment she nodded. What choice did she have, she thought to herself.

When she and Felix returned to the centre of the room where Carpani awaited them, he soon resumed his cajoling, "I have heard that both Michael Kelly the singer and Lorenzo Da Ponte who wrote the librettos for Mozart's Italian operas are writing their memoirs." Anna did not recognize Michael Kelly and asked Carpani who he was. "Oh, Herr Kelly was one of the great tenors in Vienna at the time when Mozart was here. He sang the dual role of Don Basilio, the music master, and Don Cuzio, the magistrate, in Mozart's production of *The Marriage of Figaro*. But what makes him really interesting for your research is that he also sang in Salieri's *La scuola di Gelosi*. So like Da Ponte he worked with both Mozart and Salieri. These men would know what really went on between the two maestros. I am happy to write to them on your behalf."

Anna finally spoke, "I can give you assurance without hesitation that what I seek is the truth. I would greatly appreciate any help that you could offer if, as you suggest, it is shared without strings and with a similar commitment to the truth."

Carpani smiled broadly and replied, "Well then let us get started. So Fräulein, you have obviously given this some thought. How do you intend to commence?"

Anna replied confidently, "I have already started. Besides my brief interview with Herr Weigl, I have been reviewing my notes of the Mozart letters. That is what I was doing when you entered."

"The Mozart letters? You have letters from Herr Mozart?"

"Copies were given to my uncle by Frau Mozart for his articles on her husband. They include letters from his family to him."

"And what do they say about Maestro Salieri?"

"They have several very telling references to the Kapellmeister. Here is an example. It is a letter that Mozart wrote to his father shortly after his

DAMAGING WINDS

arrival in Vienna in 1781. He was assuring his father that he would prosper in Vienna. He notes that if Kapellmeister Bonno dies, Salieri will take his position and someone named Starzer will replace Salieri. This would create an opening that he hoped to be able to secure."

Carpani thought for a moment. "Bonno died a few years later I recall and yes Signor Salieri did replace him. I do not know about what other positions were filled but I do not think that Mozart was given one."

"And why not, Signor Carpani? Was he not eminently qualified? Did Kapellmeister Salieri block his advancement?"

Carpani responded with a shrug of his shoulders and the words, "Imperial appointments are complicated affairs affected by many things."

Anna continued, "There are other letters. Later that same year in December 1781 Mozart is again writing to his father. He has still not procured a position it seems. He tells his father that he had been considered for a position as a teacher of the Princess of Wurtenberg. Listen to this. Mozart says, 'The Emperor killed it for me, for the only one who counts in his eyes is Salieri.' It seems that an Archduke had recommended Mozart and apparently the princess would have chosen him but the Emperor recommended Salieri because of her singing."

"Salieri is noted as a teacher especially for the voice. That may be no more than choosing the best voice teacher over the best composer. You must admit they are different skills."

"Perhaps, but we still have a situation where a clearly superior composer is without a position while an inferior one is securely employed."

"Oh my dear what naiveté!" exclaimed Carpani. "First, even if one concedes Mozart's superiority in composition, which I acknowledge is certainly our view today, it may well not have been clear to the Emperor and others at the time. Mozart's music is, to some extent, an acquired taste. But there was likely much more going on than Mozart is telling us. How old was Mozart then? In his early 20's? Unmarried? Of uncertain character? A newcomer to the city? All of these things would have militated against making him the music teacher of a young girl. And what experience did he have as a teacher of voice? If you had been the girl's guardian would you not have favoured the older, married long-time resident of the city who was a court official and an experienced voice teacher? This hardly qualifies as unjustified preference for Salieri."

"Perhaps, but there is more. Here is one. This is from May 1783 and discusses Lorenzo Da Ponte. It seems that Mozart had met the poet and

learned that he was obligated to do a new libretto for Salieri. Listen to this. ‘He promised to write me something new after that, but who knows if he will keep his word, or even wants to.’ Anna then realized that the next words would embarrass her and Carpani and hesitated.

Carpani asked what was the matter. When she still hesitated he took her notes from her and saw the problem. “My dear if we are to help each other we must not seek to spare each other’s feelings. Let me read aloud what you were loathe to have me hear. ‘You know those Italian gentlemen; they are very nice to your face! Enough, we all know about them. And if he is in league with Salieri, I’ll never get a text from him, and I would love to show here what I can really do with an Italian opera.’ Now that is more interesting. Of course, Da Ponte was not in league with Salieri and he did produce a libretto for Mozart, *The Marriage of Figaro*. Not exactly new. Da Ponte had a tendency to borrow from others. Perhaps it would be more polite to say that Da Ponte excelled at adapting the work of others to Viennese tastes. *The Marriage of Figaro* was of course a very political French play by Beaumarchais that Da Ponte turned into a much less political Italian opera. But clearly Salieri did not block its performance.”

“I am not so sure. I have notes from a letter from Leopold Mozart, the composer’s father, to Mozart’s sister. Here it is. He says that it will be a feather in his son’s cap if he pulls off the opening of *The Marriage of Figaro* because to use his words ‘he has incredibly powerful cabals against him. Salieri and all his hangers-on will try to move heaven and earth.’”

Carpani looked pensive. “When is that letter written?”

“April, 1786.”

“Hmm. If I am not mistaken Signor Salieri may not have even been in Vienna at that time. You probably do not know Salieri’s career as I do. The years from 1783 to 1787 were ones when the Maestro was as much in Paris as he was in Vienna. More even. He wrote and helped produce *Les Danaïdes* and then when that proved very successful he was invited back to do *Les Horaces* and *Tarare*. I suspect that Leopold did not know what he was talking about or, if there was a faction against Mozart’s opera, it was likely not led by Salieri. The Maestro’s mind and likely his body were in Paris...” Carpani paused and then his face lit up. “You know it just occurs to me that the factions may have been formed against Da Ponte and not Mozart. Yes, that may be it. And they may have been led by Da Ponte’s competitor for Court Poet, Abbot Casti. I have heard much over the years about the bitter rivalry that existed between those two poets.

DAMAGING WINDS

Mozart might not have been the target at all. He may have simply been caught between the two warring poets. We masters of the word have our own rivalries and intrigues."

"But there is more. Shall I go on with the other letters?" Anna inquired.

"Oh, certainly, this is great fun."

Anna turned back to her notes. "Here is another one that refers to Salieri and his tricks. It is dated in July 1783. Again it is Mozart writing to his father. He discusses an incident where Salieri frustrated his attempt to have a replacement aria that he had written for a singer by the name of Adamberger performed at the Hofburg Theatre. Mozart says that Salieri took Adamberger aside and warned him as a friend that Count Rosenberg would not be happy to have an additional aria added to the work. He later learned that Count Rosenberg knew nothing of it. It was a trick of Salieri's."

"Too few facts to draw any conclusion from that. Was Salieri acting out of friendship and sincere concern for Adamberger or out of fear and jealousy of Mozart? How are we to know? What else do you have?"

"Here is a letter of December 1789 but it only refers to unidentified tricks played by Salieri that have misfired. It gives no details." When Carpani shook his head, Anna quickly added, "There may be more. I have not yet finished my review. But surely based on what I have already found you would agree that Mozart and his father believed that Salieri was using his position and influence to block Mozart's advance?"

"Yes, that seems clear enough but there is certainly not enough evidence to support the sort of rumours that are being circulated. But like you I promise to keep my mind open to new evidence. In reading these and other letters, we should bear in mind that letters are not always the best evidence, or at least evidence that needs to be carefully considered before we rely upon it."

"Why do you say that? Surely Herr Mozart and his father would have no reason to lie to each other?"

"Just think about how and why letters are written. They are not official, factual accounts of events. They are personal reflections on what a person perceives to have happened or what they want someone to believe has happened. Suppose, for example, that Herr Weigl had written a letter to me after your interview with him in which he told me that an impudent woman had visited him and made it clear in her questions and attitude

that she was prejudiced against the Kapellmeister and out to do damage to his reputation. Should I, as a reader, take those as proven facts? Would Herr Weigl have any reason to lie to me, his long-time friend?"

"But I was polite and had no such prejudice or objective," Anna protested.

"It is a hypothetical situation. I am not saying that he wrote any such letter, but if he had would his letter be proof of what he said?"

"I see your point. I agree that the letter would just set out his impression."

"Or what he wanted me to believe was his impression."

"Yes, I see what you are saying."

"So, besides the letters, what do you intend to do?"

"My uncle has referred from time to time to articles in his paper that suggest a bitter rivalry between Mozart and Salieri. He showed me an article written in 1786 or thereabouts, that talked of the reception of Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro* here in Vienna. That article said something to the effect that Mozart's music was appreciated by connoisseurs of good music except for those whose self-love and conceit would not allow them to find merit in anything not written by themselves."

Carpani smiled but shook his head. "Not all music critics are as well informed and unbiased as your uncle. This could be nothing more than a slap at people that the critic did not like or with whom he disagreed. Besides does it even mention Maestro Salieri?"

"I am going from memory so I am not sure. But who else could it be referring to? In any event, I am sure that there are other news reports that will provide more evidence. I am told that the local music journal here has a set of my uncle's journal and perhaps of other papers so I shall consult those."

"And then?"

"I hope to interview others here who knew them both. In talks with my uncle I have learned that Joseph Eybler, Ignaz Moscheles, Ignaz Mose sel all knew both. I am sure that there are others."

"I can help with those interviews. Moscheles may be hard to interview. He is a touring musician. He was here but I believe that he has set out for England. The others hold positions here. Mose, however, is the would-be biographer of the Maestro. He is likely to be well informed, but biased." He paused and reflected for a moment. "It seems that some of the evidence suggests that Mozart had difficulty obtaining a position at court.

DAMAGING WINDS

I can get you access to court records about Mozart's appointment to the court. When and what position he held."

"I did not realize that he ever had been appointed to the court."

"Oh yes. I cannot recall the details but I am sure that he was. Not right away. After some time. Like all bureaucracies, the Viennese court is expert at filling up pieces of paper. And we can get access to the performance records for the Hofburg Theatre. That would help us understand what obstacles, if any, were put in the way of Mozart getting his operas performed."

"That would be helpful. I am going to be busy I can tell but it is a worthy cause."

"How worthy we shall see, but necessary no doubt. I can perhaps help in other ways. I am sure that we can track down the doctors who administered to Mozart. They would be able to tell us if he was poisoned. And I can ask my friends in the Secret Police if they have a file on Mozart's death."

"Surely they would never help us uncover evidence about the court Kapellmeister."

"Why would they not? A suspected murder of one court official by another would have attracted their attention, especially when you think that the alleged murderer was known to have worked with Beaumarchais in Paris on an opera that anticipated the revolution. Remember that Beaumarchais's *Marriage of Figaro* had been banned in Vienna and also bear in mind that Salieri's protector Joseph II had died before Mozart. So the Secret Police might well have looked into this."

Carpani then became quiet as if deep in thought. After a moment Anna remarked, "Herr Carpani you seem distracted. Has some other approach occurred to you?"

"No, I was thinking of the Maestro. All of this reflecting on the past brought two very different images to mind."

"Would you be willing to share them with me?"

"Certainly. Perhaps they might incline you to be more appreciative of Maestro Salieri and his role in the Viennese music scene. They both involve Haydn and Beethoven and, of course, Salieri. The first occurred many years ago — twenty years ago perhaps. I was arriving at a party being given by Frau von Bernhard, one of Vienna's socialites. When I entered the room I looked about to see who else was there and I immediately spotted Beethoven who stood out in the crowd. His dishevelled

appearance and sloppy, informal attire made him easy to spot. I thought that I might approach him. As I drew nearer I saw that he was standing carrying on a conversation with two impeccably dressed men seated in front of him. The two men were wigged and wore the formal dress usual at such occasions, frock coat, knee length breeches and silk stockings. They were none other than the maestros Haydn and Salieri. To me that scene epitomized the disruptive element that Beethoven brought to music in Vienna, but also the continuity of the musical tradition. Beethoven was clearly refusing to conform to their style of dress and their musical conventions, yet Haydn and Salieri were his teachers and he was carrying on a lively conversation with them.”

“And the other scene?”

“It took place a few years later in March 1808. Herr Haydn was then old and in poor health. I had written an Italian translation of his *Creation* oratorio. It was thought that a gala production of it should be given at the University Hall as a way of celebrating his 76th birthday and his illustrious career. Maestro Salieri had agreed to conduct and Herr Haydn had consented to attend. The event attracted virtually all of Vienna’s nobility and all of its musicians, both amateur and professional. Even Herr Beethoven was in attendance. An Esterhazy princess commissioned Balthasar Wigand to paint a miniature, recording the event on the lid of a small box that was given to Haydn. That portrayal of the event was shown to me several times by Haydn when I visited his home. It shows him seated in the middle of the large crowd. Standing immediately on either side of him are Beethoven and Salieri. Would Haydn and Beethoven, both of whom so admired Mozart, have been seen thus with his killer? Surely not. Would the man who murdered Mozart have been asked to conduct this momentous performance for the cream of Vienna’s society? It makes no sense to me and I trust that when we are finished it shall make no sense to you.”

When Anna looked concerned, he added. “You shall make up your own mind. Do not worry. I shall keep my word.”

Carpani then rose from where he had been sitting with a burst of energy. He smoothed his waist coat and affirmed, “Well, we have a great deal to do. I shall set about the various tasks that I have taken on and Anna you do likewise. Felix, I expect you to take good care of my young assistant. Let us come together in a few days to see what has been achieved and what remains to be done.” And off he went with a spring in his step.

DAMAGING WINDS

Anna looked at Felix and with a tone of uncertainty said, "I do hope I have not made a terrible mistake. Oh, I do hope so. He seems convinced that Salieri is innocent and he seems set on convincing me of this." She then smiled weakly and added, "But he does seem sincere and as you pointed out he could prove helpful." Sighing she quietly murmured, "I hope I have not made a terrible mistake. I do hope not."



Later that day Otto came rushing into the room where Anna was sitting, making notes of her session with Carpani. He could do nothing to disguise his obvious elation. Anna looking up asked, "Dearest, what ever has you so excited? You seem ready to burst."

"Oh, indeed I am. We are finally going to be able to set a date for our wedding!"

"You have found a position?" Anna burst from her chair and gave Otto a huge embrace and a lingering kiss. After a few moments she broke the kiss and said, "Oh, Otto come sit with me and tell me all about it."

Otto pulled a chair over and sat beside Anna, who had resumed her seat. He took her hands in his and, looking her in the eyes said with great enthusiasm and pride said, "Some time ago Herr von Weber recommended me for a position at the new National Theatre in Munich. I did not tell you for fear of getting your hopes up. They have just informed him that they want me to start shortly. It is only an assistant to the assistant composer, but it is a job. And I shall have opportunities to compose replacement arias and the like. Think of it Anna. I shall be assisting in mounting operas in this brand new theatre."

"Finally we can start planning in earnest. Soon we shall be married!"

"Don't be too impatient. I think that by next summer at the latest we shall be man and wife."

"Next summer?"

Leaning forward and taking her into his arms, he whispered, "At the latest, my darling. It will go by much more quickly than you think. In the interim, I have to go to Munich."

"When must you leave?"

"I want to leave tomorrow."

“Tomorrow? So soon?”

“There is much to be done.”

“But we were to have several months together here. You assured me of this. Several months, not a few days!”

“I realize it is a disappointment to you... and of course to me. But it cannot be helped. I have to meet the court composer and his assistant and convince them that they have not made a mistake. And then I must find us a suitable place to live. Besides it is all that I can think about. I want to make an early start.”

She smiled at him broadly. Then another thought came to her and she said, “By the way I too have good news. Herr Carpani has agreed to assist me in my investigation of Salieri.”

“Carpani? The Court Poet? Is that not like a chicken asking one of the wolves to help him investigate the leader of his wolf pack?” In a mocking tone Otto asked, “Has your leader ever attacked the chickens?” Otto looked at Anna and laughed. “And besides I thought that we had agreed that you would drop this silly idea.”

“No, we agreed that it was not practical for me to do it alone. I am no longer alone. Felix will accompany me around the city and Herr Carpani will open doors and arrange meetings for me. He has given me his word that he will not interfere in my work.”

“Your work? My darling Anna, you are no detective. Just drop this impossible mission. I know that you are being forced by your uncle to sit through his interviews with the old Italian. I do not hold this against you and neither does Herr von Weber. Let us just leave it at that.”

Then taking her in his arms he kissed her once more. “I refuse to have the old Italian ruin our great news. Nothing more about Salieri. We can spend our time together so much more pleasantly. Is your uncle at home?” And he kissed her deeply. All thoughts of Salieri vanished from Anna’s mind and she passionately returned Otto’s kiss.

The next morning Otto came to say goodbye. He was dressed in his travelling clothes and Anna could tell that he was anxious to be on his way. Yet she so wanted to spend more time with him. She was not sure when he would return from Munich. She invited him in but he reminded her that it was best if he was on the road early. So she said her goodbyes to him in the street by the coach that Weber had been kind enough to rent for him. He was so touched by his mentor’s gesture that all he wanted to talk of was how much he would miss working with Weber each day. But

DAMAGING WINDS

what of me she thought to herself? Otto, noting the disappointed look on her face, quickly gave her a kiss and said, "And of course I shall very much miss spending time with you." She smiled.

As Otto's coach drove out of sight, a wave of sadness swept over Anna. It seemed to her that life was always taking unexpected turns. After only a short reunion they were once again parted. Instead of spending time with her beloved, she was to spend months with the old Italian!

Two Very Different Students

WHEN ANNA AND HERR ROCHLITZ were next shown into the parlour of the Salieri home, her uncle approached the old composer eager to talk. “Maestro, today I have a story to tell *you*. Yesterday just before dinner I was walking on the Graben when I met young Schubert.”

“Ah, Franz.” Turning to Anna he said, “I can still see him in my mind’s eye standing right where you are now standing Anna. I do so miss the regular study sessions that we used to have.” Then returning his gaze to Anna’s uncle he asked, “He looked well?”

“Very well, but Maestro I have much to tell. With your permission I shall continue my story.” The old composer nodded his agreement and ushered Anna and her uncle to seats in the parlour. Anna’s uncle, bubbling with enthusiasm, resumed, “Schubert told me that if I wished to find Herr Beethoven in a natural and jovial mood, at least as good a mood as he is capable of these days, that I should accompany him that very minute to an inn where Beethoven was taking refreshments with other musicians. Off we went together.”

As her uncle spoke, Anna could not help but reflect further on how unfair life could be. While she had been talking with old Carpani about the even older Salieri, her uncle had met young Schubert, her hero. To her uncle the young composer had been but a means to an end — a way to meet Beethoven. To Anna, Schubert was himself the person of interest. Oh, what that chance meeting with him would have meant to her!

Her uncle, all energy and joyful enthusiasm, continued, “When we arrived most of the places were taken. There were a number of people that I did not know. Beethoven seemed in good spirits and acknowledged

DAMAGING WINDS

our entrance. We found seats from which we could see him. He spoke so loudly that hearing was not a problem. It was not a conversation but rather a monologue. He spoke at random on many topics. He philosophized and politicized, his audience in rapt attention, laughing and nodding as appropriate."

Salieri, deep in thought, replied, "Ludwig and Franz, such very different students ... and such very different people."

"Maestro, surely this is a sign that today we ought to discuss Herr Beethoven."

"Happily. I take great pride in each of my students, even those who have taken a false turn on the road," the old composer said with a broad smile. "It was Haydn who first introduced me to Ludwig. He was then in his early twenties and was already a talented performer and a would-be composer. He had come to Vienna in 1792 to work with Haydn. But his study with Haydn lasted but a year. I in no way wish to cast aspersions on the memory of one of our greatest composers and a dear friend, but to be honest, Ludwig was not happy with Haydn as a teacher. He told me that he had been frustrated at what he saw as Haydn's lack of interest in him and inadequate attention to his instruction. This criticism together with Haydn's decision to return to England in 1794 drove Ludwig to seek out other teachers. I seem to recall that he tried Schenk for a time before settling on Albrechtsberger."

"Who?" Anna asked innocently.

"Forgive my niece, Maestro. I shall remind her that she is to sit quietly and take notes," said Anna's uncle while giving her a meaningful glare.

"There is no need for that," Salieri said, coming to Anna's rescue. "I am happy to answer her question. Johann George Albrechtsberger, young lady, was the Kapellmeister of St Stephen's Cathedral and much respected for his knowledge of counterpoint and free composition. If you are truly interested in music, he is someone who ought to be known to you." Then turning back to Anna's uncle, Salieri continued. "Albrechtsberger, as distinguished as he was, did not teach how to write for the voice — opera, choral works, songs. It was this — putting words to music — that led Ludwig to me. Years later he told me that it was the combination of my reputation as both an opera composer and as a careful and caring teacher that had drawn him to me. He studied with me until 1802 and even thereafter he would periodically seek out my advice. He would come to me with some crumpled score in hand and after I had spent hours com-

Two Very Different Students

menting on it, he would ignore all of my suggestions. Seek out advice and not follow it — that was Ludwig.”

“But what was he like as a student, Maestro?” asked Anna’s uncle.

“Difficult, stubborn — he was without doubt the most difficult of all my many, many students. And I am not alone in thinking that. All three of his teachers, Haydn, Albrechtsberger and I were of one mind about his study habits. In those days when we got together he was a regular topic of conversation. We valued this young German highly, but,” laughed Salieri, “we shared a teacher’s frustrations with a brilliant but challenging student. All three of us felt that he was so headstrong and self-sufficient that he refused to accept what was presented to him as a subject of study. He would not learn from others. He had to learn through harsh experience.”

“I remember one day...I criticized his work saying that the melody that he had composed did not suit the text of the aria that he was setting. I was quite firm in my criticism...but that night I could not get his melody out of my head. The next day I made the mistake of admitting this to him. He replied with a self-congratulatory smile on his face, ‘Then, Herr Salieri, it cannot have been so utterly bad.’ Try as I might thereafter he would not accept that however good the melody it still had to suit the words being put to music.”

“So you taught him the setting of words to music. But I am puzzled in that he has primarily worked in German and yet you yourself have said that you did not feel comfortable in that language.”

“True. I taught him using Italian texts. When he made it clear to me that he wanted to do choral and operatic works in his native German, I suggested that he study my French opera, *Les Danaïdes*. Admittedly it was not German, but it demonstrated how I had adapted the principles that I had taught him for Italian opera to another language.”

“And he accepted this approach?”

“Yes, he told me that it proved very helpful.”

“But I understand that you had a falling out.”

“Several,” said Salieri with a laugh. “But it would be wrong to think that we dislike each other. Ours is a long standing, complex relationship which has of necessity been based on mutual respect for each other’s talents and at least in part upon tolerance of each other’s foibles. How else can you explain that our paths have crossed so many times over decades?” Looking from Anna to her uncle, he said, “You can rest assured that he would not have continued to have anything to do with me if he had not

DAMAGING WINDS

respected me. He has never had time for people whom he did not respect in some manner or other. You have to agree with me that diplomacy, tact and tolerance have never been Ludwig's strengths." Anna's uncle smiled knowingly. An idea then seemed to occur to Salieri. "I can illustrate what I mean. I recall Frau von Bernhard complaining to me that Ludwig was the most rude and offensive of party guests. If he actually came to one of her parties, he would stick his head in the door and make sure there was no one there whom he disliked before entering. And then once inside he would absolutely refuse to play a single note on the pianoforte."

"You say that your paths have crossed often over the years. We obviously know you were his teacher, how else have you had to deal with each other?"

"In many ways. First, I helped him showcase his talents and introduced him to important people. Remember that he was not from Vienna. To succeed here, he needed the support of people of substance and importance. As I am sure that you know, Rochlitz, every year I have organized Christmas and Easter charity concerts for our widows and orphans fund. I tried to use these concerts to help my students by giving them a stage on which to perform. I recall very well that in the first of our Easter concerts in 1795 Ludwig performed his piano concerto in B flat. The next night he improvised on the pianoforte. If I am not mistaken those concerts were Ludwig's first public appearances as a composer and virtuoso pianist. At another of our concerts a few years later, about the time that I was working on my *Falstaff*, he presented one of his works with Emperor Franz and the royal family in attendance. I, of course, introduced Ludwig to them."

"He must have been very appreciative."

"In his own way — he complained that he was not being paid!" Salieri laughed. Then looking more serious he added, "But he did dedicate his Opus 12, a set of violin sonatas to me. I was touched — deeply touched. One of the very few times he ever dedicated a work to one of his teachers I believe. Then he wrote and published a series of piano variations on my *La Stessa La Stessima*. It was a joy to listen to them." Smiling wryly he added, "But I suspected that Ludwig wrote them to profit from my popularity. He was always short of money."

"But at some point you had a falling out. Why?"

"Why? Because he is the most stubborn, selfish person who ever composed music! Perhaps that shocks you, mia cara Anna," continued Salieri,

Two Very Different Students

noting Anna's expression. "But just because someone writes wonderful music does not mean that he is a wonderful man."

"But you must admit that his music is beautiful," she quickly replied.

"Some of it is absolutely wondrous! That is why I became so upset with Ludwig. I know what he is capable of and I hear what he produces. It so disappoints me."

Anna's uncle, fearing that his niece's questioning would upset the old composer, intervened asking Salieri to return to his explanation of his break with Beethoven.

"It was in 1808. I remember the year very well because it was the year when Haydn attended his last public concert — his retirement gala. I conducted Carpani's new Italian translation of Haydn's *Creation*. Ludwig, like so many others, was in attendance. Everything seemed fine between us. Yet by the end of the year we were at each other's throats. You see Beethoven decided to organize a concert on the day that I had used every year for one of my charity events. It was no accident. He knew the public was accustomed to attending a concert on that day and he was desperate for money — money that properly belonged to the widows and orphans! His concert featured his Choral Fantasy. His Choral Fantasy — a work that drew on the very lessons I had given him! And how did he use my lessons? To steal away my audience and my musicians! Can anyone blame me for taking umbrage with him for this scheduling nightmare?"

"That must have been a very trying time. But you reconciled?"

"To a degree, but we have never been truly on friendly terms thereafter."

"I assume that he apologized."

"In his own way. Those words never crossed his lips or if they did I never heard them. What he did do was visit my home. Regrettably I was out but he wrote on his calling card that my student Beethoven had visited. When I came home and saw those words I knew how much they had cost him. He was then at the height of his fame and to characterize himself as a student and especially as my student must have been hard for him. I knew his apology was genuine."

At this point, Salieri noticed that Anna had a knowing smile on her lips. "There is something that you are not telling me."

"I have heard the story from someone else," replied Anna.

"How?"

"Herr Moscheles told me."

DAMAGING WINDS

"Ignaz Moscheles? How would he have known of this? I did not tell him. And when did you meet him?"

"I met him at a dinner party given by Herr Weber a short while ago. Herr Moscheles told us that he visited your home that day when you were away and saw Beethoven's note. It was what led him to study with you. He told us that if the great Beethoven thought that he could learn from you, surely he could learn as well."

"I had no idea. It makes me even more appreciative of Ludwig's visit that day. Moscheles is another student for whom I have both pride and affection."

"And that note brought you and Beethoven back together?" Anna asked.

"At least we were civil with each other. Periodically we would see each other and on rare occasion we worked together. In 1812, for example, at the premier of his symphony in honour of Wellington's victory, Ludwig asked me to direct the percussion section. The only time that I have ever conducted cannons!"

Anna's uncle added, "And then about four years ago you jointly wrote a letter to my paper promoting the metronome." Salieri nodded and smiled.

Anna, however, wanted to hear of Schubert and so she asked "What about Herr Schubert? How did he differ from Herr Beethoven as a student" asked Anna.

"Who is conducting this interview?" her uncle instantly interjected.

"Oh, I am sorry" Anna replied.

"I marvel at how you have gone from the sullen, silent young lady forced at her uncle's insistence to sit through these interviews to a lively and questioning participant."

"You did not want to participate in the beginning?" questioned Salieri. "I remember well your look of fear and the occasional scowl in our first session. So what was it that made you reluctant? My age? The style of my music? Or was it those nasty rumours circulating about me?"

Anna blushed noticeably and Salieri commented, "I have my answer. But now you know better, I trust."

Anna hesitated in responding. Although she no longer thought him an ogre, she had no doubt that the old composer had used his position to gain preferences over Mozart and probably many others. But dare she even hint at this? Surely not. Whatever chance she had to get at the truth hinged on his trusting her. While all of this flashed through her mind,

Two Very Different Students

the words that came out of her mouth were more simple and straightforward. "Your charm has won me over," she lied.

The old composer smiled broadly and said, "You asked about young Franz. He differed from Ludwig in almost every respect except talent."

Anna's uncle, determined to take back control over the discussion was quick in asking if Salieri really thought that Schubert was as talented as Beethoven.

"I expect great things from young Schubert. Mark my words; someday people will remember me as his teacher rather than he as my student. I first met Franz when Napoleon's army was knocking on the gates to Vienna. Young Franz brought joy to a very trying time." He stared into space and gradually a broad smile lit up his face. "He was a ten year old soprano. I was assisting Dr. Innocenz Lang, the principal of the Imperial-Royal Seminary in selecting students to join the Boys Choir that sings in the Court Chapel at the Palace at religious services and various ceremonies. You will recall that I, too, had been a boy soprano in a choir when I was discovered by my dear mentor. Each time I attended these tryouts I imagined finding someone who could succeed me as court composer the way that I had succeeded Herr Gassmann. I hope that Franz will be that person."

"He appeared in response to a newspaper notice announcing two positions for boy choristers. Like all applicants he had to submit to a competitive examination. As required he brought his school marks together with evidence from his parents that he had been taught singing and was fit to enter the first Latin class and, given the then current health concerns, his parents had to prove him past the danger of smallpox."

"As it happened three boys stood out. Franz, another boy named Franz — Mullner I believe — and a third boy named Maximilian something. What was his name? Oh, anyway it does not matter. These three boys were selected. The appointment of those boys was taken very seriously. Lang and I shared extensive correspondence on the matter with the Court Music Official, Count Ferdinand Kuefstein, as well as with the Supreme Court Chamberlain, Prince Ferdinand von Trauttmansdorff-Weinsberg."

"Young Franz was soon decked out in his military-like uniform, with a tricorne hat and a coat with an epaulet on one shoulder. The uniform was more than just an appealing look. The boys were required to submit to military-like discipline, marching and singing in formation. Schubert

DAMAGING WINDS

also played the first violin and occasionally conducted the school orchestra. Ludwig could have benefited from such discipline."

"Is this what you meant when you said that the two were very different?" Anna asked.

"In part, I had the advantage of teaching Franz from a much younger age and more thoroughly than I did Ludwig. It is, therefore, not surprising that he was more teachable and less challenging of my authority and ideas. Being in his twenties and already a composer, Ludwig had many fixed ideas of his own when I began to work with him."

"Did you have a particular style that you sought to inculcate in your students that Schubert accepted and Beethoven did not?" asked Anna's uncle.

"No. Although I have definite views on the interplay between music and words, I do not prescribe for my students what they should compose; each has free choice according to his talents and inclinations. I do not use any textbook in my instruction in the art of composition. I do, however, in a strict manner go through whatever is placed before me for correction. It was my careful review that Beethoven most cherished in me as a teacher."

"So how long did you instruct young Schubert?"

"For about eight years, a period of time that saw him grow in stature as a man and as a composer." Then laughingly he added, "Well at least in some respects. He is destined as I was to live life as a man of modest height. But as a composer how he has grown! When a few years he invited me to attend at a local church to hear the first performance of a mass that he had written, I was impressed beyond measure. I told him, as I have told you, that he would bring me great fame in the future as his teacher."

"But he has not yet enjoyed anything like the success of Beethoven," Anna's uncle noted.

"But he is still quite young. He is just now the age that Ludwig was when he became my student."

"But he is no longer your student," Anna's uncle noted.

"Yes, why is that?" Anna interjected.

"Franz has fallen under the influence of some of his friends who want him to strike out on his own as a composer of German songs and the like."

"I love his German songs," Anna noted.

"I am not saying that they are not entertaining. But tell me how can one make a living composing such songs? I tried for some time to encour-

Two Very Different Students

age Franz to write operas and other works for which there is a market. In other words, I have tried to groom him to be a court composer. It was always my hope that he would succeed me here at the Court. Not necessarily immediately but after he had served some time with a theatre or with one of the noble families that have traditionally retained such composers."

"But is that realistic today? The competition is fierce for the few positions available."

"Perhaps so, but Franz has the makings of one of the greatest composers of ours or any other time."

"So how long ago did he go his separate way?" asked Anna's uncle.

"Not long after he participated in my 50th Anniversary celebration."

"The 1816 celebrations that you told us about the first day? Was Herr Schubert there?" asked Anna.

"He joined us in the evening with many of my other students."

"Was Herr Beethoven there?" Anna continued.

"No, Ludwig did not attend." Salieri paused for a moment. "Perhaps he was out of town or ill or, knowing Ludwig, just did not want to socialize. Given his hearing problems he does little of that."

"Nevertheless, that must have been very special," commented Anna's uncle, trying to cut off Anna and regain control of the discussion.

"Certamente! Yes, it was. What, doubtless, added much to the occasion was the fact that the year before, I had been brought very low by a fit of sickness. It was such a joy to be in good enough health to share the day with my family and students."

"Could you tell us more of that event?"

"Another day perhaps. I have a number of things that I must do now."

With that Salieri signaled that the interview was over for the day.

Once Anna and her uncle were in the cab that was to drive them to their rooms, he turned to her, "I am not happy with your frequent interjections. I expect you to be polite and deferential at all times. We are guests in the house of one of Vienna's most important citizens, a person who has been good enough to submit to my questioning. Need I remind you how important these interviews are to me?"

Anna gave him her assurances and he smiled and patted her on the hand. "Surely it is better that I am interested," she added.

"Yes," her uncle nodded "I hope that I have seen the last of the sulking, morose young woman who attended the first interview."

The Doctor Speaks

Anna and her uncle were unable to arrange an interview with Salieri for a week. The old composer explained that every summer he spent some time on one of the estates of Count Moritz Dietrichstein and he was to do so that coming week.

"I have many errands to run this week that shall keep me very busy, my dear," Anna's uncle informed her. "I trust that you will find something to occupy your time."

Anna assured him that she could. Privately she decided to put all of her energy into her investigation. She knew that one of the allegations against Salieri was that he had used various techniques to keep Mozart's operas off the stage. Anna intended to prove this interference. With this evidence perhaps she could finally convince her uncle to drop these silly interviews.

First, thought Anna, I need to know what operas Mozart wrote during his years in Vienna and when they were performed. She went through her uncle's writings about Mozart and her own notes from the composer's letters and began to develop a list of the operas written during his decade in Vienna. For each she would need to know when it was written, if its performance had been delayed or its run cut short. She spent all of two days gathering what information she could, carefully secreting her research before her uncle returned each evening. It bothered her that she was keeping this from him, but it was, after all, for his own good.

The morning of the third day when her uncle left to deal with his various matters she pulled out her list and began to add to it. Finally, by mid afternoon she was finished. With some pride in her work, she looked over her list.

The Doctor Speaks

1782 — *The Abduction from the Seraglio*. A German singspiel. Mozart discussed the idea of a German opera with his father in April of 1781. Received the libretto in late July. Initially told his father that it was to be staged in September to mark the arrival of the Grand Duke of Russia. Later informed his father that it could now be completed at a more leisurely pace since the Russian nobleman was not to arrive until November. No indication of interference. Many letters expressing frustration at the staging of a Gluck opera in place of his. To be staged at Easter 1782. It did not, however, make it to the stage until mid July 1782.

Anna had smiled when she had first found these letter since she was convinced that this was the first evidence of an attempt to keep Mozart's opera off the stage. The more of Mozart's letters that she had read, however, the less certain she became. She noted that Mozart's letters referred to problems with the text and the librettist. The problems may have been with the work and not as a result of outside machinations. Many delays for sure but there was little indication of any interference and no mention of Salieri in the letters. Perhaps Mozart himself was as yet uncertain of what was transpiring. Yes, that must be it, she concluded. Mozart had not yet realized what was really going on.

1786 — *The Impresario*. One Act singspiel for special event in February. No operas for over three years! Why? Letter to his father about approaching Lorenzo Da Ponte, newly arrived in Vienna, for an opera and being told that Da Ponte was committed to writing a libretto for Salieri. Suggested to his father that if Da Ponte was in league with Salieri that he might never do a libretto for Mozart!

1786 — *The Marriage of Figaro*. An Italian opera with Da Ponte. Worked on in 1785 and finally staged in April or May, 1786. Father suggested in letter that Salieri and his cabal would move heaven and earth to block its performance! Performed only 9 times!

1787 — *Don Giovanni*. An Italian opera with Da Ponte. Staged in Prague in October pursuant to a special commission. But as Weber had asked, why had there been no such commission in Vienna? Weber said at our dinner party that the librettist Da Ponte had been called back from Prague by Salieri before the opera's premier. Another dirty trick?

DAMAGING WINDS

1790 — *Cosi fan tutte*. Yet another Italian opera with Da Ponte. Staged in Vienna in January. Another long gap between works — why?

1791 — *La Clemenza di Tito*. Italian opera seria done under commission for the royal coronation in Prague.

1791 — *The Magic Flute*. Mozart's last opera, a German Singspiel. Letter about taking Salieri to this opera and Salieri's enthusiastic response to it? Seems odd and out of place. Had they reconciled their differences? Just before the alleged poisoning. Was Salieri seeking to hide his true feelings to throw suspicion off of himself? Had an unsuspecting Mozart been fooled?

Anna knew that the list was a good starting point but she needed to do much more. The story was incomplete and certainly not enough to convince her uncle. What next? Carpani had arranged for her to be granted access to the National Theatre records. She decided that she and Felix would attend at the Court offices where the records were stored that very afternoon.

Anna and Felix spent the next day and a half looking at the court theatre records in the library of the Berg Palace. On their arrival with Carpani's letter of introduction, they had been admitted immediately and shown to a long table where they seated themselves. At Anna's request various documents were brought to her. She called upon Felix from time to time to translate documents not in German. Anna found the experience to be frustrating and unfulfilling. She had expected a well organized collection. Instead she was presented with incomplete lists of performances, some posters, and newspaper notices. These isolated documents were neither easy to use or as complete or useful as she had expected. She was offered the theatre account books but after a brief review of one she decided that the lists of names and amounts would be of little help to her.

When not translating for Anna, Felix spent his time reading some small notebooks that had been brought by the clerk assigned to them. Unlike Anna, whose frustration showed prominently on her face, Felix seemed quite pleased. After some time Anna decided that she had to know what he found so enjoyable. He handed her one of the volumes, explaining that these were a few of the diaries of Count Karl Zinzen-dorf. Anna looked at the one that had been given to her. It was tidy in

The Doctor Speaks

appearance, being written in a small, neat hand. She could not, however, decipher the unfamiliar words, making out only a few names and dates.

"They are in court French," Felix informed her, "and really quite amusing. Parts, I am afraid are not for the ears of a young lady." When Anna looked annoyed, he added, "Ah, but some passages will be of real interest to you. It seems that Count Zinzendorf went to the theatre virtually every evening and he tells us what was being performed."

Anna smiled broadly. "He does! How marvellous."

"And on occasion he comments on the opera and its performance "

"Can we look together at the volumes for the years that Mozart was in Vienna?"

"Those are the volumes that I have before me."

"Wonderful! Can we see what he says about Mozart's works?"

"We can and we shall. And perhaps we ought also to look at what he says about Kapellmeister Salieri — by way of comparison"



Two days later Carpani came to visit Anna. Felix showed him into the parlour where Anna was reviewing some notes and making annotations on her list of the Mozart operas.

"I have made some progress in our investigation," he proudly declared. "I have here a copy of the appointment of one Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart to the post of Imperial and Royal Chamber Musician. Carpani held up a piece of paper. "The position was granted, 'in view of his knowledge and capacity in music and the approbation he has earned thereby' ". Carpani explained that the appointment had assigned Mozart an annual salary of 800 gulden, something he called "a handsome stipend." He continued, "It does not specify any duties required of Mozart so it was likely a sinecure given him as an acknowledgment of his skills and as a means of ensuring him a living."

Anna's interest was obvious. "May I see it?" Taking the paper from Carpani, she noted, "It is dated December 7, 1787." Suddenly her face lit up and she exclaimed, "Of course!" She went over to the table where her summaries of the Mozart letters lay. She quickly found what she was looking for and brought it to Carpani. "I noted this passage earlier when I

DAMAGING WINDS

was looking for references to *Don Giovanni*. On December 19, 1787 Mozart wrote to his sister saying that she had probably already heard of his writing of *Don Giovanni* and its triumphant success but she likely had not yet heard of what he refers to as the Emperor taking him into his service. This," she said waiving the document "is what he was referring to."

"Undoubtedly so."

"But why did it take six years after he came to Vienna? That seems a long time in coming. But it at least shows that Salieri's intriguing was not entirely successful."

"Anna, Anna. First, you need to know that the Emperor would not likely have granted any such position without the knowledge and at least the passive acceptance of Maestro Salieri, the court composer. It is inconceivable to me that this would have been done if Salieri had actively opposed it. Secondly, we have no real proof of any such intrigues."

"We have the letters of Mozart and his family."

"We have discussed those. They prove only that the Mozarts believed there to have been intrigues. What we have not yet found is independent evidence that they actually occurred. On that score I have more news. In talking with my friends in the Secret Police, I came across someone who accompanied the Emperor and Salieri to Frankfurt in 1790 for the Imperial election and to Prague in 1791 for the royal coronation. He had some very interesting things to say. He remembers well that Salieri brought with him to both events no fewer than three Mozart masses which he conducted for the official ceremonies. Tell me Anna is this something that you would do if you wanted to hinder someone's progress or to damage his reputation."

"I agree it is odd. But can this policeman's memory be trusted? To quote you, we have no independent verification." Carpani smiled and nodded. "Perhaps by this time," Anna continued, "the Kapellmeister had come to realize that he could not defeat Mozart."

"Perhaps. Or maybe there never was any such desire. What, by the way, has come of your review of the court theatre records?"

"Very little I am afraid. The records are frustrating in the extreme. I did find records for the 1785-1786 theatre season in the *Weiner Theaterkalender*. It is not much but it is the best that I could find."

"Oh, that might be revealing. If I am not mistaken, *The Marriage of Figaro* first appeared that season."

"I am impressed with your memory," Anna interjected.

The Doctor Speaks

Carpani, smiling proudly, continued. "You have told me that one of the allegations you hear knocked about is that the Maestro's cabal had that opera closed down after only 8 or 9 performances. So what do the records show?"

"I prepared a list of the performances. I have no experience with the-atre schedules so perhaps we can look at it together."

"Certainly. Let us look at this list of yours. Have you totalled the performances?"

"I have counted the number of performances of Figaro and the allegations are true. It had only 9 performances."

"But surely we ought not to stop at that. Is not the issue whether 9 performances was unusually few? What other operas were presented that year?"

"The Kapellmeister had several of his operas performed."

"Which ones and how many performances were there of his operas?"

"His *La Grotta di Trofonio* was performed 11 times and his *La fiera di Venezia* was performed twice."

"I fail to see any evidence of preference here or put another way any evidence of the premature closing of the Mozart work. Eleven performances is not many more than Mozart's nine. And *La Grotta* was one of the most popular operas put to music by the Kapellmeister."

While Anna pondered how to answer Carpani, he continued to look at her list. Before she had formulated her response he resumed in an animated tone. "Anna, did you notice all of these performances of various Paisiello operas? Look at all of them. His *King Theodore* was performed 11 times and his *Barber of Seville*, 10 times. And here are other Paisiello works. It would seem that neither Mozart nor Salieri was the most popular composer that year."

"I had not noticed ..."

"Need I remind you again to keep an open mind?" interjected Carpani. "That means looking at all of the evidence. What we need to check is if any other operas were performed less than 9 times." Carpani studied the schedule in his hand, running his finger down the page and mumbling to himself. Then looking up he said, "Yes, look here Anna. Cimarosa's *La villanelle* was done only 8 times and his *L'italiana in Londra*, only 6 times. And Dittersdorf's *Doctor and Apothecary* was done only seven...eight ...no nine times, the same as Figaro. But you have to admit that when looked at in light of the other operas that year, nine does not seem all that unusual."

DAMAGING WINDS

Anna reluctantly nodded her agreement.

"What else have you learned from the records?" the old poet asked.

"Not much. Deciphering what records there are and coming up with something useful is beyond the time and the skills that I have available. I have given up on them. Someone could do a great service by better organizing these records! As odd as it may seem, the best thing that I found, or rather that Felix brought to my attention, was a series of diaries kept by some court official by the name of Zinzendorf who wrote in French — all seventy-seven volumes."

"I have heard of the diaries but have never taken the time to study them. The French is not surprising. Remember, French was the language of the court. But seventy-seven volumes! That is quite a diary!"

"Felix has been helping me with some of them — for the years when Mozart was in Vienna. These are the notes I have so far. It seems Herr Zinzendorf went to the theatre virtually every night and recorded what he saw."

"So what have you learned that might be useful?"

"I have determined that Herr Zinzendorf did not have very good taste in music. Let me find the passages in my notes. Oh, here they are. Listen to what he says about Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro*. 'The opera annoyed me.' Can you imagine that? It annoyed him!" When Carpani merely smiled, Anna continued, "He was somewhat more complimentary about *Don Giovanni*. 'The music of Mozart is agreeable and quite varied.' But then he adds, 'Not appropriate for singing'.

"Do not be so harsh on him. I warned you that Mozart was to some extent an acquired taste. Our Herr Zinzendorf obviously liked memorable tunes that he could sing on his way out of the theatre. But what light does he shed on the rumours?"

"There is no hint in his diaries of any rivalry between Mozart and Salieri. The Kapellmeister is often mentioned and Mozart very little."

"That supports my view that they were not really rivals. Anything else."

"Well it seems that Herr Zinzendorf was at Schönbrunn for the opera competition that the Kapellmeister briefly mentioned to my uncle. Can you believe that he thought that Salieri's Italian opera was better than Mozart's German Singspiel?"

"Well the Kapellmeister knew how to entertain — no surprise there."

"But he does not even mention Mozart's music, saying simply that everything about the German work was mediocre."

The Doctor Speaks

It was at this point that Carpani noticed Anna's list of the Mozart operas. Pointing to her list he said, "What have we here?"

"I have prepared a list of the operas that Mozart wrote during his stay in Vienna," Anna explained.

"May I see it?"

Anna handed him her list. He immediately noticed her various annotations and complimented her on her thoroughness and organization. Then his eyes fell upon one particular note.

"I see that you have a note saying that Herr Weber told you that the librettist Da Ponte had been called back from Prague on some pretext by Salieri before the premier of *Don Giovanni*."

Anna blushed, not wanting to have shared Herr Weber's views with Carpani. "Yes," she replied weakly.

"I must caution you about relying on anything said by Weber about the Maestro." Anna looked startled. Carpani explained, "He is neither knowledgeable nor without bias. First, let me say that he has no first hand knowledge. He never met Mozart, being born in Germany far from Vienna and a mere child when Mozart died."

"But he was related to Herr Mozart by marriage," Anna asserted.

"True, but even if he has had some limited contact with Mozart's family, he is simply not to be taken at his word."

The remark upset Anna and she demanded to know why Carpani would say any such thing.

"Anna, please do not take offence. I am simply sharing with you some information that you should have before you make your mind up about anything that he might have told you. I have only your interest at heart."

Anna was deeply troubled by this attack on the integrity of Otto's mentor, but she told herself to remain calm. Let the old Italian say his piece before coming to any conclusions, she told herself.

"I would first point out that he is not of noble birth and holds no position that would confer upon him the right to use "von Weber." His father gave himself that title and Carl has continued the family tradition."

"Perhaps," Anna replied. "But like Herr Beethoven his music has qualified him to assume this honour."

Carpani paused. He then slowly continued, "More important is that he has had a troubled past and as a result has a strong aversion to and distrust of Italians. I can tell from your expression that you know nothing of this, so please let me provide the background you lack. Regrettably his

DAMAGING WINDS

father was a musician who wasted his talent and his wife's fortune. He was shiftless and irresponsible. Carl began his career much as his father lived his life. In Breslau he became the director of the opera at eighteen. But he lived a dissolute life that led him into debt and resulted in his being let go. He then briefly held positions in Karlsruhe, Stuttgart (where he was arrested for failure to pay his debts), and Prague before securing his current position in Dresden. But even this is not what I want to warn you about. The fact is that he has had trouble in Dresden and Berlin and probably other places convincing the Italian opera directors to stage his German operas. He has let this bad experience shape his views towards all Italians. Did you know that he has criticized the work of Signor Rossini?"

"Herr Carpani," Anna replied, intentionally using the German form of address, "surely he is entitled to feel some resentment towards those Italians who have usurped the rightful place of Germans as Kapellmeisters in the German courts."

"However true you may feel that to be, I would ask no more of him than we agreed to ask of each other — that he be open to the truth. What I am warning you about is a bias that I have seen in his writings and in his words on those few occasions when we have met. Please just take my words as something for you to consider."

Anna agreed to give his words some thought, provided that he gave her the same consideration. They each nodded in agreement.

"So," Carpani began, "if I understand what Weber alleges, the Maestro unnecessarily called Signor Da Ponte back from Prague where he was working on the premier of *Don Giovanni* as a way of weakening the opera that Mozart was to present."

"Yes, that is correct."

"Do we know what the alleged reason for the recall was?"

"Something about the moving up of the performance of an opera that Da Ponte was working on with Herr Salieri."

"Let me think. *Don Giovanni* was, as you note, done in the fall of 1787. At that time, if I am not mistaken, the Maestro and Da Ponte would have been working on *Axur Re d'Ormus*." He paused, trying hard to recall the timing of the Salieri operas. Then he clapped his hands together and smiled, "Yes, I am sure that it would have been *Axur*. The opera that would prove to be the Emperor's favourite. One could certainly imagine *Axur* being staged for some court function. Have you thought of using the diaries of Zinzendorf to assist in this?"

The Doctor Speaks

Anna shook her head and the two began to look through her notes about the diaries. Carpani pointed out that there was a mention in September of the advancing of the marriage of an archduke. Could this have been the event that caused Salieri to recall Da Ponte? Certainly, the timing would have been right.

“Anna, let us assume that *Axur Re d’Ormus* was to be performed at the wedding. In that case Salieri might well have needed Da Ponte to finish the libretto for the opera so that it could be performed earlier than planned. Were that the case it would seem to justify the Maestro’s recall of Da Ponte.”

“But why should the Kapellmeister be able to simply recall Da Ponte when he was otherwise engaged in Prague with Mozart?”

“Anna, think about what you have just asked. What was Da Ponte’s title?”

“He was the Imperial Court Poet.”

“Correct. And where is the seat of the Empire?”

“Vienna — but Prague is also in the Empire.”

“Yes but Da Ponte was working in a city other than Vienna on a private commission for an opera to be given in a private theatre by a composer who held no position at court. Clearly his duty as Court Poet was to work with the Imperial composer on an opera to be performed at the Imperial Court for an Imperial court function.”

“I can see that Da Ponte might have been duty bound to do as Salieri requested.”

Carpani acknowledged Anna’s statement with a smile and nod of his head. Then with a broad sweep of his arm, he announced, “I have been dilatory in not sharing with you my good news. I have made arrangements for you to meet Court Councillor Eduard Vincent Guldener von Lobes.”

“Who?”

“The doctor who was consulted by Mozart just before his death. He was the court physician at the time, so clearly someone possessed of both expertise and integrity. This interview should give us the medical evidence that we need to determine if there was indeed a murder, a poisoning. It is my fond hope that you can obtain both his candid assessment but also a letter that we can use to buttress any presentation of our findings that we might publish.”

DAMAGING WINDS

"Your words suggest that you believe that this doctor shall exonerate the Kapellmeister. Does he know that your goal is to clear the Kapellmeister's name?"

Before Carpani could respond Anna added, "I told you from the very beginning that I shall not be part of any whitewashing."

"My but you have a suspicious mind, young lady! No, I assure you that I have done nothing to influence the good doctor. In fact, I can show you my draft of the letter of introduction that I have sent to Herr von Lobes."

With these words, Carpani passed his hastily written note to Anna. She took the piece of paper and read it aloud. "To the most lauded and worthy Councillor Eduard Vincent Guldener von Lobes from the most unworthy of his Majesty's servants, the court poet Giuseppe Carpani. I am writing to you because I have been informed that you were consulted in your professional medical capacity by the great Kapellmeister Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart just before his death in 1791. As you may know I am in the habit of collecting materials about the lives of our great musical composers. I would ask that you deign to entertain my young assistant, Fräulein Rochlitz, and that you share with her your candid memories and assessment of the Kapellmeister's medical condition and circumstances surrounding his death. I can assure you that I am writing in my personal capacity and that my humble request in no way represents an Imperial command or inquiry. I do most sincerely hope that you will see your way to accommodate my request. Accompanying this request is a copy of my book *Le Haydine* that I, in all modesty, ask you to accept as a small token of my appreciation for the service that I earnestly trust that you will render to me and to posterity."

"Is this the language that court officials use with each other?" Anna asked in all innocence.

"This is, if anything, more casual and less flowery than most court missives."

"What an odd world you must live in."

"Odd? Perhaps. What I can tell you with certainty is that it is a world in which someone like Salieri excels and in which someone like Mozart chafes. But be that as it may, the doctor has agreed to see you in the early afternoon two days from now."

"Two days? In the afternoon? But my uncle and I are scheduled to resume our interviews with the Kapellmeister in the afternoon of that very day. How am I to explain my absence? I cannot exactly tell the

The Doctor Speaks

Kapellmeister that I am off to interview Mozart's doctor to find out if he is a murderer!"

"Anna, Anna, you give me no credit. I am not totally without knowledge of these matters or without common sense. I have arranged for the Kapellmeister to be busy that afternoon. Being the diligent person that he is he has already sent word to your uncle to change your meeting to the morning at 9 am."

Anna was puzzled. "But is he not away at the moment?"

Carpani smiled. "There are couriers my dear. He is not beyond communication."

"But how long ago did you make these arrangements?"

"I have been working on this for a few days. There was no point in telling you until I knew that it could all be arranged. That has now been effected. In two days time upon his return, the Kapellmeister shall spend from 9 until 11 am with you. I have ensured that your uncle will be otherwise occupied. He has been invited to a meeting of the Society of Friends of Music immediately following the interview. Finally I have arranged for a cab to pick you up from the Maestro's home after your uncle has left. The cab driver shall have the address and shall take you to see the doctor. You should be able to meet with the doctor, brief me about the meeting over a midday meal and still be able to be at your rooms when your uncle returns from his meetings."

"So you are now my social secretary as well, Herr Carpani, and a devout one at that. You are clearly a man of many talents."

Carpani smiled and bowed.



In two days time Anna and her uncle attended at the Salieri residence in the morning as Carpani had arranged. But Anna could not focus on the interview. Her mind was on the upcoming meeting with Mozart's doctor. As the interview progressed Salieri could see that Anna was distracted and not paying attention to her note taking. "Dear girl, where is your mind this morning? It is clearly not on music or at least not on what we are trying to accomplish today."

DAMAGING WINDS

"Oh, I am very sorry. I am thinking of Otto," Anna lied. "He has gone to Munich and I have found it hard to think of anything else since he left."

"Inattention is unacceptable," Salieri rebuked her sharply. "Have I not been sharing my recollections with you and your uncle? Do you not think that you owe him and me your close attention during our interview? I do not like people who waste my time. You, mia cara Anna, are very fortunate that I have developed a deep affection for you. I shall forgive you this once. Now go over there and work on transcribing your notes. Herr Rochlitz, I apologize, but I cannot continue in this mood. I shall spend my time correcting the work of young Franz Liszt. Now there is someone who truly cares about what I say and who is giving me all of his talent and effort. He is only 11. He and his father walk three times a week to my house — all the way from their rooms in Mariahilf. Imagine that! Perhaps you will see him when you are leaving. He is to arrive at 11 am."

Chastened, Anna did as instructed. Her uncle made it clear to her with his silence and his long glaring stare that he was most disappointed. He excused himself and left. When he had gone Anna thought to herself that the Kapellmeister would be even less happy with her if he knew the truth about why she was distracted, where she was going after the session and what she hoped to hear from the doctor.

As 11 am approached, she bade the Kapellmeister goodbye and joined Felix out in the hall where he waited with her sun bonnet. After she had carefully placed it on her head, checked the hall mirror to ensure that it was straight and that no hair was showing, she left with him through the front door and took his hand as he assisted her into the waiting cab. As the cab pulled away, she saw a middle aged man and a fragile looking young boy approaching the Salieri home on foot. The boy was perspiring heavily and seemed exhausted. This must be the young student that the Kapellmeister had mentioned, she thought to herself. She could not imagine how the boy, exhausted as he clearly was, could concentrate on his lessons. Her guilt at lying to Salieri and at not concentrating on her own work was now even more intense. No, she said to herself. I must focus on the task at hand — the interview with Mozart's doctor. But still the nagging guilt would not completely leave her.

Felix gave Anna the notes that she had prepared the night before on joining her in the cab. During the cab ride Anna did her best to consult them. She felt quite unprepared despite spending hours the night before

The Doctor Speaks

thinking of what to ask the doctor. What did she know of medicine? She simply did not know what questions to pose. She would have to trust her ability to steer the interview in the direction of an honest and complete telling of Mozart's symptoms and the circumstances of his death. She would take detailed notes and let Carpani help her interpret any medical terms that she did not understand.

It took only a few moments for the cab to arrive at the doctor's home. With Felix's assistance, Anne descended and was shown to the door. She was expected and was soon shown into a lavishly decorated, large parlour where the doctor greeted her. He was a brittle looking, elderly gentleman who moved ever so slowly. Despite his advanced years, he insisted on showing Anne to an armchair. The dozen paces to her chair seemed to take an eternity as the old doctor shuffled along. When they reached her chair, she sat on the edge of her seat. At any moment she expected the frail doctor to collapse of exhaustion or perhaps to even expire on the spot. She breathed a sign of relief when he eventually made his way to a chair opposite her and successfully lowered himself into it. Only then did she let her eyes move away from him. She was pleased to see that the chair he had chosen for her was by a small writing table. She took some paper and a pencil from her bag and placed them on the table. She then took her notes and spread them on her lap.

Prepared for the interview, she returned her gaze to the frail, old doctor. She thanked him for meeting with her. Then uncertain how best to begin, she simply asked if he could remember how Mozart had died.

"Oh, yes," he assured her in a thin, barely audible voice. "It may be 31 years ago, but I remember the events of that autumn very well. Herr Mozart was well known and much loved in the city and in the Empire as a whole. His illness was a matter of concern to many including the Imperial Court of which he was a Kapellmeister."

Anna was pleased to learn that the doctor thought so highly of Mozart. It was a good beginning. She inquired, "Were you perhaps Herr Mozart's doctor?"

He shook his head. "No, Dr. Closset was his personal physician. I was only asked to consult on his condition when the Kapellmeister had been labouring under his disorder for some days. I did, however, receive information about his condition from Closset who attended him daily."

"I assume that you were satisfied that Herr Mozart was in good hands," she said in a questioning voice.

DAMAGING WINDS

"Oh yes, Closset was a fine doctor and someone in whom I had the utmost confidence."

"When you were consulted, what was your assessment of Herr Mozart's medical condition?"

The doctor replied in a louder, more forceful voice. "He was ill with an inflammatory fever."

"You seem very certain," Anna stated.

"You need to appreciate that at that season inflammatory fever was so prevalent that few people entirely escaped its influence."

"And when you examined him, what you found supported this conclusion?"

"Very much so. In addition to his fever he had a general malaise, painful swelling of the joints and other parts of the body, nocturnal vomiting and a skin rash."

"Is it not possible that he was in fact poisoned ...but that it went undetected?" Anna asked.

"No, I think not. It would not have gone undetected. Careful attention was shown him by his family but more importantly, Dr. Closset was very scrupulous in his watchfulness and in the care he bestowed upon the patient. During the whole of this painful period Closset displayed the solicitude of a friend rather than a medical man. It is simply not possible that anything violent like a poison could have escaped his notice. Besides, I myself saw the body after death and it exhibited no signs beyond those customary in such cases."

Anna remained uncertain. "But, Herr Doctor, is it customary that someone would die of an inflammatory fever?"

He again answered in a surprisingly authoritative tone. "In certain circumstances it could indeed lead to death. At the time, many people in Vienna were suffering from the same complaint and many died like Herr Mozart. I remember that when Closset first consulted me, he was already of the view that Herr Mozart's case was potentially very dangerous. He told me that from the first appearance of the complaint he had feared a fatal result, namely, a determination to the head."

Anna looked puzzled. "Doctor please forgive my ignorance, but I am not sure that I understand. What is a determination to the head?"

"If an inflammatory fever spreads to the head, there is a swelling or growth of the brain. It is invariably fatal."

"And you are of the opinion that this is what happened?"

The Doctor Speaks

Once more the forceful tone of his reply suggested he was without doubt. "Yes, the disorder took its usual course and its usual time. I recall that one day Closset met Dr. Mathias von Sallaba, the senior physician at the hospital in Vienna, and observed to him that it was all over for Mozart. That it was not possible to prevent the determination to the head. Sallaba instantly acquainted me with this, and in fact Mozart died some days later with the usual symptoms. Closset monitored its progress so carefully that he predicted the very hour of Mozart's death."

Again Anna looked puzzled. "But if as you say he died of the same fever as so many others, why did it come to be believed that he was poisoned?"

The doctor threw up his skeletal, little hands and exclaimed, "Heaven only knows. Certainly I do not. It is a mystery." Then he paused, brought a hand to his chin and rubbing it said in a quieter, more contemplative tone, "Perhaps it was just the reaction of a saddened populace. They were unwilling to accept that this talented man had been taken from them at such a young age." Then the moment of reflection passed and his assertive tone returned. "What I do know is that his death excited very general interest, but never did it once occur to the mind of anyone involved in his treatment to suspect, even distantly, that his death had been occasioned by poison."

Anna, knowing this to be the key point in the interview, stated, "So Herr von Lobes you are convinced, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that Mozart died of natural causes and was not poisoned."

Without any hesitation whatsoever, the doctor responded, "I am."

"Signor Carpani has asked me to inquire of you whether you would be willing to set down what you have told me in a statement that he might publish."

A broad smile filled the old doctor's face. "I would be more than pleased to do so. In fact nothing would prove more gratifying or more satisfactory to my mind. Perhaps my testimony may to some degree counteract the horrid rumours circulating that the excellent Salieri poisoned Mozart."

Anna was taken aback. "I did not say anything about any defence of Kapellmeister Salieri," Anna replied.

"It is no great leap of logic to realize that such is Carpani's goal. Carpani is very close to the Kapellmeister and it must trouble him terribly that his friend is the object of such malicious and unfounded rumours."

DAMAGING WINDS

"I trust doctor that your desire to clear the good name of the Kapellmeister has not helped shape your memories," Anna replied sharply.

The doctor immediately straightened in his chair and looked at her in shocked disbelief. "I could take insult at such a suggestion my dear young woman! Indeed I could!" When he saw that she now had her own look of shock, he said in a more conciliatory tone, "I shall attribute your comment to the impetuosity of youth and shall ignore it. I have given you my best recollections of a medical condition and its cause and I stand by both." At these words he slowly rose from his chair and with great effort straightened his waist coat. Looking sternly at Anna he said, "I am sure that you must have others to see and things to do. Perhaps we should consider the interview at an end and I can wish you a pleasant day." The old doctor reached over and picked up a small glass bell on the table near him and rang it.

Instantly a servant appeared. He escorted Anna to the door where Felix assisted her into the waiting cab. She barely noticed when they arrived at the place where she was to meet Carpani for their midday meal. A short time later, Anna found herself seated at the dinner table with the old Court Poet.

He leaned across the table. "Well?"

"I have good and bad news for you Signor Carpani."

"Please start with the good news, my dear."

"The old doctor is confidently of the opinion that Herr Mozart died of natural causes and was not murdered. He says that Herr Mozart died of inflammatory fever that, to use his words, determined to the head."

"I knew it," the old poet gushed. He took no steps to mask his obvious delight. "What else did he say?"

"I took detailed notes that I shall share with you. The essence of it is that there was neither suspicion nor evidence of any poisoning. He says that many people had the same condition at that time and many died."

Again Carpani smiled. "So there is no evidence of any murder." Tapping the table in front of him, he asserted, "Mozart was not murdered by Kapellmeister Salieri or anyone else." Then he looked at Anna and added, "But you said that you also had bad news?"

Anna blushed. "I am afraid that I insulted the doctor and he had me ushered out of his presence."

"So what did you say or do this time?"

"I am afraid that I reacted badly to his statement that nothing would prove more gratifying or more satisfactory to him than to know that his testimony would counter the rumours circulating that Salieri had poisoned Mozart."

Laughing, Carpani replied, "And you in your youthful innocence and ardour, asked if he was lying to protect the Kapellmeister's reputation!" Anna blushed. "Oh my but you have much to learn about dealing with people. Of course, I can understand how such a statement on his part might have raised suspicions in your mind. But you must learn subtlety. You Germans all pride yourself on your directness and honesty and look down your noses at we Italians who engage in our subterfuges and indirect approaches. But I would have been able to find out if he was shading his words to mask a hidden reality without in any way upsetting him. Did he look nervous when you asked him about Mozart? Did he look away or hesitate in giving his answers?"

"No, not all. He is a very frail gentleman but he answered in a strong voice and seemed sincere and truthful throughout."

"And still you doubted his word? My my, I repeat what I have said before. You have a suspicious mind, young lady! "

"I simply want the truth. Perhaps I do not know how to read people as you do, and I certainly do not know how to engage in subterfuge."

"Oh really? What did you tell the Kapellmeister about why you were being met by the carriage at 11 am? What have you told your uncle about what you are doing in your spare time?" Again Anna blushed. "You, my dear young lady, have been engaged in subterfuge for some time now. You are simply not yet good at it. But you are learning."

It is not a skill at which I wish to excel, thought Anna. "The doctor has agreed to give you a written statement. In the interim, I shall prepare a copy of my notes."

"Yes, yes, I do look forward to reading them. Oh, what wonderful news. What wonderful news!" He rubbed his hands together in glee. Then, looking at Anna, he wagged his finger and added, "And speaking of news, I have just learned that the Kapellmeister has taken in a new eleven year old student who has enormous potential — Franz Liszt. Remember that name. You will hear much of him in the not too distant future."

Anna smiled and replied, "Yes, I saw the boy and his father this morning when I was leaving the Kapellmeister's home. The poor lad looked exhausted."

DAMAGING WINDS

"And he has a right to be exhausted. He makes a long walk each day. But the Maestro is trying to remedy the situation. I have here a copy of a letter that he has written seeking financial support from the Emperor for his young student. Listen to this." Carpani then read to Anna from the letter.

"I heard him by chance in a certain house where he was sight-reading and improvising on the pianoforte. He left me so entranced that I actually believed I had been dreaming. I learned after speaking to his father that he is in the service of Prince Esterhazy and has obtained permission to spend a year in Vienna so his son could study languages and music. Czerny is teaching him pianoforte. I, of course, offered to instruct him free of charge in figured bass and composition. Since the middle of last month his father has been escorting his son to my home three days a week. The young man has been making extraordinary progress in singing, figured bass and in deciphering full scores of different genres. I drill him on each of these disciplines each lesson as a way of introducing him to composition and developing good taste.'

This letter reveals the real Salieri that you have been seeking." Shaking the letter in Anna's face, he added, "This is the truth you seek. The Maestro is not only providing free tuition for a young servant's son but he is trying to obtain funding from the Emperor so that the boy does not have to board so far away."

"The boy and his father will be pleased to learn of the Kapellmeister's request on their behalf."

"They do not and likely will never know of it." Anna looked puzzled. Carpani noting her expression assured her that they would never know of the letter. "At least the Maestro shall not tell them. He seeks not their gratitude, nor any public acknowledgement. He is truly a selfless man."

Is he really, Anna wondered. Variations on this question played in Anna's mind as Felix accompanied her to their residence. Was Carpani right about the true Salieri? If so, had he changed over the years? Could the same man who sought to help young Liszt have made Mozart's life difficult? How had Moscheles described it? Salieri had doubtless poisoned many an hour for Mozart. Were his efforts now motivated by guilt at his earlier behaviour? But, she thought to herself, she was not entirely

The Doctor Speaks

unhappy at Carpani's "wonderful news." At least she now knew that she was not taking notes from a murderer.

Later that night, Anna realized that she had not written to Otto in some time. I must write tonight, she chided herself. She sat at the small desk that graced a corner of her bedroom, took a blank piece of paper and placed it squarely before her. She carefully trimmed her quill pen to ensure it had a fine point; she took the cover off the inkwell and set out some blotting paper. She stared at the paper but she did not know where to begin. What could she tell Otto of what she had been doing? She so wanted to tell him what she had learned, to share the early results of her investigation. But she knew that she could not. No, this would be best shared with him in person on his return, when all of her evidence had been collected. To date she had not found the convincing evidence of guilt that she was seeking. Given Otto's concerns she knew that only when she had that proof would he see what she had achieved and how worthwhile her efforts had been. When he saw the proof of Salieri's guilt, he would forgive her for disregarding his advice. Only then would he fully appreciate her investigation and her determination. She pushed the paper away and leaned back. So if she could not share this news what could she tell him? She could, of course, write of her uncle's interviews with old Salieri. Yes, that would be of some interest to Otto. What else? Although she was not seeing as much of the city as she had expected to, she could write of those sights she had seen. The broad boulevards, landscaped gardens and striking buildings of the upper and lower Belvedere and the nearby Karlskirche were truly awe inspiring. She would write of them. But mostly she would share her longing to be with him. Yes, that would be enough. She pulled the paper back in front of her, dipped the pen in the inkwell and began to write.

CHAPTER EIGHT

What Have You Been Doing

When Carpani had suggested they write to Michael Kelly in London and to Lorenzo Da Ponte in New York, Anna had wondered if they would ever hear from them. They were far from Vienna and had been gone many years. Would they bother to respond to an unsolicited inquiry? Carpani had evidenced no such doubts and had assured her that both men would be pleased to share their memories.

The day after her interview with the doctor, Felix came into the salon where she was sitting and presented her with a letter from Michael Kelly in London. As previously arranged, it was kept from the attention of her uncle. Anna wondered whether she really ought not to share the letter with him. She knew her uncle would be very interested. Nevertheless, she was reluctant to do so. How would she explain writing to Kelly? Besides, it made her proud that this was part of her investigation, something that she was doing on her own, or at least without his supervision. The reason that she had commenced the investigation was to gather enough evidence to convince her uncle to discontinue the Salieri interviews. If the letter whitewashed Salieri, out of some misplaced sense of loyalty, it might improperly strengthen her uncle's resolve. No, she needed to weigh the evidence before deciding whether and when to share it with him. So she waited until her uncle was engaged elsewhere and then opened it. Her hands were shaking with excitement. What would it reveal of Salieri's relationship with Mozart? After she had broken the seal and opened it, she sighed with disappointment — it was written in English. Of course, it would be she thought. How foolish to have expected otherwise. She called Felix in to read it to her. In a clear, but soft voice, he slowly did so, translating somewhat hesitantly as he went.

What Have You Been Doing

Dear Fräulein Rochlitz,

Signor Carpani has written to me of the work that your uncle is doing and has asked me to share with you my memories of the two masters Mozart and Salieri. His letter has brought back such happy memories of my four years in Vienna. I often think of those days. I found my time in Vienna absolutely charming. Nothing could exceed the gaiety of that delightful place. I was fortunate during my stay to be introduced to the best society. The public was kind and indulgent to me when I performed. You are so lucky to be able to spend time there and even more so now when the city is alive with the music of Rossini and Weber, to say nothing of Beethoven and so many others.

I understand that you are particularly interested in Kapellmeister Salieri. I hope your uncle's interviews are progressing satisfactorily and that the Kapellmeister is in good health. Please give him my kindest regards.

It was Maestro Salieri, you should know, who first met me the morning after my arrival in Vienna. While working in Italy I had been recruited to sing in the opera buffa troupe that they were assembling. Salieri, as I am sure you know, is a Venetian, and a student of the celebrated composer Gassmann. Of course, Salieri himself was a composer of eminence. He was Maestro di Capella at the court of Vienna and a great favourite of the Emperor. He presided at the harpsichord and was sub-director at the theatre under Prince Rosenberg, the Grand Chamberlain of the Court.

Even today, so many years later, I can see him so clearly in my mind's eye — a little man, with an expressive countenance and eyes full of genius. But of course I do not need to tell you this because you are seeing him regularly. I do hope that age has been good to him. The Lord surely knows that it has worked its evil magic on me.

One thing that struck me about him from our very first meeting was his sense of humour. Salieri indeed could make a joke of anything, for he was a very pleasant man, and much esteemed in Vienna; and I considered myself to be very lucky to have been noticed by him. I remember so well one evening when he suggested that I accompany him to the Prater. What a wonderful park, even better than our Hyde Park here in London. Has he taken you there?

DAMAGING WINDS

Has he shown you his favourite tree? If not you owe it to yourself to ask him to do so. But I am wandering off topic, for which I apologize. In any event at this time he was composing his opera *Tarare* for the Grand Opera House in Paris. At the back of the cabaret where we were taking refreshments, near the banks of the Danube, we seated ourselves by the river side. He took from his pocket a sketch of that subsequently popular and very humorous aria which he had composed that morning, Ah povero Calpigi. Playing the role of the poor castrato who had been sold by his parents into Turkish slavery, he sang to me with great earnestness and gesticulation. As he sang, I cast my eyes towards the river, and happened to spy a large wild boar crossing it, near the place where we were seated. Without a moment's hesitation, I jumped up and took to my heels. As I ran I called out over my shoulder to my still singing composer that he best run too. He was startled but quickly looked where I had been staring and spotted our unwanted visitor. He promptly jumped up and followed me." Felix could not suppress a chuckle at the scene being described in the letter and Anna laughed in turn. Regaining his composure, Felix continued. "Our poor Calpigi was abandoned on the table but what was even worse a flagon of excellent Rhenish wine was also left behind us, which was to me a greater bore than the bristly animal, whose visit seemed intended for us." Felix paused, "he has made a play on words. The English word for dull, tiresome is pronounced the same way as their word for the animal. I can see that it is not just Maestro Salieri who has a sense of humour."

When Anna smiled in acknowledgement, he continued. "When we were out of danger, the story was food for much laughter. But you do not want to hear such stories from an old man. You asked about the relationship between the two maestros, Salieri and Mozart. Let me begin by saying that they were very different men. Mozart was as touchy as gunpowder. I recall once when there was a scheduling conflict between him, Salieri and another composer, Righini. The question was in what order their new operas would be performed in the court theatre. Mozart in typical fashion insisted that his work go first. He emphasized how seriously he took the matter by saying that he would throw his score into the fire unless he got his way. Salieri, however, was a clever, shrewd man, possessed of what Bacon called crooked wisdom. He knew how to get

What Have You Been Doing

his way without the threats of Mozart or the mole like burrowing of Righini. He made no demand for any preference whatsoever, although his position as vice-director of the theatre might have given the basis for such a claim. No, Salieri did not himself press his case with the other two composers. Instead he convinced the principal singers (I was the exception, siding with Mozart) to argue his case for him. It was a very effective tactic. The singers were a group not easily ignored. And so Salieri's opera went first and poor Mozart was left in the embarrassing position of having to withdraw his dramatic but ineffective threat.

These are the sort of squabbles between the two maestros that I recall. But do not be surprised. I can tell you from many years in the theatre that such in-fighting between composers and performers is the rule and not the exception.

I am sorry that I do not recall more. I hope that this serves some useful purpose and do remember me to Maestro Salieri.

I remain your obedient servant, Michael Kelly

Anna was terribly disappointed. After all of her anticipation there was so little detail. Kelly did say that Salieri was possessed of "crooked wisdom." Surely this was his way of saying the old Italian was conniving. But why did he not tell her more? And why did Kelly think fondly of Salieri and even admire how cleverly he got his way? Was Mozart really as touchy as gunpowder? Perhaps his was the reaction of a frustrated genius unable to stomach the preference constantly given to those of lesser talent. Bearing her uncle's admonitions in mind she tried to weigh the evidence in a dispassionate way. She was forced to admit that Kelly neither proved nor disproved the existence of any Italian cabals aimed at Mozart. She felt as if one more chance to get at the truth had slipped through her fingers.

Later when she showed the translation of the letter that Felix had prepared to Carpani, he laughed and laughed. He was quick to point out to Anna that Kelly, a singer in Mozart's camp as he himself said, had such warm and good feelings towards Salieri. Yes, thought Anna, but why?

Anna was left asking where was she going to find the proof that she eagerly sought. She was sure that it was there. She thought long and hard about what direction her investigation ought to take next. She had looked at the theatre records; she had interviewed the doctor who had treated Mozart. What ought she to do next? The Zinzendorf diaries had been

DAMAGING WINDS

interesting. Perhaps it would be good to look at the newspapers of the day and to see what if anything they had reported about Mozart and his rival Salieri. Had any of the rumoured animosity or any of the Kapellmeister's tricks been noted by the newspapers of the day? Here her uncle could be of assistance. Presumably he would know if such papers had been retained and where. She would tell him that she wanted to do background research to better understand the people and events being mentioned by Salieri during the course of the interviews.

Her uncle proved most helpful when asked and even complimented her on both her initiative and helpful suggestion. He told her that there was a local Viennese journal that had a collection of older papers, both their own numbers and those of several other journals. He was happy to give her a letter of introduction to the publisher.

The next day Anna duly presented herself at the offices of the Vienna paper and provided the publisher with her uncle's letter. The middle aged man was pleased to show her the old copies of his paper and certain other journals that they kept for their own research purposes. She worked for several hours but had little to show for her efforts. There were notices of concerts or performances and advertisements for sheet music but nothing of any rivalry. Perhaps it was not politic to criticize a high court official, she thought to herself.

As she was preparing to leave the newspaper offices Anna was approached by the publisher. "Young lady, given your interest in Mozart, you will be interested in this news. We have learned that Mozart's son, Wolfgang Amadeus Junior, will be visiting Vienna shortly." Anna was excited beyond measure and asked the publisher when the visit was to take place. He replied that it was not yet known but apparently the visit was imminent. She thanked him for sharing this with her and left. As she walked with Felix back to their rooms her mind was overflowing with the possibilities that this news offered. Might she be able to meet and question the very son of Mozart? Might he provide her with the sort of hard evidence of Salieri's guilt that had thus far eluded her? Surely he would know what had really happened or at least have learned of it from his mother or family friends. Anna knew that she must consider how she could arrange to meet him. Perhaps Carpani would be able to help.

Anna's pleasure at what she had learned was shattered when her uncle arrived back at their rooms in the late afternoon. He was no sooner through the front door than he called out, "Anna, what have you been

What Have You Been Doing

doing behind my back?" At these words Anna's stomach knotted. As she hurried to the door she asked herself if her uncle had somehow discovered her secret mission. Would he be terribly upset with her? She took a deep breath and struggled to control herself. Then as calmly as she could manage she asked, "Uncle, whatever do you mean?

"As you know I was at a social event just now and who do you think happened to seek me out?"

Anna simply shook her head to indicate she had no idea.

"None other than Herr Weigl, the Kapellmeister of the opera." Anna's face went white and her stomach knotted further. "I can see that you share my surprise, although I suspect for very different reasons. What if I told you that he said that he was very pleased to see me because he had long wanted to apologize to me and to you for reacting as he did to your question about Mozart and Salieri?" Anna was now feeling nauseated and light headed. What little colour had remained in her face totally disappeared, and she felt faint. Although her uncle noted her obvious discomfort, he pushed on. "He explained that on reflection he had realized that it had been a well intentioned question." Anna felt that she was going to be sick on the spot.

Her uncle showed no concern for Anna's obvious discomfort. Instead he stated, "You should feel terrible young lady. I had no idea what he was talking about. None whatsoever! Imagine my embarrassment. When I stumbled for a response, he said that he was referring to the interview that you had with him on my behalf. You! I did not want to embarrass you or admit that I did not know what you had been doing so I was neutral in my response. He explained that when you had asked about the basis of the tension between Herr Mozart and Herr Salieri he had overreacted. He hoped that you had not been offended. Being a gentleman he was concerned about you. I can assure you that I have no such concern!"

"Uncle, let me explain." As she said these words Anna wondered how in fact she would do so. Ought she to tell him everything? But if she did would he let her continue her investigations? Likely not. But if she did not tell him the truth what could she say? But then a possible avenue of escape occurred to her. "You will recall that when you were telling me about Herr Salieri's initial visit you mentioned that Herr Weigl would likely know the truth behind the rumours about the Kapellmeister and Herr Mozart because he had worked with both men. You said that you thought that we should interview him. I wanted to help. I thought that I

DAMAGING WINDS

would assist you by conducting the interview with him myself. You know I am anxious to develop my skills as a journalist. This seemed the perfect opportunity."

"But then you mentioned none of this? You told me nothing of what you had learned."

"Because I handled the interview badly and I was embarrassed to admit it to you."

"Anna, I am so very disappointed in you, both because you arranged the interview without telling me but also because you did not let me know about the problem you encountered."

"I am sorry. I truly am."

"I can assure you that you are going to be even more sorry! Can I assume that you used the letter of introduction that you got me to sign?"

"Yes," she replied meekly.

"And do you remember the words that I said to you when I agreed to give you this letter?"

She nodded sheepishly.

"Did I not say that you were not to arrange any interviews without speaking to me first?"

Again she nodded. "But," Anna pointed out, "it was you who suggested that Herr Weigl might cast some light on the relationship between Herr Mozart and the Kapellmeister."

"And you took that as my permission to interview Herr Weigl?"

Before Anna could reply, Giuseppe Carpani burst into the room followed closely by Felix, the servant. An angry and frustrated Felix pushed past the Court Poet and addressed Anna's uncle. "I am so sorry Herr Rochlitz. Herr Carpani insisted on seeing you immediately and simply would not wait until I introduced him." Anna's uncle looked from Felix to Carpani. "This is not a good time Herr Carpani. Perhaps you could visit at another more propitious moment."

Carpani, however, would not be put off. "Please forgive my seemingly inappropriate intervention into what is obviously a domestic matter between you and your young niece. I arrived at your door just now in the hope of meeting with her, and I could not help but overhear you chastising her for her unauthorized interview with Herr Weigl. I felt that I had to intercede because it is I who am at fault, not your niece."

"I fail to see how that is possible."

"Please, do let me explain."

What Have You Been Doing

Anna's uncle nodded, indicating his acceptance, however reluctant.

Carpani acknowledged the nod and continued. "As you know, I am the Court Poet and a close personal friend of Maestro Salieri. I have for some time been concerned about the rumours circulating about the Maestro and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart — indeed deeply troubled. When I learned that Anna was assisting you in your interviews with the Maestro, I approached your niece and asked her to help me. How could she help me, you ask? It is simple. Because of who I am many people are afraid to share with me their true feelings about the Maestro and any suspicions that they might have. This makes it difficult for me to address their concerns. I asked her to assist me by conducting some interviews under the guise of assisting you. The unfortunate incident that you were addressing with her was the first of these."

"The first? There have been others?"

"No, not as yet. I had hoped that there would be more."

"And why was I not told and my permission sought?"

"Once more, I am at fault. I did not want it known that Anna was acting on my behalf so I asked her not to mention it to anyone. I, of course, did not intend that it should be kept from you but, being the diligent person that she is, she took my instructions literally and did not tell anyone — even you. For this I am most sorry. I am deeply penitent and very much embarrassed and suspect that Anna shares my sentiments"

Anna had been taken completely by surprise by Carpani's arrival and gallant rescue, but she had wisely remained quiet. She clearly recognized Carpani's explanation, although a distortion of the truth, offered a way out of her predicament. But now, she thought, the time had come to speak. She chose her words very carefully. "Oh, uncle, I am so very sorry for having kept all of this from you. When Herr Carpani and I discussed doing research into the rumours about Kapellmeister Salieri and Mozart, I was eager to do so because I thought it would be of benefit to you. I had no intention — none — of harming you, or your reputation."

"I can understand that, but you did not inform me. What you have done is completely and utterly inappropriate. You carried on an interview *in my name* without telling me. You lied to at least one important person with whom I must work and you lied to me by omission. And now that I have stumbled upon your clandestine activities you expect me to just accept what has happened as if it was of no consequence. I do not see how I can do that."

DAMAGING WINDS

"Uncle, you must understand that I had nothing but your interests at heart. I agree that I should have shared this with you and sought your counsel but this is very important work. Do you not want to know if there is any truth in the rumours about the Kapellmeister?"

Carpani stepped in. "Herr Rochlitz, you have every reason to be upset but I beg you please blame me and not your niece. And please, I implore you, let her continue her work for me." When his words drew no immediate response, he turned to go. "I have said my piece. I hope you understand and will see your way free to forgive me and to permit my work to proceed. But if you do not, I shall understand. Again I say that I am so sorry that this has occurred."

After Carpani had left, Anna's uncle turned to her. "I thought that you were convinced that the rumours about Salieri were true. Now you want me to believe that you are working with Carpani to clear his name."

"No, no — not exactly. I have not changed my views. Herr Carpani and I agreed to work together in an effort to learn the truth. One way or the other. As you advised, I am trying to keep an open mind. He believes that the Kapellmeister is innocent. I have my doubts. But we have agreed to share what we find with each other and to let the evidence speak for itself."

"Now that finally has the ring of truth about it." When Anna smiled in relief, he quickly added, "Do not think that I have forgiven you. But I am curious as to what you have found so far."

"Nothing really. We are just getting started. That is why it is so important that you let me continue."

"Anna, you are a grown woman, and you can, and should, make your own decisions. If you feel that this is something that you must do, then so be it. But I must insist that as long as we are living and working together that you keep me better informed. Anna, I thought that I knew you and could trust you."

He turned his back and walked from the room and Anna was left to ponder the situation. She was relieved in one sense that her uncle now knew of her activities. It would make her feel less guilt. Acting behind his back had made her uneasy and tense. And sheltering her investigation behind the Court Poet also meant that if Kapellmeister Salieri heard of her activities she would be able to explain them away in a manner that would not offend the old composer. Offend? What was she thinking? What did she care what the old Italian felt about what she was doing?

What Have You Been Doing

What did it matter if she hurt his feelings? Did he care about how he had hurt Mozart's feelings?

Whatever limited positive feeling Anna was able to derive from their new turn of events was not shared by her uncle. That evening at dinner he was unusually quiet and exceptionally formal. There was none of their normal banter. She felt terrible. She realized that in addition to whatever work she did on her investigation she would now have to work to repair her relationship with him. This realization made her ill, and she could manage but a few bites of her meal. She asked her uncle to be excused and he brusquely agreed without question. As she climbed the steps to her room, she questioned both her quest for the truth and her tactics. The only solace she could take was that her motives had been good.

But what still made Anna uneasy was that she had uncovered so little. Should she simply call off her investigations? No, she could not do that. She was convinced that she now had no choice. She must prove Salieri's guilt. She had offended her uncle. She had lied to Otto by omission. If she was to stop now it would have all been for naught. But if she could establish Salieri's guilt they would have to admit that she had been right to conduct the investigation. How could they not? She resolved that she must redouble her efforts. She must find the evidence of Salieri's guilt. She simply must find it.

Student Reminiscences

“WE SHALL HAVE TO CUT our interview short this afternoon,” declared Salieri when Anna and her uncle arrived for the next interview. “You see I am expecting a very special visitor later today. None other than young Mozart, Wolfgang’s youngest son.”

Anna was taken aback. She had, of course, heard of the pending visit but she could not imagine why Mozart’s son would be visiting old Salieri. When she had first learned that Mozart’s son might be visiting Vienna, she had wondered how she might meet him. Now he was, in effect, coming to her. She resolved to find a reason to stay at the Salieri home when her uncle left so that she could meet and interview Mozart Junior. Who better to cast light on the relationship between Salieri and his father!

While these thoughts were running through her mind, her uncle asked the obvious question — why was young Mozart visiting the Kapellmeister. Salieri explained that he had taught Mozart’s son. The old man is full of surprises, Anna thought. What irony! How could Mozart’s widow had entrusted the teaching of one of her sons to the very man who had made her husband’s life miserable? Might it have been some calculated way to ensure that her son did not suffer the same fate as her husband?

These thoughts were never far from her mind throughout the interview. She hoped that her cryptic notes would be decipherable later when she could concentrate on them. For now, she could only think of her possible interview with Mozart’s son. What would she ask him? Would he be truthful? How could she avoid the problems that she had experienced with Weigl and the Doctor?

Later when the interview with Salieri ended, Anna breathed a sigh of relief. She told her uncle that she needed to work on her notes. She suggested that it might be better if she did so at the Salieri home. He

accepted her explanation without question and left. Once he had gone, Anna asked Catarina if she might work through her notes from the interview session in the small room off the vestibule. Always happy to have female company in the large home, she was happy to oblige. She had tea brought and some Viennese pastry. Anna was quite taken with the light, flaky treat with its vanilla custard filling.

Catarina had many questions for her young visitor. Was it Anna's first visit to Vienna? What had she seen so far? Was she enjoying the city, the food? Was it very different from Leipzig? Anna tried to be polite and to show interest in the questions and in her hostess, but she found it very difficult. Finally, she tried as politely as she could to remind Caterina of the work she had remained behind to complete. Acknowledging that Anna's duty called, Caterina left Anna to her work. And so Anna sat pretending to work on her notes and awaiting the arrival of young Mozart. When he arrived, Anna wanted to rush up to him and immediately question him. She knew that this was impossible and so she sat quietly in her room. She could see the slight man of about 30. She wondered how much he looked like his famous father. She witnessed the warm greeting that Salieri gave his former student and the equally warm greeting that Mozart gave the old composer. At this point, Salieri noticed Anna sitting seemingly working on her notes but trying hard to see what was transpiring.

"So you stayed behind to see our special guest?" he said looking at Anna. "Come then, and I shall introduce you." Turning to Mozart he said, "This is Fräulein Anna Rochlitz, the niece of the music critic. She and her uncle are interviewing me for a series of articles Rochlitz intends to write. Anna, this is the youngest son of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. He was christened Franz Xavier but his mother later changed his name to Wolfgang Amadeus Junior." At these words young Mozart seemed to blush and to shrink into himself.

Anna and he exchanged a few brief words before Anna, using all of the inner strength she could muster, suggested that she should return to her work and leave the teacher and former pupil to enjoy their reunion. It would be most appropriate, she thought to herself, to wait until Mozart's visit with Salieri had ended before she approach him. As patiently as she could, she tried to work on her notes during the hour long visit. Finally she heard Salieri bidding his guest goodbye, and saw Mozart walk down the hall past the small room where she was working.

DAMAGING WINDS

Anna called out in a friendly, polite tone. "Herr Mozart, may I walk with you? I would greatly appreciate a few moments of your time to ask you some questions in connection with the interviews that my uncle has been conducting with Herr Salieri."

"It would be my sincere pleasure, Fräulein, but I am not walking. I have a cab awaiting me. Perhaps I might offer you a ride to your residence."

"Most certainly. It is gracious of you to offer. We are staying in the Minoritenplatz; I hope that does not take you much out of your way."

"Not at all, and it shall provide us an opportunity to talk. I am always happy to speak of Papa Salieri. He has been so good to me in so many ways. His offer to teach me for no fee was much appreciated by both my mother and me. And then there has been his deep knowledge of music and his sage and helpful advice."

Anna had to fight back her shock at these words. How could a son of the man Salieri harassed call him Papa and speak of his kindness? She knew that she could not express these views and certainly not in the Salieri home. Instead she said, "It is such an unexpected joy to be in the presence of one of the sons of the immortal Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart."

"Not you too," he said in a sad, disappointed tone. When Anna looked surprised, he added, "I do not mean to be ungracious, but you must realize that no one sees me for myself. To everyone I am the son of a great father. My music must always be held up to his. My playing always measured in comparison with his. But the irony is that although his spectre haunts my every move, I remember nothing of my father. Nothing at all. He is a total stranger to me. I was but a babe in arms when he died. I know much more of Papa Salieri than of my own father."

Anna's heart went out to this man whom life had given such an enormous burden. "I am so sorry. I did not mean to cause you any offence. It is just that my uncle and I have been working for some time with Herr Salieri and we are of course interested in his relationship with your father. One hears so many things, it is difficult to discern truth from fiction."

"My mother and I have never put any stock in the rumours that suggest that dear old Salieri had anything to do with my father's death. My mother would certainly have never sent me to study with him had she believed any of these whisperings."

"How did you come to study with the Kapellmeister?"

"Not long after the turn of the century, my mother and I returned to Vienna. We had been living in Prague. It was in Prague that I first began

to show both an interest and some aptitude in music. My mother encouraged me, but she knew that if I was to avoid mediocrity I needed the best teachers and that meant returning to Vienna. She used to always say "no son of Mozart should ever be mediocre." So when we returned a number of distinguished musicians offered to provide me with lessons. They included Herr Haydn, Papa Salieri, Herr Hummel and Herr Albrechtsberger. Haydn and Albrechtsberger have passed away, but whenever I get the chance I try to visit Papa Salieri and Herr Hummel. Whatever modest success I have had as a musician and composer, I owe to them.

"But if you are looking for an insight into the relationship between my father and Papa Salieri, I am not the one to ask. The person you should really ask about these matters is Ludwig von Beethoven." Anna looked puzzled. "Yes, the great maestro — he greatly admired my father whom he met before he died and he then studied with Salieri. He would know something of what happened at that time." Then laughing he added, "And one thing is certain — he will not hold back his views for fear of offending anyone."

"I regret to say that I have never met Herr von Beethoven," Anna said meekly.

"Have you not? Well, as it happens I am off to see him now."

"Oh could I please accompany you? I can think of few things that would please me more than to meet him."

"I do not want to dampen your enthusiasm, but I feel honour bound to warn you that Herr Beethoven can at times be extremely rude and unpleasant, especially to uninvited guests. What I suggest is that you come with me, but that you wait in the cab while I inquire of him whether he is in a mood to meet you."

Anna quickly proffered Mozart the standard letter of introduction that her uncle had given her as well as the one that she had from Carpani. "These may help."

Perusing the letters, Mozart replied. "I am sure that they will. I know that Signor Carpani is persona grata with Herr Beethoven and I am certain that your uncle will also be known to the Maestro."

"Where does Herr Beethoven live?"

"Always a good question. Every time I visit him he is in a different apartment building. He never seems to stay in one place for more than a year. In this, as in so many things he is a stark contrast to Papa Salieri. The Kapellmeister has been in the same residence for as long as I have

DAMAGING WINDS

known him and for many years before that I understand. Of course, Herr Beethoven has neither the temperament nor the income of the Kapellmeister. It is said that Herr Haydn and Papa Salieri were the most financially successful composers in Vienna, and perhaps all of Europe. But I digress. I believe that you asked where Herr Beethoven now lives. He rents an agreeable enough first floor apartment at Hauptstrasser 244 Landstrasser. It is some distance out in the suburbs." Mozart then became very serious and turned to Anna. "As I have mentioned I cannot guarantee that you will be admitted but if you are, please remember that he is almost entirely without hearing. When you wish to say something to him it must be written down in his conversation book so that he may read it."

When they arrived, Mozart went alone into the apartment building leaving Anna to wait impatiently in the cab. As the minutes ticked by — five minutes, ten minutes, fifteen minutes — she became more and more convinced that she was going to be denied her fondest wish, to get to meet the great Beethoven. At the same time her stomach was in knots for fear she would in fact meet him. Suppose the meeting went badly. She thought of her earlier meeting with Herr Weigl. She tried with limited success to put these thoughts out of her mind and to concentrate on what questions she would ask.

Finally Mozart opened the door and climbed back into the cab. He sat opposite Anna. A smile lit his face. "I am pleased to report that your letters, and a little cajoling from me, have done the trick." Had the space in the cab permitted it, Anna would have jumped for joy. "Now I just pray that he treats you as is fitting for a young lady. Please do not take offence if he is loud and coarse, and do forgive his untidy rooms. I have endeavoured to make them more presentable but I am no miracle worker."

"I shall be a model of decorum."

"Of that I have little doubt. It is not you that concerns me."

As they ascended the stairs to Beethoven's rooms on the first floor, Anna's heart beat like a snare drum. The main staircase led to a dark, ramshackle set of stairs that in turn led to the composer's workroom. Mozart entered the room first. When Anna made to follow, she was struck by a smell that emanated from the room — a smell of unwashed clothing, unfinished meals and too infrequently emptied chamber pots. Afraid of offending her famous host, she fought back the desire to hold her scented handkerchief to her nose. As she stood in the entrance, she scanned the room. She could not help but notice the clothes, burned

down candles and other household items scattered throughout. But what really attracted her attention were the pages filled with musical notation that seemed to be everywhere — on the floor, on chairs, on tables. It was as if an open window had permitted a strong gust of wind to scatter these scores and notes onto every surface and into every sticky, undusted corner. On taking her first tentative steps into the room, her nose reminded her that no such wind had cleared the air for some time. She decided that she would focus on the scattered music. This was not the occasional score that often lay about on chairs in Salieri's parlour. Here music was everywhere — single pieces of paper, many dog-eared, together with complete and partial scores often rolled into tied scrolls and many, many notebooks, anything on which music could be written. Haydn's depiction of chaos at the beginning of his *Creation* oratorio came to her mind.

Mozart, seeing Anna's shock at the state of the room, motioned for Anna to approach to where he stood near Beethoven. "I warned you that there was only so much that I could do," he whispered in her ear. "He absolutely refuses to let anyone tidy his piles of musical notations."

The great composer sat, his head down, deep in thought. All that Anna could see of him were the wild, uncombed strands of his long hair. A notebook and pencil lay on the table by him ready to receive the words of his visitors but he showed no interest in them. He did not rise nor even lift his head. He merely sat there ignoring them both. Mozart motioned for Anna to sit in a nearby chair. He himself sat in a chair by the table with the conversation book next to Beethoven.

After what seemed to Anna to be an eternity, Beethoven turned his pox-marked, weathered face towards her. She was startled as he bellowed in a loud voice, "Do not waste time telling me how honoured you are to meet me. Everyone says it. I know why you are here. I only agreed to answer some questions out of respect for your uncle. I stopped reading the *allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* when he ceased to be its editor. You may tell him so. I also wanted to take this opportunity to end the asinine rumours that people tell me are being spread about old Salieri. If you came expecting me to give any credence to the rumours, you are sadly mistaken. Salieri is many things but he is no murderer. He is kind and generous if somewhat stubborn and wrongheaded."

Mozart interjected, looking at Anna, "I do not want us to get off on the wrong foot. Let me write a brief note for the Maestro explaining your good intentions and your desire to learn the truth from the lips of one

DAMAGING WINDS

who knows. I then suggest that you ask him what you hope to learn. I shall write this out for him. Short sentences are best."

Beethoven's eyes closely followed the note that Mozart was writing as if he could not wait until it was finished before reading it. The pencil had barely finished this introduction when Beethoven nodded and looked at Anna. She began to explain about her uncle's interviews with Salieri and about their desire to learn as much as they could about his relationship with Mozart senior. The young Mozart then wrote it out for Beethoven. Again the famous composer followed Mozart's writing closely.

Beethoven frowned when Mozart had finished his writing and looking at Anna he promptly said in a loud voice, "Do you think for a moment that I would have studied with the Kapellmeister if I believed there was any chance that he had in any way harmed Mozart? Mozart was my hero, my inspiration. I came to Vienna in 1786 expressly to study with this young man's father. Sadly my mother's death forced me to return to Bonn and I missed my opportunity to study with that immortal genius. His death in 1791 affected me deeply." Turning to Mozart, he said more softly, "I remember when your mother came to Vienna in 1795 and arranged for a performance of your father's *La Clemenza di Tito* to raise funds for the education of you and your brother. I played one of your father's piano concertos, the D minor. It remains one of my favourites. It was a small token of my deep debt to your father's genius. Still when I pick up his quartets I ask myself what might he have given the world if only he had more time with us!"

Turning back to Anna, he exclaimed, "So I ask you, how can anyone think that I would have spent even a moment of time in the presence of Mozart's murderer? It is beyond comprehension. And it is made even more so by alleging that Salieri of all people was his killer! I have had a long and fruitful relationship with the old man. At times I have thought him my enemy, but never have I thought him the murderer of Mozart. His weapons are words and influence, not poison. He can be stubborn — oh so stubborn. And he can be trying at times, but he is at heart a kind and generous man, and one who knows much about music."

Anna asked Mozart to write a question asking how Beethoven came to work with Salieri. Mozart scribbled down the question and passed it to Beethoven.

"Ah, it is a story with many twists and turns. Salieri was, of course, well known to me as an opera composer before my arrival in Vienna. As a

Student Reminiscences

boy in Bonn I heard his *Chimneysweep*. Then in my first season playing the viola in the theatre orchestra of the Elector of Cologne we performed Salieri's very popular *La Grotta di Trofonio*. Ironically the very last opera that I participated in as a member of that orchestra was Salieri's *Axur*. But it was Haydn who visited Bonn that year and invited me to study with him. I was very pleased to say yes, knowing Haydn's symphonies and quartets. I learned the hard way that Haydn did not give his students the same level of care and attention that he gave to his musical compositions. He would give me assignments but would be careless in his review of them. Others would note failures in my counterpoint that he missed. And then he decided to go off to England. He said that I could accompany him, but I decided to stay and find a better teacher, someone who cared about his students and their progress. I learned nothing from Haydn, nothing!"

"Instead you turned to Salieri?" Anna asked.

Beethoven looked to Mozart to see what Anna had said. When he read her words, he said "Not yet. I told you the story had many twists and turns. Be patient. No, I then turned to Kapellmeister Schenk, but he too was not suitable."

"And then you turned to Salieri," Anna chimed in.

Beethoven did not wait to read Anna's words this time. He glared at her and stated, "You are both impatient and annoying. NO, I DID NOT THEN TURN TO SALIERI," Beethoven bellowed.

Mozart wrote a speedy apology and pleaded with Beethoven to forgive her youthful enthusiasm and impatience. After a few moments, Beethoven returned to his story. Anna told herself that under no circumstance would she utter another word until called upon to do so.

"After Schenk I turned to the Cathedral Kapellmeister Albrechtsberger. It was he who suggested that I study voice composition with Salieri. I asked around. Salieri had an excellent reputation as a careful and caring teacher. The fact that he gave free tuition was also appealing. I learned a great deal from him. He is very knowledgeable about music." Laughing he added, "Of course, he and I did not see eye to eye on all matters...on many matters." Beethoven broke into deep laughter.

"But it was not just his teaching that was of help to me. No, much more. He was more than just a music teacher. He was the Pope of Music. He dominated the musical scene in Vienna. He proved very useful to me. You must know that every year Salieri would organize Christmas and Easter charity concerts for the widows and orphans of musicians through

DAMAGING WINDS

the Society founded by his mentor, Gassman. He put his heart and soul into these concerts. It was the first organization to arrange musical concerts for the general public, you know. It was also his way of showcasing the talent of his students. I remember so well my first public concert in Vienna. It was in March 1795. Salieri had arranged for two concerts featuring an oratorio by Antonio Cartellieri, another of his students. He asked me to play one of my piano concertos, which I did on the first night. The second night I improvised on the pianoforte. Of course, we were expected to *donate* our time. He did arrange for the Society to grant me a free life time pass to their concerts. Try paying for your rent with that! Nevertheless, it was a wonderful opportunity and did help me secure paying commissions. So thereafter when he asked me to perform at his annual charity concerts, I would usually agree. In 1798 when I presented my Quintet Opus 16 at one of his concerts, the Emperor Franz himself and the royal family were in attendance. I was deeply in his debt in those years. I dedicated a set of violin sonatas to him."

Anna smiled recalling Salieri's own telling of this story.

"He even inspired some of my music. When I told him that what I wanted to do was to write a German opera, he suggested that I look at his opera *Les Danaïdes*. Although it was written for French, he thought that it might be instructive as an example of how to adapt the opera to a language other than Italian. And it surely was. I carefully studied the copy of the score that he gave me, copying out various passages (mostly vocal duets and choral scenes). I especially liked a motif from the beginning of his overture and I used a variation of it in the rondo for my piano concerto in C Major. I still have the score of his opera around here somewhere."

Anna looked around at the chaos that was Beethoven's apartment and wondered if it would ever be possible to find it.

"It was money, however, that led to our falling out in 1808. I remember it was the year that Salieri conducted *The Creation* at Haydn's retirement gala. I was in attendance. But that same year we reached the lowest point of our relationship. It was Salieri's annual charity concerts that led to the falling out. In December I organized one of my concerts. It happened to fall on one of the days when Salieri was to stage one of his charity events. My concert was not only competition for Salieri's charity event, but my concert was so much better than his. Mine featured my Symphonies 5 and 6, my fourth piano concerto and my Choral Fantasy. Salieri was incensed about this scheduling conflict. He insisted that I change my date, but

I had incurred significant expense in arranging the concert and simply could not afford to change the date. He then tried to destroy my concert by telling all of the musicians that I had lined up that he would never forgive them for playing in my concert. I, in turn, reacted badly to his actions and his public criticism, denouncing him as my enemy."

"The very next year, however, I visited him and tried to repair our relationship. I did not want to let the rift grow between us. I tried to keep in contact with him after that. At the premier of my *Wellington's Victory* I asked him to direct the percussion section. He was good enough to agree to do so. And then we jointly pointed out the usefulness of the metronome. So if you ask me if I believe that Salieri poisoned Mozart the answer is an emphatic no. Is it possible that Mozart had the sort of problems with Salieri that I did. Yes, I think that is possible, even likely. In any such confrontation would Salieri have triumphed? Yes, I have little doubt of that. He is the consummate courtly diplomat. Would he have been motivated by the baser human motives, money, power, jealousy? I very much doubt it. These are not the things that matter most to the Kapellmeister. Mozart's failure to follow in Gluck's footsteps? That would have upset Salieri." Turning to Mozart he said definitively. "I have work to do. I am trying to finish my *Missa Solemnis*. Go away." It was clear that the interview was over.

In the carriage on the way back to her rooms, Anna could not thank young Mozart enough. "It was nothing. I just hope that the meeting was of some use." Anna herself wondered about that. She had learned that Beethoven did not believe that Salieri had murdered Mozart but, of course, she knew that Mozart had not been murdered. What was more interesting was Beethoven's falling out with Salieri. That had shown the power that Salieri could wield against those who dared to challenge him. The Pope of Music — a Borgia Pope surely! "Yes, it was most interesting and helpful."

Later when she was alone, Anna pulled out some paper to write to her beloved Otto. She so wanted to share the day's events with him. He would not believe her good fortune. In the same day she had met both Mozart's son and the genius Beethoven. But how would she explain meeting them? Could she say that it had been mere chance? Would not that be more of a lie than saying nothing? And if she did mention them, what would she say that they talked about? To describe the discussion would be to reveal her ongoing investigation. No, no that would not do. Soon she hoped to

DAMAGING WINDS

be reunited and able to share her research. But what did she have to share as yet? She slowly pushed the paper aside and prepared for bed.

A Competition Revisited

THE NEXT DAY ANNA AND her uncle were surprised when Salieri arrived at their door early in the afternoon in a carriage pulled by a pair of fine looking horses. Salieri, a broad smile on his face, explained, "You two have been pressing me for information about Mozart for some time. Today I thought that we might discuss Mozart or at least an event in which we both played a part." Both Anna and her uncle smiled at the prospect. Anna was doubly happy because it had been some time since a smile had graced the face of her uncle. Since his discovery of her investigations, he had smiled little in her company. But clearly even he could not help but be intrigued by the prospect of learning more of Mozart and Salieri.

The old composer noted their interest and continued, "But, as I thought about this, it seemed only right to have our discussion where the actual event took place. With your permission, we are off to Schönbrunn, the summer palace of the Emperor."

Whatever her reservations about the Pope of music, Anna was quick to accept. She wanted very much to hear how Salieri would characterize his relationship with Mozart and she had heard much of the palace at Schönbrunn. She rushed upstairs to dress more suitably for an outdoor afternoon. In only a few minutes, she presented herself in an appropriate walking dress with her new wide brim sun bonnet. The carriage driver helped Anna as she mounted into the carriage. She was followed in short order by her uncle and the old Kapellmeister. Her uncle sat beside her facing forward and Salieri settled in opposite.

"Take us first to the Amalischer Hof at the Hofburg," Salieri told the driver. Then turning to his two fellow passengers, he explained. "I assume that at least you, Herr Rochlitz, have heard of the famous opera competition at Schönbrunn."

DAMAGING WINDS

"Heard of it, yes," replied Anna's uncle. "You mentioned it the first day we met, but I know only that you were pitted against Mozart, with each of you composing a short work specially for the event. I know nothing more."

"Well there is much more to tell. It was a special event. Being entirely accurate, however, it was not a competition between Mozart and me. Remember that Mozart and I were then engaged in very different activities. He was a composer without a court position; forced to write instrumental works on commission and to organize his own concerts. His only opera-like work in Vienna before that time had been the German singspiel *Abduction from the Seraglio* some three years before. I, on the other hand, was director of the Italian Opera and the composer of many, many operas in Italian and French. The roles that we each played in the competition were also quite different. Given that old Bonno was too frail and aged to be of much practical help, I was effectively the acting Imperial Kapellmeister with overall responsibilities for all musical events like this. Besides all of this talk of the rivalry between Mozart and me is exaggerated. In fact just before this event he, Da Ponte and I had worked together on a small piece to celebrate the return of our prima donna Nancy Storace to the stage after an illness. Da Ponte provided the poem "On the recuperation of Ofelia".

"Ofelia?" asked Anna's uncle.

"An allusion to Storace's role in my opera *La Grotta di Trofonio*. In any event, for the opera competition I worked with Casti, my librettist, on the Italian comedy that we presented, and in at least a general way, I oversaw the preparations for the event as a whole. Mozart's role was much more limited. He was then working on his *Marriage of Figaro* and did not have the time to do more than supply an overture, an arietta, a rondo, a trio and a finale. But in any event a Singspiel was largely a spoken work and he had no role in that. It was Gottlieb Stephanie the Younger, I believe, who was responsible for *The Impresario*. Mozart just supplemented that gentleman's work by the addition of some music." Pausing, he continued, "No, it would be wrong to think of it as a competition between Mozart and me. Rather it was a competition pitting two genres of musical theatre against each other: the Italian opera buffa against the German Singspiel. The competition was arranged by Joseph II as a way of celebrating the visit in February, 1786 of his sister the Arch-Duchess Maria-Christine and her husband Duke Albert of Saxony-Teschen. The Emperor had re-

A Competition Revisited

cently decided to try to sustain both a German Singspiel troupe and an Italian buffa company. He had been trying for some years to promote the writing of German Singspiels — something near and dear to the hearts of both of you I understand.”

“Indeed,” responded Anna and her uncle in almost perfect unison.

Salieri laughed. “Your unity of thought and timing is admirable! Admirable! It makes me think that you will play the role of the chorus very well in my little drama.” Anna looked at her uncle questioningly at these words. To her immense relief, her uncle smiled at her and took her hand in his. It is going to be a good day, Anna rejoiced to herself.

Salieri seemed to have felt the same thing because he too smiled. He then continued. “Undoubtedly Emperor Joseph thought that his sister’s visit would be a good opportunity to test his German Singspiel troupe against his newly reconstituted Italian opera buffa troupe in a friendly competition. He so loved competitions! In fact the event became more than just a competition of two genres. The leading German and Italian prima donnas of the day were set against each other, and then, of course, a German composer was set against me as an Italian.

“The Emperor invited a visiting Polish prince and about forty courtiers and their escorts.” Looking out of the window of the carriage, Salieri stated, “The guests gathered at this very spot, on the first floor of the Amalische Hof of the Hofburg palace about two in the afternoon. I am not sure what experience, if any, either of you has had in organizing a state function, but it is a task that would try the patience of Job — so many protocols to be observed, so many egos to be assuaged. To be a success, the event must not offend anyone. Even the simplest of things could give offence. Lots had to be drawn to determine the order of departure.”

Sliding open the communications port, Salieri told the driver to set off for the summer palace. Then, returning to Anna and her uncle, he continued, “The guests in their coaches and carriages, each preceded by two grooms, set out along this very road. They would arrive at Schönbrunn about four o’clock. I hope to make better time, not having to participate in such a grandiose parade.”

“It must have been a very impressive sight,” Anna interjected.

“Would that I had seen it but I, of course, did not get to witness this particular spectacle. I was already at Schönbrunn busy making the final preparations for our opera evening. You cannot imagine how many little last minute details required my attention. I was wearing two hats for the

DAMAGING WINDS

occasion. I was the unofficial director of the theatre but I was also conducting one of the two pieces to be performed."

Anna's uncle noted, "You must have been concerned to put on a better performance than Mozart."

"I, of course, wanted my little opera to come off without a hitch. But having unofficially assumed old Bonno's duties, I also had to be concerned to some extent about what the German troupe did at the other end of the hall. I had overall responsibility for the evening's entertainment."

Anna's uncle inquired, "You have now twice mentioned 'old Bonno'. I do not recognize the name. You say that he was the director of the National Theatre at that time. He was clearly Italian but I thought that at this time the National Theatre was performing German singspiels."

"First, let me correct you. Kapellmeister Bonno was Italian in name only. His father was from Brescia but he had been born and raised in Vienna. True he did go to Naples for musical training but he spent his career in Vienna serving the Imperial Court. He had become Imperial Court Kapellmeister on Gassmann's death in 1774. He was already in his sixties when he took up this title. In less than a decade he gave up his administrative duties, although not the title. Having assisted Gassmann I was experienced and largely assumed Bonno's duties. Then, on his retirement in 1788, I received the title Imperial Court Kapellmeister."

Anna, who had sat quietly through most of the trip, could not suppress her curiosity and asked, "What of Herr Mozart? Was he considered for the post? By 1788 he had already written the *Escape from the Seraglio*, *The Marriage of Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*."

"No, my young lady, he was not. You know so little of court appointments! I suspect that no thought was given to Mozart in this appointment. None at all. And nor should he have been considered. He was not suited to the post." Then looking out the window of the carriage, Salieri added in a clipped, formal tone, "Let us enjoy the drive."

For a while the three passengers lapsed into an awkward silence, avoiding conversation. Anna felt sure that she had hit a nerve with Salieri. This was clearly a point of some concern to him but, for her uncle's sake, she decided it best not to press the point with the Kapellmeister. Anna determined that she would enjoy the scenic drive. Finally, when she broke the silence, it was to change the subject. "I have never been to the summer palace. I understand that it was inspired by the palace in Versailles."

A Competition Revisited

“Not exactly,” Salieri replied. “It was originally a wooded area, but the Turks destroyed the forest in the late 1600’s at the time of their siege of the city. Plans were then prepared for a spectacular palace on the cleared land but they were not carried out and all that was built was a hunting lodge. It was called Schönbrunn because of the “beautiful spring” that exists on the property. It is said to have healing powers. It was the Empress Maria Theresia who was inspired by what had been done at Versailles and who converted it into the summer palace that you will see. Haydn once told me that as a young boy, he and his fellow choir boys would climb on the scaffolding being used to build the summer palace. Being young boys they made lots of noise. One day they noticed a stately woman watching them. It was the Empress herself. She called to them to be quiet and come down immediately. When they did, she threatened to have them properly thrashed if they ever did it again. The very next day Haydn was caught up on the scaffolding.”

“What happened to him?” Anna asked.

“He was soundly beaten as promised. But the best part of the story is that years later when the Empress went to Eszterháza and was introduced to Haydn, he thanked her for the reward that she had bestowed upon him when they had last met. The Empress was puzzled. ‘Have we met before? Surely I would remember’, she said. He replied in mock seriousness, ‘We have indeed met at least twice. You see I was the choir boy climbing on the scaffolding of Schönbrunn that you had beaten for disobeying your command to never do so.’ ‘Oh’, she replied, colouring up. ‘Well, clearly it must have done you some good.’ Apparently everyone roared with laughter, especially Haydn.”

Anna and her uncle broke into broad smiles and Salieri continued, “But the summer palace is still a work in progress. Every Emperor makes additions or changes. Much of the landscaping that we shall see was done during my time in Vienna. The Gloriette, the series of triumphal arches on the hill overlooking the palace, was built during my first decade in Vienna. The wonderful Neptune’s Fountain was added a few years later while I was on leave in Italy. On my return in 1780, I was as impressed on seeing the new fountain as I am sure you will be. It is a marvel.”

Salieri continued for some time giving his guests an historical overview of the palace and its grounds. Finally their carriage turned into the road leading to the palace. Anna and her uncle were struck by the dramatic entrance, large iron gates were flanked on each side by identical guard

DAMAGING WINDS

houses from each of which rose a towering white stone pillar topped by a large eagle — the twin eagles symbolizing the Hapsburg family and their Empire. From each gate house a colonnaded outer wall curved back separating the inner courtyard from the surrounding area. Both Anna and her uncle strained to get a good view through the windows of the carriage. The impressive palace spread out before them. Once through the gates, their carriage travelled down a broad carriageway through the large courtyard. Fountains flanked them on either side and beyond them was a tree lined circular drive and a set of buildings that enclosed the courtyard. Their carriage stopped in front of the central building, a massive, perfectly symmetrical structure with a pink roof and tall classical columns.

Salieri stepped down from the carriage and took a small bag from the driver. Waving to Anna and her uncle he began to stroll slowly away from the palace itself. Following his lead they walked through an arched walkway to the left of the central building and came out into a boulevard lined with skillfully shaped trees and flanked by landscaped gardens. “I regret that the Imperial family is in residence and so we shall be denied the sublime pleasure of viewing the palace’s interior. And I shall not be able to visit the boy. But it cannot be helped.”

“The boy?” Anna inquired.

“Yes. The palace is home throughout the year to Napoleon’s son by the Princess Marie Louise. He is known as the Duke of the Reichstadt, a title his grandfather, the Emperor, gave him a few years ago. Can you believe that his father, Napoleon, had the audacity to call his son the King of Rome? Such an embarrassment to both the little boy and the Emperor.”

“I knew none of this,” Anna replied. Turning to her uncle, Anna asked if he had known this and he indicated that this was unknown to him as well.

“Yes, he has lived here for years. He is now 11. For fear that he might be taken and exploited by those who wished to incite further troubles in France he is kept here under protective custody, a sad victim of world politics.”

“What a lonely life. Is he not allowed out at all?”

“Not to the best of my knowledge. He lives a solitary life. It is thought impolitic to befriend the poor lad. His sole companion is a crested larch.”

“A bird?” asked Anna incredulously.

“Yes, a sad fate for one so young.” Salieri glanced up towards the windows of the Palace then, turning to his companions, said, “Just ahead of

A Competition Revisited

us is the entrance to the Orangerie, where the Emperor's musical competition took place. Shall we take a turn about the gardens before seeing it?" The group turned and walked out of the tree lined boulevard through a small garden and into a vast area flanked by tall trees. They continued their walk, enraptured by the beauty of the rear gardens of the Palace. Walkways lined with flowers and shrubs, perfectly manicured lawns and fountains stretched out before them. In the distance a set of triumphal arches crowned a steep hill. "The Gloriette!" exclaimed Salieri. "The view from there is not to be missed!" And so the three of them strolled through the beautiful gardens to the base of the hill upon which the Gloriette stood. There an enormous multi-level fountain rose in front of them. Atop the third level of the fountain, a rocky outcrop, stood Neptune holding his trident. From beneath his feet flowed water that dropped down the face of the rock into the second level of the fountain below. Surrounding but below Neptune were sea nymphs and mounted figures, a riot of statuary in white marble. Anna, her uncle and the old composer paused for a few moments to admire the work and to hear Salieri's stories of having first seen it so many decades before. They then proceeded slowly up the hill.

"What do you think of my wedding present?" Salieri asked, pointing to the Gloriette.

"It is impressive beyond measure," Anna's uncle said, "but why do you refer to it so?"

"Oh, it was an amusement that my wife Therese and I enjoyed. You see it was built just after our wedding in the fall of 1774. We used to say 'How considerate of the Emperor to have it built to celebrate our union.'" Salieri laughed but then in but a brief moment a look of sadness clouded his face. When Anna and her uncle looked worried, he assured them that he was fine — just remembering his dead wife. "I still miss her terribly although she has been dead 15 years. I trust that she is looking down upon us and smiling. What a wonderful family she gave me — seven daughters and my dear son Alois. I am reminded of a brief period in 1788 when I was confined to bed with a leg injury. Each night my wife would sit by me with two of my daughters, working at a small table. My son would be studying at my desk while two of our younger daughters were in the next room knitting, keeping an eye on the youngest girls who were playing with their dolls. I cannot tell you how happy I was to see that charming sight. At seven o'clock my wife and children would recite their evening prayers, and then continue their previous activities. Later my son would

DAMAGING WINDS

sit down at the pianoforte, and invariably one of his sisters would ask him to play a dance tune. The girls would whirl around merrily. At nine o'clock my wife and a maid would come to take care of my bad leg with fumigants and other medications prescribed by the doctor. Afterwards one of my older daughters would bring me my soup, and half an hour later my wife, my son and daughters would kiss me goodnight. I may have been suffering from my injury but I cannot but recall how pleasant those evenings were for me!"

Wiping away a tear from his eyes, he changed the subject. "Yes, Schönbrunn is impressive but it is nothing in comparison to Versailles."

"You have visited Versailles, Maestro?" Anna's uncle asked.

"Yes, several times at the invitation of Queen Marie Antoinette during the time that I spent in Paris in the 1780s, but that is a story that I shall reserve for our trip back to Vienna. Now it is time to sing"

"Sing?" replied Anna and her uncle in unison.

"You two do play the role of the chorus so well! Yes, we shall sit over there on the grass under that tree and we shall sing a canon, or round as you may know it. I have been composing one in my mind as we walked. I have done it in German in your honour. The more you come to know me the more you will come to learn my routines. One routine that I greatly value is the singing of humorous canons on my outdoor excursions."

"As you did with Rossini and his wife."

"Yes but in that case absent the outdoors." By this time the three of them had reached Salieri's chosen tree. He pulled a large cloth from his bag and began, with help from Anna's uncle, to spread it out under the shady cover of the large tree. Salieri stood while the others settled themselves. Then, with the grandeur of the Gloriette providing a backdrop, he explained, "I shall sing the three verses of my newest composition. Then we shall try it together a few times until you feel familiar with it. Once we have achieved this familiarity we shall sing it in turn. Anna as the soprano shall start. As she finishes the first verse, I as the tenor shall repeat the first verse while she shall continue with the second. As I finish the first verse, Herr Rochlitz you shall sing the bass part. Sing a short passage for me so that I can test your voice." Anna's uncle somewhat hesitantly sang a few words. Salieri shook his head and said, "That shall have to do."

Then Salieri began to sing in a strong voice. His first verse spoke of three weary travellers stumbling along an endless road to a magical palace. In the second verse the travellers shake off their fatigue and recreate

A Competition Revisited

an opera competition of long ago. In the third verse, they cast their eyes to heaven and ask Gluck, gazing down from above, whom God had judged the winner. Anna and her uncle both smiled as they listened to the verses. The old Kapellmeister then insisted on putting them through several rehearsals and then directed them in a performance. If they thought that he would be happy with a single round they were to learn that he intended to keep the rounds going for some time.

When their singing experiment ended some time later with more fun than success, Salieri addressed Anna. "You have a fine voice." Turning to her uncle, he said scoldingly, "Would that the same could be said of you." Smiling he added, "You were wise to have become a writer." He then reached into his bag and shared with them some sweets he had brought for the occasion. "Another of my routines," he explained. "I always bring sweets for my walks. In fact, I once thought that I could live on nothing but bread, water and sugar for eight whole days."

"Do I hear another story coming?" inquired Anna's uncle.

"You see you are already coming to know me." Salieri smiled broadly and continued. "You will recall that I told you of my brother Francesco the violinist."

Anna and her uncle nodded.

"Well when Francesco was retained to play at some church festival or the like, he would take me with him if there was room in the carriage. But one day, when I was about ten, my brother left without me."

"You must have been disappointed." Anna chimed in.

"Indeed I was. I so wanted to accompany him that I started off on foot, forgetting to ask my parents for permission. When I returned that night with my brother, my father was so angry that he told me that if I ever again did anything like that he would confine me to my room and give me nothing but bread and water for a week." Salieri smiled to himself remembering the incident. "At first I was greatly frightened. Then as I mulled the matter over, I concluded that it was worth the risk. I could endure the punishment. Water was no problem. I have never drunk anything but water."

Anna's uncle looked very sceptical but Salieri stated assertively, "I simply do not like the taste of wine unless it is sweet. And as for bread, I decided that I could live on it, if I could have sugar too. Even then I was very fond of sweets. So I began to stock pile sugar, just in case."

Anna and her uncle smiled together at the prospect.

DAMAGING WINDS

“The next time that my brother was unable to take me on one of his trips, I waited half an hour or so. It was early in the morning and my parents, brothers and sisters were not yet up. I told the servant girl that I was going to mass (which I really was). I selected, however, a distant church not far from where my brother was playing that day. After the church service rather than return home, I struck out for the village where my brother was playing. I had convinced myself that my disobedience was no great fault since it was being done to hear sacred music. I had not counted, however, on the resourcefulness of my father who had someone watch over me. I barely made it through the city gate before he overtook me and led me home. My father was irate. ‘This is how you obey me? Have you forgotten the punishment I threatened? Away to your room and get ready for a ‘good’ dinner.’ After a warm bath, I went like a bird to its cage and my father locked me in my room. I was not particularly concerned, however, because I had had a good breakfast and I knew that I had my secreted sugar supply. I read until the hour for dinner struck. Sure enough, the servant came bringing me a sliver of bread, a bottle of water and a glass. The ugly old woman placed them all before me and then when out of the room and, with an evil smile, locked the door. Off I went to the clothes press where I had concealed my hoard of sugar. It was not there. How could this be?” To stress the point Salieri looked about him lifting objects as if in search of the missing sugar. He then looked at Anna and, raising his finger to stress the point, he said, “Then it struck me. I had entrusted my secret to my sister. She must have informed my mother who in turn had told my father. He had confiscated my entire stock of sugar! Now I truly did feel the full weight of my punishment and learned once more that my father was a man of his word. I was very fearful, thinking of eight everlasting days shut up in my room with little food.”

“You must have been very worried;” Anna noted.

“Oh yes. Very much so. I was overcome with both shame and fear, but mostly fear. I broke down and cried. My father, who had been listening at the door, opened it and said ‘Ha, ha, my fine gentleman. Pretty tricks these plans of yours! You not only disobeyed my orders but you then hid away sugar in anticipation of your punishment.’ By this time I was full of repentance and I prayed his forgiveness. Thankfully, he granted it, on the proviso that in the future when my brother Francesco went to a music festival and there was no room for me in the carriage, I would be shut up all day in my room. With this altered sentence hanging over my head, I

A Competition Revisited

was allowed to go to the dinner table. I found to my chagrin that several of my father's friends were dining with us that day. When they were told the story of my hoarding of the sugar, I had to put up with many a joking remark. Indeed, for a long time thereafter when I met any of them they would always ask me how my sugar supply was."

So with smiles upon their faces, the trio made its way back towards the palace and into the long, narrow hall of the Orangerie that stretched out on their right from the main building of the Palace. As they entered the hall, sunshine poured through its tall, south facing arched windows. Salieri explained, "It was here that the competition was held."

"It seems rather utilitarian in the midst of such splendour" Anna's uncle noted.

"You will recall that our competition took place in February and that this is a summer palace. The Orangerie was chosen because here the summer could be recreated. It was lined with orange trees and other foliage that was stored here over the winter because the hall was heated both from the sun and by hot air piped into the room. That day the room was also illuminated by many chandeliers and embrasured torches. Each opera was performed on a stage specially erected for the event at opposite ends of the long hall. My opera was at that end" he said pointing to their right, "and Mozart's was at the other end." Dinner was served at a center table, which was decorated with both Austrian and more exotic flowers. During dinner, the imperial wind ensemble performed excerpts from my *La Grotta di Trofonio*. After dinner, the Emperor and his guests made their way to the stage that was to be used for *The Impresario*. When the Sing-spiel was finished the party moved to the other end for our Italian opera buffa. By 9 o'clock, the guests were in their coaches and carriages on their way back to the city in the same order as they had come.

"Ah, but those were glorious days! What joy and good humour," Salieri recalled. "Perhaps the most fun that I ever had in preparing and overseeing the performance of an opera. Both the Italian and the German works made fun of such preparations. I worked with Casti, my collaborator on *La Grotta*, on a work we called *Prima la musica e poi le Parole* (First the Music and Then the Words). Casti's libretto was great fun, satirizing everyone involved — the producers, the composers and the singers. The opening duet with the librettist and the composer was marvellous. In that duet we learn that a Count, who is to provide the funding, wants everything ready in just four days. Can you imagine? Four days! And to make

DAMAGING WINDS

matters worse he has made his funding conditional on his chosen female singer being cast as the lead. The librettist, who, of course, Casti made the voice of reason, says it cannot be done. But the composer is not concerned. He points out that no one is interested in the story anyway. He insists that it can in fact be done. How? He has already written the music. The librettist is puzzled. Does the music not have to draw its inspiration from the words? How can the music come first? How can it be written before the words? The composer explains that his music is suitable for any occasion. Write what you like, it matters not. Meanwhile, the producer's chosen prima donna arrives. She, of course, must be the centre of attention. She tries to impress everyone by listing the many theatres in which she has appeared and the roles that she has sung. She offers to imitate Sarti's famous castrato role Giulio Sabino. The composer and the librettist agree to keep her happy. Oh, but she cannot just sing. No, she must create the appropriate scene. She notes that she will need the librettist and the composer to play children. Oh, alright they say. But you are too tall for children. She insists that they crawl on their knees, while she sings the aria. What joy. Oh, Casti was so cleverly humorous."

"But what of the other work? Which work was better received," Anna asked, confident that she knew the answer.

"Both works were well received but if I can be candid without being boastful most in the audience agreed that our Italian opera had been superior to the German Singspiel. I recall my friend Zinzendorf telling me that he thought the German work very mediocre."

When Salieri noted the frown on Anna's face, he added, "I did not say that my music was superior to that of Mozart — although I think it better suited to our audience. It was much more a comment on the inherent problems of the German singspiel. Remember that it was a spoken play with a few musical interludes. It lacked the musically accompanied recitative of the Italian comedic opera. And that particular German play lacked the genius of Casti's libretto. But neither my work nor that of Mozart was our best work. We had a limited time to prepare and it was after all only an occasional piece, done specially for the occasion." Then noticing the lengthening shadows, Salieri said, "it is late. We must be one our way."

As the three walked back to their carriage, Anna reminded Salieri of his promise to tell the story of his visits to Versailles.

"I have not forgotten young lady. I was simply awaiting the time when we were all comfortably seated and on our way. The story of my trips to

A Competition Revisited

Versailles is intimately connected with Gluck and the writing of my first French opera, *Les Danaïdes*. You, Rochlitz, will recall that Gluck had had great success in Paris in the 1770s. He had written and produced six or seven operas there, including a new version of *Alceste* and his *Orphée et Eurydice*. Then in the early 1780s he was asked to set to music a French libretto, *Les Danaïdes*. By the end of 1783, he realized that he would not be able to do so. He had had a previous stroke of apoplexy and he was simply not up to the task. The directors of the French Academy of Music asked if someone could work with him to produce a French opera using the principles he had taught. Gluck suggested I do it."

"It was my first attempt at setting a French text to music. Virtually all of my work to that time had involved setting Italian texts. My only limited experience beyond Italian had been my German opera two years before. Gluck, however, made it clear that I could compose the work under his guidance. As it happened, he was not in a position to offer much assistance but I took great solace in knowing that he would review it with me before I took it to Paris. When it was finished, we went through it together at the pianoforte."

"I alone took my score to Paris, not only with the consent, but to the great pleasure of my patron the Emperor Joseph. The Emperor wrote to his sister Marie Antoinette suggesting that she lend me her support, which she was gracious enough to do. Soon after my arrival in Paris, the Queen invited me to Versailles telling me to bring my score. She met with me at La Petite Trianon, her private residence. She was so anxious to have word of Vienna, of her family and the Court generally and of Gluck her tutor. We talked and talked. She went through the score with me seeking out duets we could sing together. She had a wonderful, well trained voice. Three times I went to Versailles to rehearse the work there and each time we sang together. After our first meeting we used the nearby private theatre that she had had built for her exclusive use. A truly charming place. Apparently she and others in her circle performed works there. Their audience? Why the servants of course," he laughed. "I even got to conduct my opera once in the presence of the King and Queen as well as the Count d' Artois and several other high personages of the court. I knew that I would have cause for full satisfaction if my piece found the same success with the public in Paris as it had at the royal court. And so it did. It was produced with great staging and a splendid cast. I remember it as if it was yesterday — April 26, 1784, in the Theatre de la Porte St.

DAMAGING WINDS

Martin. The Palais Royal theatre had burned down a few years before. During my stay in Paris my opera was given thirteen times. Ironically, even though I was the composer, only on the first two evenings did I succeed in hearing the performance well and then only through a special favour. The other times, not wanting to wait two hours in line to secure a good place, I could neither see nor hear well.

“But the success of the work was such as to gain me commissions for two new operas. The fact that I would do three operas was very important. Every composer who produced three works at the Academy received for each of the first twenty performances 200 francs, for each of the ten following 150 francs, for each of the next (the fourth) ten 100 francs, and all beyond forty 60 francs. I am still receiving payments from France even after all of these years.”

Anna’s uncle inquired, “I understand that the work was first held out to the public as a work of Gluck. Is that so?”

“Yes. I knew before I left Vienna for Paris that at first *Les Danaïdes* was to be announced in Paris as the work of Gluck. This was done to attract a larger audience and to save it from those who judge a work by who wrote it rather than on its own merits. After it had been performed and attracted praise, Gluck was kind enough to publish an open letter in the Paris paper saying that it was entirely my work.”

“That is very interesting,” Anna interjected, “but may I hear more of the Queen and Versailles. What was she like? We hear so many stories.”

“My first word of advice to you, young lady, is not to believe everything you hear. People love to spread malicious and often totally fabricated gossip. Base your judgments on the facts as best you can discover them from reliable sources.”

Anna thought to herself that the old composer had no idea how ironic his words were but she resolved to take them to heart. She replied simply, “But that is why I asked you, an eye witness, to share the truth with me.”

“Of course. I stand corrected and suitably humbled before you.” With as much flourish as the crowded coach allowed, the old composer bowed to Anna. “The story of the ill-fated Queen is a sad one indeed, especially for those like me who knew her before she was sent to France as a peace offering by her mother the Empress. You may not know that she was never intended to marry the Dauphin of France. It was one of the cruel twists of fate that resulted in her becoming the Queen of France. Her sister, Charlotte, was to have been the Dauphin’s bride but when another

A Competition Revisited

older sister died Charlotte was chosen by Charles III of Spain for his son King Ferdinand of Naples. The Empress Maria Theresia needed someone to marry the Dauphin and seal the alliance with France. Marie Antoinette, then only 12, found herself betrothed to the heir of the French crown. Regrettably, she was in several respects ill-suited to her new role. In a private moment she told me so herself. She felt isolated at Versailles. She spoke of how she missed Vienna and her music lessons with Gluck and others. She left for France the year after I arrived in Vienna. I was only 17 and paid her little attention. Had she stayed longer, I might have gotten to know her better. But when I arrived in Versailles and was introduced to her she remembered seeing me playing in her brother's chamber music group. For a Queen she lived simply. She took refuge at La Petite Trianon from the demands of the Court. She had a model farm established nearby so that she and her courtiers could play at milking cows and living the simple life. When the revolution came I feared for her and regrettably my fears were well founded. At the time of the Congress of Vienna my duties as the master of musical ceremonies brought me into contact with Talleyrand, the then French ambassador. We talked of her cruel fate. Talleyrand and the mistreated Queen were the same age I recall. In any event, he sympathised with her. He had favoured reform initially but the excesses of the Revolution had made him an émigré in England and later in the United States. That is where he was when she was executed. He and I both thought it only fitting that a funeral mass be celebrated at the Congress for the executed Queen and her husband Louis XVI. Together we organized the affair. I remember it was celebrated at St. Stephen's Cathedral in January 1815. The requiem was written by Talleyrand's composer Neukomm. I conducted the orchestra and choir."

"Talleyrand! Was there anyone of importance that you did not meet?" Anna's uncle inquired.

"Oh, I am sure that there have been many. But Talleyrand and I had much in common. He himself told me so. He was of the view that had I not been a composer I could have been his rival in diplomacy. When I mentioned this to some students they began to refer to me as the Talleyrand of music."

Anna noted the reference to Talleyrand but her mind was elsewhere. "And what of Versailles itself?" Anna reminded Salieri. "You said that the magnificent palace that we have just visited with its spectacular gardens is nothing in comparison to Versailles."

DAMAGING WINDS

“Yes, such is indeed the case. But in defence of Schönbrunn we need to remember that it is a summer palace. Versailles is a self-contained capital built to be the centre of France. It is both immense and awe-inspiring. But for all Versailles’ grandeur, I prefer the architecture of Schönbrunn. And Marie Antoinette told me on several occasions that she found Versailles to be oppressive and much preferred the smaller Austrian palaces in which she had passed her youth. It was this and the excessive formality and endless protocols of Versailles that caused her to seek refuge at La Petite Trianon.”

Thus the trio passed the time on their return to Vienna. When they approached the Minoritenplatz, Salieri, looking at a time piece, said. “We have had a long day. It would please me greatly if you would both join my daughter and me this evening for a meal.”

Anna’s uncle was the first to respond. “I regret that I have a previous engagement but Anna would be pleased to accept your invitation.”

Startled, Anna replied, “I would not want to impose on you and your daughter and I am rather tired.”

Her uncle, however, would hear no such excuse. “Do not be silly. You are young and it will be a wonderful opportunity for you to get to know the Kapellmeister better.”

Salieri too sought to convince her to accept. “Mia cara Anna, please accept. My daughter would be most appreciative of female company at the table. Her sister, who lives with us, is away visiting another of my daughters. Catarina is thus left with her old father as her only companion at table. It would please both her and me if you could join us.” Anna, realizing that there was no easy way out, reluctantly accepted. She asked, however, for time to change and properly prepare. Salieri willingly agreed and said that he would have a cab come to pick her up in an hour and a half.

Once alone, Anna spoke harshly to her uncle. “Uncle, you put me in a terrible position just now. You know my concerns about the Kapellmeister and yet you made it impossible for me to politely refuse his invitation. I am tired and now face spending the evening unaccompanied with this man and his daughter, whom I barely know.”

“You, young lady are in no position to chastise me. I may have been pleasant today but do not think that I have forgotten your secret activities. I insist that you attend. Besides, it is because of your concerns that I thought it best that you accept the invitation. What better way to get to know the Kapellmeister’s true nature than to spend time with him and

A Competition Revisited

his family. In any event, I could tell that you enjoyed his company this afternoon."

"I admit that I enjoyed the day and found him charming and informative. But you were with me and we were in effect carrying on our interview. It was not a social occasion. What shall we have to talk of this evening?"

"He is a wonderful raconteur. Your experience this afternoon proves that. I am sure that there shall be no awkward lulls in the conversation."

"Perhaps you are right. I cannot help thinking, however, that although he is superficially pleasant and charming that we have not yet discovered his true self. As he admitted to us this afternoon, he is referred to as the Talleyrand of music. Talleyrand was a master of intrigue. It is intrigue and back dealing that Salieri is alleged to have used against Mozart. You will note that he avoids any meaningful discussion of his relationship with Mozart."

"It has not escaped my notice. Who knows, perhaps he will open up to you about Mozart when I am not present. Many people are less candid when talking to reporters for fear that their less guarded moments will find their way into a published story."

An Offer

WHEN THE CAB DROPPED ANNA off at the Salieri residence, Catarina Salieri met her at the door. She explained that her father was not yet ready and steered Anna to the small sitting room where they had chatted the day the young Mozart had visited. Once seated side by side on a comfortable sofa, she took Anna's hand in hers and with a sincere look of appreciation said, "Thank you for joining us this evening. I do not know whether you fully understand how happy your interviews are making my father. I have not seen him this excited and animated for some time. Even last year's 50th anniversary of the widows and orphans fund did not affect him as much your interviews have. He always tries to maintain a positive attitude. Nevertheless I know that it bothers him that people today are falling over themselves in their effort to see and hear Rossini. And before Rossini it was Cherubini and Beethoven that were all the rage. Meanwhile my father's operas are infrequently performed. He is a proud and sensitive man who has given his whole life to his music. Even now everyday he sits at the pianoforte and revises his operas, improving them in the hope that someday they will come back into fashion. My sisters and I cannot thank you enough for showing an interest in his work and life. It has given him a new purpose. Do not get me wrong. He is always busy. He gives lessons and he is still heavily involved with administrative matters with the Society of the Friends of Music as well as at the school and at the court chapel. But it is his music of which he is most proud and most interested. I know that I can trust that when your uncle writes his articles he will be kind and respectful of my father's reputation."

Anna cringed inwardly at these words, knowing how and why she was spending her spare time. But she reminded herself that all that she was doing was seeking the truth. As her uncle had advised her, she was to

An Offer

keep an open mind. That meant not only that she ought not to prejudge the matter but also that she should not be swayed by emotion and sentiment notwithstanding Salieri's daughter's words.

She assured Catarina that her uncle had the greatest respect for her father and a sincere interest in the life that he had lived, especially his central role in Viennese music.

She could not help herself and asked, "But what of these rumours that your father frustrated the career of Mozart?"

"That is just nonsense. That is not at all his way. He is a kind and gentle man who cares about people. And as for Mozart I never have heard my father say anything remotely antagonistic to Mozart or his memory, even though he believed him wrong in his approach to music at times."

Some of the warmth had gone out of her voice when Catarina rose and addressed Anna, "We are so very pleased that you are doing us the honour of dining with us tonight. Let us join my father at the table."

"That would be most pleasant," Anna found herself saying out of guilt and fear of offending her hostess. But to herself she asked. "Oh, now what have I done?"

Dinner was a very different affair than she and Otto had experienced with Weber and Moscheles. While there were certainly some traditional German dishes there was much that reminded Anna that she was in Vienna, most notably the Viennese pastry which seemed to play a role in virtually every course. Anna detected the influence of the Kapellmeister's sweet tooth. How does he remain so trim she asked herself? But it was more than just the food that was different. Here the chairs were soft and comfortable. None of the stiff, hard chairs that Weber had used. And the atmosphere at the table was less regimented. At dinner, it was Catarina Salieri who talked with Anna, mostly about her schooling and her engagement to Otto.

At the mention of the fact that Otto was studying composition, Salieri suddenly perked up and quickly asked with whom he was studying. Anna proudly responded that he was lucky enough to be studying with Weber in Dresden.

Salieri replied, "Ah, Weber. For whatever reason he has been avoiding me for years." The old composer paused at these words as if searching for a clue as to what led Weber to shun him. But then the moment passed and a smile returned to Salieri's face. "But he has talent. Michael Haydn

DAMAGING WINDS

told me some time ago that Weber had real promise and that he was very dedicated to his studies."

Anna added with pride, "And he has connections. Otto has just learned that with Herr Weber's help, he will be working at the National Theatre in Munich."

"Oh, your young man must be very pleased. The first position is always the hardest to secure. So he shall be working with Peter von Winter."

"He did not say."

"Well von Winter is the Bavarian court Kapellmeister. He was a student of mine."

Him too, Anna thought to herself.

Salieri continued. "He is getting on in years and can be a difficult person. But I shall drop him a note and ask him to treat Otto well. We would not want the fiancé of mia carissima Anna to be harshly treated. Do you know what operas are to be performed there?"

Catarina interjected, "Papa, enough about music. You talked of that all day." Then looking at her father with a impish grin she asked, "At Schönbrunn did you show Anna and her uncle your wedding present?" When he nodded and laughed, she said, "Now you must tell Anna the story of how you met and won the hand of mama in marriage."

"She will not be interested in the story of my marriage."

"Papa, I think that I am a better judge of what might interest a young woman like Anna."

"Well if you think so. Would you like to hear the story, Anna?"

Thinking back to the affectionate moment that she had witnessed at the Gloriette when Salieri had remembered his wife and to her own wedding plans, she replied, "Very much so."

"It was in 1775. I was giving music lessons to a young Countess who was receiving her education in the nunnery of St. Laurenz. In the same cloister other motherless girls of important families were boarded. I gave my lesson from 11 a.m. to 12 noon. Each day just before the lesson finished the other girls, accompanied by their guardians, would pass through the music room to the dining hall. On my very first day, one of these other girls made a strong impression upon me. I can still see her in my mind's eye. To be honest, Anna, you remind me of her. She was about your age, slender like you but a little shorter. She was dressed in rose-colored taffeta. Of course, now that I had noticed her I looked for her every day when the

An Offer

girls went past. The second and third days I saw her, but on fourth and fifth days when the girls passed through the room she was absent."

"You must have wondered why," Anna commented.

"Yes, very much so. And again on the sixth day the others came without her. I was now really concerned. But on that particular day after the others had left the room she suddenly appeared alone. You would not believe what joy I felt. I bowed to her to show her clearly that I had been pained not to see her the preceding days. I am sure that I detected some joy in her face at my presence."

Anna looked at Catarina and smiled. Catarina in turn nodded to her, sharing without words their mutual understanding of the woman's game the young girl had been playing.

Salieri lost in his story failed to notice the conspiratorial looks of the two women. He went on, "From that moment her picture was firmly fixed in my head and heart. But the delicious feeling that accompanied the picture was challenged by many a bitter thought. 'What a fool you are being,' I said to myself, 'to feel such a sudden passion for a girl whom you have seen but three times, who has probably seen you for the first time here in the cloister, to whom you have never spoken, and probably never will speak! And suppose she has guessed your interest in her, are you certain that she shares your feelings and has not already bestowed her affections upon some worthier object?' But such thoughts did not prevent me from longing to see her. In fact, I could not refrain from walking up and down under the windows of the room in which I supposed she was lodged.

"You were in love," Anna noted.

"Spoken with such assurance and wisdom for one so young," Salieri replied. "In any event, on the second Sunday after my first sight of my unknown charmer, God gave me the opportunity to speak with her for the first time. I was in the habit of attending the Sunday afternoon service at St. Stephen's Cathedral. This time (it was February) I came in rather late and found all the pews occupied. An old woman kneeling at the end of a row made a little space for me. After finishing her devotions, the friendly old woman rose to go away. I stepped aside to let her pass and a young girl who had knelt beside her left the pew with her. And who should it be but the young lady of the nunnery! What a heavenly surprise! I bowed to her with all the respect I could muster. Without speaking, she gracefully returned the bow."

DAMAGING WINDS

"But I thought that you said that you spoke with her?" Anna interjected.

"Well at least you were listening but you have so little patience."

"Ah but Papa you have her interest," Catarina observed.

"Yes, but getting back to my story. True the object of my affection left the church without saying a word but I followed her. As I left the church I saw that she took the way to the nunnery with her companion. I decided to hasten through other streets to get there before her so that I could meet her. When she arrived I initially dared not approach her. Finally my fear of letting so good an opportunity slip roused my courage. Being from a good family I assumed that she understood French. I asked her in that language to forgive my boldness and allow me to accompany her to the cloister. She answered me in French — with the voice and manner of an angel — that it would give her pleasure."

"Of course," Anna added.

"Perhaps you think so now but I can tell you that at that time I greeted the words with heartfelt delight."

"Once more I would say of course." Anna replied. "I am not saying that you should not have reacted just as you did. I and she before me would have been terribly disappointed had you not done so. I am just saying that there was a plan afoot that you seem to have been oblivious to. Kapellmeister you may know music but like many men you seem to be unaware of the ways of young women. You think that her pattern of appearing in the music room was not planned to attract your attention? I can assure you that it was carefully thought out. Do you think it chance that she was at the church service that you frequented or that a place suddenly was made for you by her companion? Again I detect a carefully worked out plan. That such was the case should not in any way take away from the honesty or depth of your emotions — or hers."

"You well may be right. I suspect that you are. During our conversation she told me that she had recognized me when she saw me in the cloister, and had often heard the young Countess (my pupil) speak of me in terms of praise. I learned her name was Therese von Helpersdorfer. And that she went every Sunday to visit her father and two younger brothers who lived near the Cathedral. She always returned to the nunnery at this hour accompanied by the old servant. I offered, if she would allow it to walk her back to the Cloister every Sunday. She accepted my offer. Intoxicated with joy, I wished her good night, and made my way back to the

An Offer

Cathedral, to the very spot where she had knelt, to thank Heaven for its happy guidance, and to pray for continued blessings upon my honourable intentions. A secret voice whispered to me that Therese was destined to be the happiness in my life."

"What a charming story," Anna said.

"Oh, but the best part is yet to be told," chided Catarina. "Papa, do go on. Tell her about the Emperor."

"In due course, but first I need to prepare the scene. After that Sunday meeting I could hardly wait until my next lesson with the Countess. I treasured the opportunity it would provide to see my angel. Then, just as I about to leave for that lesson, a servant came to inform me that the Countess was ill, and I should not return to the cloister until further notice. What a blow! All my joy was suddenly banished. A whole week went by without being called to the cloister. I so longed to see my angel. I took the opportunity to make inquiries about her father and learned that he was an honoured and respected court official, dwelling in this very house. Finally Sunday afternoon came. I hurried to the Cathedral and stood near the door through which, coming from her father's house, she was likely to enter. I watched everyone who entered. Each time I saw someone who looked like her I would say to myself, 'It is her'. But for three never-ending quarters of an hour it was not her. I was beginning to fear that she would not come at all, or that she had entered by another door. Even worse I began to wonder if the Countess was really ill. Perhaps the Abbess in charge of the cloister had learned of my meeting with Therese from her servant and had ordered her to keep me away. I was being tortured by these thoughts when about five o'clock I saw my angel and her companion enter. After the service I followed her.

"When I got the chance I asked her if the Countess had really been ill. She assured me that in fact she had, adding that the Countess would recommence her lessons the next day. I roused up courage to tell her I had a secret to impart which concerned the peace of my whole life. I besought her to promise me a decisive answer to what I should say. She promised it and encouraged me with such grace and with a sort of tender curiosity to speak. I finally had the boldness to say that I passionately loved her and wished to learn if I could venture to hope for some, if but little, affection in return? 'For a like inclination,' she replied, half loud. 'For a like inclination!' I repeated as I seized her hand and covered it with kisses. 'The same,' she repeated, lightly and modestly pressing my hand. Beside

DAMAGING WINDS

myself for joy, I declared to her that this assurance made me blessed, and asked when I might present myself to her father in case she allowed me this step. ‘A week from today,’ she said. ‘I will prepare him for your visit and you shall be well received, for my father already knows you by reputation.’ I had by this time had several successful operas, *Armida*, *La fiera di Venezia*, and *La seccia rapita*, and it was known that I enjoyed the gracious inclination of the Emperor.”

“So I do not see how the Emperor became involved. You loved each other and her father seemed to approve,” noted Anna.

“My patron Joseph II was to play a crucial role because life took one of those twists that it often does. You see that very week Therese’s father died. I never got to ask him for his permission to marry her. Then the young Countess, my student, left for Hungary. I was thus deprived of the opportunity of seeing Therese, except now and then at the home of one of her companions. To make matters worse, the guardian appointed by her father was a widower of middle age. Ignorant of what had passed between his beautiful ward and me, her guardian decided to marry her himself. Soon after her father’s death he told her of his plan.”

“My goodness, this is right out of *The Barber of Seville*! Did you also devise a plot to rescue your love from the clutches of her older, grasping guardian?”

“No disguises, complicated schemes or ladders in my story.”

“Even better,” interjected Catarina.

“Now you really have my interest. What did you and Therese do and how does it involve the Emperor?” asked Anna.

“Let’s start with Therese. She told her guardian of her feelings for me. He was concerned that I was not of noble birth and was a mere musician. Not everyone prizes musicians as you and your uncle do.”

Anna could not help but think of her uncle’s initial reaction to Otto’s proposal of marriage. My uncle is less different than you might suspect, she thought to herself.

Salieri oblivious to her thoughts continued, “When this came to my knowledge, I hastened to the guardian, accompanied by a highly respectable gentleman. I made formal application for her hand. He received me politely and noted that his ward was in favour of the union, but he would not give his consent to the marriage. He explained that he owed her deceased father a duty to satisfy himself that I possessed sufficient means to support a wife who belonged to a noble family and who possessed a not

An Offer

insignificant fortune. I replied that I earned 300 ducats as a composer of Italian opera, a hundred ducats as imperial chamber composer, and had hopes of becoming Court Kapellmeister at some point. Moreover, my compositions and music lessons brought me in another 300 ducats annually, so that I could well reckon my income at 700 ducats. The guardian answered in words that are burned into my memory: ‘That would be more than sufficient if it were certain; but, of all this, you can only rely upon the hundred ducats which you receive from the Court. I must therefore pray you to wait until your position improves in some positive manner before I, as guardian, can give my consent to this marriage.’ “

“So you went to the Emperor?” asked Anna.

“To ask what? How could I ask him to intervene? The guardian was doing no more than his duty — which even I had to admit. I therefore asked the guardian to keep the matter secret for the present. To my good fortune, he did not do so. Two days later at 3 o’clock I went, as my duty required, to the Emperor’s chamber to play music. When I entered the anteroom, I saw the monarch standing by the fireplace with his back toward me, alone and sunk in thought. He turned a little to see who had come in, and returned my respectful bow with his usual kindness. On the other side of the room stood the footman of the Emperor and two persons, one of whom was counted among my most intimate acquaintances. I joined them in silence, and my friend, smiling, made me the sign of the long nose. At that moment the Emperor turned, noticed the jest and came towards me asking what that meant. I pretended not to know, although in fact I understood the joke only too well! The librarian, however, in confusion stammered out that I had tried to marry a beautiful orphan, but had found a rival in her guardian. The monarch somewhat surprised, asked me if this was true. I found myself obliged to tell the story, which seemed to greatly amuse the Emperor. When I explained why the guardian had refused his consent, I noticed a sudden but passing expression of seriousness. When I finished, he said, almost to himself. ‘Well then, you must have patience.’ Meanwhile the other musicians had arrived and the concert began in its usual manner without a word more being said about my love affair.”

“Next morning the official responsible for the Court music budget sent for me. On my arrival he greeted me with the words, ‘Congratulations, Herr Kapellmeister. The Emperor has increased your salary from one to three hundred ducats. The only requirement is that in addition to your

DAMAGING WINDS

current duties you help lighten the burden of the excellent but now very old and often sick, Kapellmeister Bonno, by directing the Italian opera.' Most joyfully surprised, I thanked him for this unexpected news, and I started on my way to Therese's guardian. But then I thought better of it and directed my steps to the imperial palace. The Emperor was no sooner informed that I was in the anteroom, than he called for me. When I entered he was sitting at his writing table. On seeing me he told me, 'Go. Go this instant to this guardian. Then this afternoon at our music session I shall expect you to let me know his answer.'

"I raced to the guardian. How could he now refuse his consent, I assured myself. And of course when I explained what the Emperor had done, the guardian did in fact give his consent. That afternoon the Emperor heard this with pleasure, and what followed, you can easily imagine. Never will my grateful heart forget his goodness which gave me many years of happiness."

"That is indeed a wonderful story. Thank you Catarina for asking your father to share it with me."

Salieri turned to Catarina and said, "Now I must insist on talking music because I have an important matter to discuss with Anna." Turning to Anna, he said, "You sit during our sessions listening to me talk of music and I have learned this evening that you are engaged to be married to a young would be composer. I feel compelled to ask what you yourself know of music."

"I have some knowledge. I studied singing and the pianoforte in my youth and can read music," Anna replied hesitantly.

"In my youth," he repeated. "Mia cara Anna you are still very much in the blossom of youth. Would that I were even close to being so. But I digress. What you have said is good, very good. Here come sit at the pianoforte." Looking around Salieri found some sheets of music, "here play this." It was a Beethoven sonata but not one that she had played before. She accepted it reluctantly.

"I am sorry it is not a piece I know."

"That, mia carissima Anna, is the idea. I want to see how you sight read."

When she did not prepare to play, he cajoled her. "Please, humour an old man. It is not a test. I shall think no less highly of you no matter how you play. I am just curious to know. It is the music teacher in me."

An Offer

Catarina who had been sitting quietly listening, added. "He won't be happy until you do. Please just play a few bars for him."

Anna put her fingers lightly on the keys, studied for a few moments the notes on the music sheet and tentatively began to play. She so wanted to avoid embarrassment that she focused all of her being on the notes she was reading. She had always thought herself an adequate sight reader and she at least wanted to appear so to the old man. After a half dozen bars she stopped but Salieri insisted she was doing well and should continue. Finally after what seemed an eternity but was only a minute he told that he had heard enough.

"I am suitably impressed. You can sight read and have a talent for music. That I can see. And you have had some training. I heard you sing this afternoon so I know you have a good voice." He paused as if trying to make a decision. He then resumed saying, "Yes, you have a gift for music and a fine voice. You are badly in need of help with your breathing. But you have the raw ability. With my help you could learn to truly sing and even I suspect to compose."

"You are only trying to be polite. I am fated to marry a composer not to be one."

"But why limit yourself in this way? Why can you not do both? Many women successfully combine a career with marriage. My goddaughter Theresa Rosenbaum is both a wife and a famous prima donna, as is Isabella Colbran who, of course, is married to Rossini."

"But they are performers."

"True but I have taught composition to several women with some real success. The daughters of Leopold von Auenburger (the man who wrote the libretto for my German singspiel) were quite talented, especially Marianna but also her sister Katherina. Both learned to compose. They also became distinguished pianists. Haydn dedicated six piano sonatas to them. He once told me that their approbation of his work was quite important to him and that their insights into music were the equal of many masters. Then there was Marie Bigot and also Maria Therese von Paradis."

"The blind organist?"

"The very same. She was the daughter of the Imperial Secretary to the Empress, Maria Theresia. Despite her blindness, she studied singing and composition with me. She became such a skilled organist that I wrote an

DAMAGING WINDS

organ concerto especially for her. Mozart and Haydn wrote piano concertos for her. She now teaches music here in Vienna.

"But even if you never compose or sing professionally, developing your God-given talents would be a boon to both you and your husband. Think of how many composers marry other musicians. Rossini married his prima donna. Why? Because music can be such a joy to share with your loved one. You would better understand your husband's work and be able to talk with him and help him with it. You say you want to write like your uncle. Would you not be a better music critic if you actually knew music? And if you develop your creative skills and apply them to your writing perhaps you might even be able to write librettos that he could set to music."

Anna was startled to hear the old composer give voice to her own thoughts.

As she tried to gather her thoughts, he continued. "I am not asking you to decide this very moment. Just promise me that you will think about what I have said."

Anna nodded her agreement.

She had no problem keeping her promise. Later as she prepared for bed, Salieri's offer was all that she could think about. She knew that she should not give it a moment's thought. Of course, she should reject it. But she could not get it out of her mind. She had always enjoyed music and the thought of having the same music teacher as Beethoven and her beloved Schubert was appealing. Yet she knew that she could not accept his offer. This was the man that had frustrated and hurt Mozart. How could she even think of studying with him? It would be impossible to explain it to Otto and she shuddered at the thought of telling Herr Weber. No, she was silly to waste even a moment considering the offer. Certainly if she did accept she would have to keep it from Otto and Weber. But could she? It was one thing to keep her continuing investigation from Otto but this. Surely this would be too much. The investigation was to help his career and to win favour with Herr Weber. How would this help? It would be different if this would yield some insight into the old composer's mistreatment of Mozart, if it was part of her investigation. But this was music lessons.

She knew that she must force herself to think of something else. She sat down at her writing table to begin a letter to Otto. But once again she pondered what she could say. There was so much happening yet so little she could share. It was becoming more difficult to write about things

An Offer

unrelated to Salieri. The fact was that she was spending all of her time in the interviews or carrying out her investigation. She thought for a moment that she might write of Schönbrunn and her dinner with the Salieri family. But how would she explain why she had accepted such a social invitation. Otto had understood how her work had forced her to accept her role in the interviews, but how would he react if he learned that she was now socializing with the old composer? No, she knew that she could not write of these activities — certainly not of the dinner and even less the proposed lessons. She wrote as she now did in each letter, “my life is full of Salieri — Salieri, Salieri and more Salieri.” She then added the line, “but let us not talk of the old Italian” and she shifted to a series of questions about how things were going for Otto in Munich. That would have to do for the moment.

Later while she lay in bed, Anna repeated to herself over and over, “Do not be fooled by his charm. Your job is to delve below the surface and find the scheming master of intrigue hidden so well beneath.” Her mind returned to the story behind Salieri’s marriage. Was there another way to see these events? At the beginning Salieri had been an unmarried composer without noble rank and with an insecure income. By the conclusion he had married into the nobility, had secured his place at the court, increased his income and gained access to his wife’s inheritance. Had it all been good fortune? Had Salieri really been the beneficiary of the guardian’s disclosure of his proposal (a proposal that the guardian had agreed not to disclose) together with the unsolicited intervention of his friends at court? Or had Salieri, in fact, out manoeuvred the guardian and worked in concert with his friends to gain the Emperor’s favour? Anna thought for a moment. She recalled Michael Kelly’s story of Salieri’s indirect approach to getting his way, using the singers to put his case to the director of the theatre. Was a pattern emerging? Is that what Mozart had been alluding to? Was this the Italian cabal at work plotting to better Salieri’s position at court? Remembering Salieri’s words, she thought to herself no disguises or ladders perhaps, but a plot nevertheless. In fact, it seemed on reflection to be a carefully conceived and executed plot to her. Talleyrand himself could not have done better. This sort of subtle behind-the-scenes plotting would be far more difficult to detect.

Then it struck her. The old composer’s endless stories could be the way to learn the truth. She thought of her uncle’s comment — what better way to get to know the real Salieri than to spend time with him and his

DAMAGING WINDS

family. Taking lessons from him would mean that she would be alone with him regularly. She also recalled Carpani's admonition to be less direct, more subtle, in her seeking of the truth. If the old Italian regarded her as a student and not someone taking notes for publication, might her be more candid? Certainly it was now very clear to her that he loved to reminisce. If she could encourage him during the lessons to recount stories of the days of Mozart in a relaxed environment with no reporter and no note taking, he might inadvertently reveal the truth. Yes, that might work. But then different doubts seized her mind. Am I capable of such duplicity? Can I pretend to be interested in the lessons so that I can foster more stories and gradually learn the truth? There would be no uncle to ask the questions. She could not sit quietly in a corner taking notes. She would be expected to pay attention to the musical instruction of this old man. Could she force herself to do that? And then the words of Moscheles came to her. If Beethoven thought that he could learn from the old Italian, surely I can. Yes, yes, I am sure that this could work. This could be the path that would lead her past the defences put up by the old composer, that let her break through his charming façade and see the real man beneath.

On awaking next morning, she resolved to find an excuse to visit the Salieri home. She was becoming so adept at telling her uncle partial truths that she had no difficulty in justifying such a visit to him. In fact he seemed quite encouraged by her news. "So your dinner last night must have gone well. I told that it would not be the unpleasant affair that you imagined", he said.

"Well enough," she responded.

Luckily she found Salieri at home. He was in fact quite pleased to see her. She had barely entered the room where he was working when he asked her if she had considered his offer. When she told him that she had and that she was willing to become his pupil his face lit up, he clapped his hands and he said loudly, "Fantastico, mia cara Anna". Then, realizing that he had slipped into Italian, he added, "I am so very pleased. You will not regret letting me train your voice and give you composition lessons."

Anna paused, not knowing how to react to such unexpected enthusiasm. "I am sure you are right" she said aloud. To herself, she added, "I doubt you would be as enthusiastic if you knew why I have accepted."

Words and Music

ANNA SAT STARING AT HER notes of the previous day's interview. She was perplexed. How could someone who had developed his skills under the watchful eye of Gluck, who had learned proper declamation from the legendary librettist Metastasio, who had played music with Haydn and who had taught Beethoven and Schubert be a second rate composer? And yet he was. Why? How was it that the Salieri's music did not lift off the page, as did the music of his teachers or his pupils? What was it about Salieri's operas that made them inferior? She truly regretted that she had not heard any of the old composer's operas. Then, at least, she would better understand. She must have been wondering out aloud because Felix, on entering the room, expressed his surprise at her desire to hear a Salieri opera. Was she altering her view of the Kapellmeister, he asked. She assured him that she was not — it was but curiosity.

The next morning Anna heard a knock at the door and the sound of Felix's shoes on the marble floor of the foyer. She recognized the Italian accented voice of Carpani asking for her. When he was admitted he began as always with the usual formalities but then asked her if she was sincere in her desire to hear a Salieri opera. She was taken aback. How had he known? But then she detected a slight smile on the face of Felix and she knew that he had again intervened with Carpani on her behalf. She assured her visitor that she was sincere, very much so. He replied that perhaps an informal performance of excerpts from one or two of the popular works might be arranged through Weigl. Carpani remarked. "I have an idea. We can ask Weigl if he might have his opera troop do excerpts from both an opera buffa and an opera seria — *La Grotta* would be my choice of a comic work and *Axur* my choice of a serious one." With these words, Carpani gathered himself and set off to visit Weigl at the theatre.

DAMAGING WINDS

Less than two hours passed before Carpani returned and asked for Anna. After he was shown into the parlour and offered a seat, Carpani eagerly explained that he had gone to Weigl immediately on leaving her. He had asked if something might be done to permit Herr Rochlitz to experience first hand opera by the Kapellmeister as background to his interviews. Carpani paused to apologize for not mentioning Anna. "You will understand, I am sure, why I did not characterize the effort that I was going to put him to as a response to the curiosity of a young lady, especially one who had earlier offended him ... however unintentionally." Weigl, he told Anna, had responded that any such performance was impractical. Anna looked dejected but nodded in understanding. Carpani took her two hands in his and said that she should not be so easily discouraged. He assured her that he had not been. He had asked Weigl if it might not be possible if it were limited to a modest affair. There need not be a full orchestra and certainly no chorus — just a few volunteer singers. He had acknowledged that this would necessarily limit the pieces that could be done. No dramatic finales. No arias with choral accompaniment. Just some solo pieces, some duets. Perhaps a trio or quartet. With this Weigl had smiled and said that there might be a way after all. Perhaps, he said, we could do it as a training session for our student singers with simple accompaniment on the pianoforte. I immediately agreed. What a brilliant idea I told him. He was very pleased and we promptly set out planning the session."

"That would be sufficient I am sure." Anna replied. "How wonderful of you to offer to arrange this. I shall tell my uncle of your idea."

"Before doing that please let me tell what was finally agreed upon. You will recall my proposal that we ask the singers to do excerpts from an opera from each genre. Weigl disagreed with several aspects of my proposal. First, he did not think that *Axur Re d'Ormus* lent itself well to this simplified performance. It is a spectacle, he reminded me. It needs a large chorus, oriental costumes and sets and more importantly, excellent acting singers. It is too complex and challenging a work to entrust to a few students. *Falstaff*, he noted, is a more modern work and has a smaller cast and a simpler plot and it features some wonderfully effective but more easily staged scenes with some very enjoyable music. On reflection I knew that he was right so I agreed. He shall arrange for you (that is for your uncle) to receive a copy of the libretto for *La Grotta* and for *Falstaff*."

"In German?" Anna asked.

"No, I am afraid that you shall have to be content with the Italian. Really Anna you ought to learn Italian. It is the language of opera."

Anna glared at the old Italian. "It *was* the language of opera." She corrected him.

"Without conceding that point, I shall prepare a sufficient summary of each of the scenes to be performed in your beloved German."

"Thank you," Anna said with a broad smile on her face. "Oh, this is so exciting. I can hardly wait."

"And the good news is that you need not wait that long — Quattro di."

"Quattro di?" Anna responded.

"Quattro di!" Carpani responded in turn with a loud laugh. "Four days." Collecting himself he proceeded to explain. "You and I have just performed a scene from the Maestro's little comedy *Prima la musica*."

"The work that he put on at Schönbrunn opposite Mozart's Impresario," Anna noted.

"I am very impressed."

Anna, filled with pride, added, "And if I am not mistaken the scene that you are referring to is the opening duet between the poet and the composer."

"I am even more impressed. How, dear girl do you know this?"

"The Kapellmeister told us of the debate that opened this opera about whether the opera could be finished in four days."

"Then you will appreciate that when Weigl suggested four days he used the Italian in obvious reference to *Prima la musica* and I picked up the reference to our mutual delight. He laughed saying that if an entire opera could be readied in 4 days in the Maestro's opera, surely our students could prepare a few scenes in that time. It shall teach them the reality of life in the theatre he noted."

As soon as she had the opportunity, Anna presented the proposal to her uncle (absent the statement that it would be done in four days). Her uncle shared her enthusiasm. Then to his complete surprise they soon received word that their special performance was to be held the next Saturday afternoon.

Anna and her uncle duly presented themselves at the Hofburg Theatre at the appointed time. Her uncle was generally familiar with *Falstaff* but had merely heard of *La Grotta*. He had consulted the libretto of each. Anna had contented herself with the German synopsis. They were both looking forward to this special presentation in their honour. Carpani met

them at the theatre door and ushered them to a box just to the left of the Imperial box. As they were seating themselves Carpani leaned over to Anna and whispered that he had chosen pieces from each opera on the theme of love and marriage in honour of Anna's pending marriage. Anna smiled and whispered a thank you. When seated, Anna saw Weigl himself at the pianoforte and a group of nine students standing on the stage. Weigl introduced each student in turn, explaining which role each would play. Five students, three men and two women, were to perform the scenes from *La Grotta*. Four students, three men and a woman, were to perform the scene from *Falstaff*. *La Grotta*, which Weigl explained had been first performed on this very stage in 1785 was to be presented first. *Falstaff*, a work first performed in 1799, was to be done second. Weigl then asked the students to take their places.

Weigl resumed his place at the pianoforte and played an arrangement of the overture. As he played Anna recalled the synopsis. A loving father in Ancient Greece is talking to his twin daughters about marriage. He notes that one is quite playful and the other, by contrast, is quite serious and deeply interested in philosophy. Each ought to seek a husband with a similar nature, the father advised. The three students playing the father and his daughters sang a trio. Anna was impressed with all of their voices. As the scene progressed she found herself pleasantly surprised. The music was tuneful and joyful and altogether quite appealing and she could relate well to the story being told. The male tenor who had played and sung his role as the father so well left the stage and Anna could not help but applaud. Her uncle joined her. He gave her a knowing glance as if to say that he knew that she would find it a pleasant experience. Then came an absolutely beautiful solo aria by the young woman playing the role of Ofelia. Anna recalled Salieri's little story about his collaboration with Mozart on The Recuperation of Ofelia. When the aria ended she and her uncle applauded even more loudly. But the best was yet to come. The two young men who were playing the two boyfriends came on stage and with the twin sisters sang a lively and funny quartet in which each couple made fun of the inclinations of the other. Anna was very, very impressed. The final piece was a playful duet between two of the lovers about the state of marriage. While less flamboyant than Rossini and Weber, these pieces had been delightful, full of life and emotion and so well suited to the love and marriage theme.

Words and Music

When the scene ended, Anna's uncle turned to her and said, "I need not ask. I saw you found yourself thoroughly enjoying the performance. It was light and airy — in no way deep or profound. But what joy — beautiful harmonies and some very expressive arias."

Anna nodding her head in agreement, added, "It was a truly great experience. I could see how audiences would have enjoyed themselves. It reminded me in several places of *Cosi fan tutte*."

Carpani, overhearing, interjected, "And if you check your dates you will see which influenced which."

"It had not escaped my notice, Herr Carpani," Anna replied, "that this work preceded Mozart's by several years."

Anna's uncle cut short the discussion, drawing their attention to the stage where the students who were to sing *Falstaff* had gathered. Anna returned her attention on the stage. She knew that it was one of the first opera settings of Shakespeare's Merry Wives of Windsor about the blowhard knight, *Falstaff*, who seeks the amorous attentions of two married women in an attempt to steal their husband's wealth. The two women set out to play a series of tricks on *Falstaff*. In the scene that they were to see one of the wives, Mrs. Ford, disguises herself as a servant and comes to the knight supposedly with a message from her mistress, the very same Mrs. Ford. After being introduced by *Falstaff*'s servant, the disguised Mrs. Ford flirts with *Falstaff* in an effort to lure him into a trap. After she leaves, her husband, also in disguise and calling himself Mr. Brock, comes. He, driven by jealousy, is seeking to determine if *Falstaff* and his wife are having an affair. He pretends to hire the lecherous knight to arrange a liaison with Mrs. Ford.

Anna was quite surprised when the disguised Mrs. Ford engaged in a multilingual dialogue with *Falstaff* in which she spoke in broken German and Italian and he responded in a mixture of Italian and German and French with frequent use of sign language. Anna looked at her uncle and broke into an embarrassingly loud and unladylike laugh. She could not help herself. She had no doubt that Salieri had had a large hand in writing this scene. He had been poking fun at himself in a very public way and she had to admire him for it. She enjoyed Mrs. Ford's aria in which she sang in German of knowing well the ways of men. Anna gave her a warm round of applause. Then when the knight, seeking to impress Brock, sang a wonderfully funny and quite challenging aria comparing himself to Caesar and Ulysses in Cupid's Empire she again broke out

DAMAGING WINDS

into laughter. Anna and her uncle both applauded loudly. The disguised and increasingly jealous Mr. Ford then sang of his anguish and fears in a wonderfully emotional piece.

When the all too brief scenes were finished and all nine students gathered on stage Anna and her uncle rose out of their seats and applauded. He even called out a few bravos. They then joined Carpani in leaving their box and going down to the stage. As the three of them approached Weigl, Anna noted that he seemed distracted. Something had caught his attention at the back of the theatre. As they walked towards the opera director, Weigl called out to someone behind them, "Maestro, we did not expect you to do us the honour of your presence at our little student concert."

It was only then that Anna realized that Salieri had slipped into the theatre during the performance. She suddenly felt guilty as if she had been caught cheating. How silly she thought but nevertheless the feeling persisted. She was fearful that he would ask her opinion of the works she had heard. She was not sure whether she ought to share with him how much she had enjoyed the little performance. Before discussing what she had seen and heard she felt that she ought to reflect on its merit. Certainly she had enjoyed the works but they were silly, light pieces and certainly not of the calibre of Mozart. Was this not the joyful silliness of Rossini? And should opera not be more? But what joy! What silliness!

Salieri, however, did not ask her opinion. Rather he turned to her uncle. "I am pleased that you wanted to hear some of my operatic works but I do hope that you do not base any of your opinions of my work on these few pieces taken completely out of their proper context and adequately performed at best. These were not written as concert pieces. They were intended to form part of a dramatic presentation."

Anna felt compelled to intervene to clarify the situation. "Herr Kapellmeister, it was my lack of familiarity with your works that led to this most generous gesture on the part of Herr Weigl and Herr Carpani. They warned us, as you have just done, that what could be presented in this fashion would not do justice to your work. But I thought that the students did a fine job."

Salieri, looking at the performers standing on the stage listening to the exchange, said "I was not casting aspersions upon either your performance or your motives. I know full well the value of rehearsals and that you have been denied them. You did surprisingly well. It is just that I see Herr Rochlitz as the keeper of my reputation and one of those that shall

Words and Music

shape my legacy. In that context I would have him hear none but the best of my works in a full, well rehearsed performance with proper orchestral support."

As Anna and her uncle made the short walk back to their rooms, her joy at the success of the little concert was tempered by Salieri's words. How had she and her uncle become the keepers of the old composer's reputation and the ones who would shape his legacy? She had not yet determined what that reputation and legacy should be.



The Monday after the little concert, Felix came to Anna to tell her that an American military officer had come to call upon her. He was waiting in the front room. What could this military man possible want of her? She hurried to greet him. He could see her surprise and quickly explained that Lorenzo Da Ponte had several friends of influence in the US diplomatic corps who would not hesitate for a moment in granting the request of Mozart's librettist for a speedy delivery of a letter to the capital of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

As with Kelly's earlier letter, Anna had to gather all of her strength to resist the urge to immediately tear open the letter and devour its contents. She knew that this would have been poor manners and would have failed to properly acknowledge the service done her by the gallant military man. She forced herself to sit and at least try to enjoy some tea and pleasant conversation with him. She inquired about his reaction to Vienna and asked if America was also making a fuss over Rossini. He responded in a most diplomatic fashion. And so the conversation went for a quarter of an hour. Finally, he took his leave. He was barely out the door when Anna tore open the Da Ponte letter. This was a very special moment. She had often joked with Otto about being Da Ponte to his Mozart. Now, her hands shaking with nervous anticipation, she was opening a letter from the man who had written for the immortal Mozart. The letter was written in Italian. She called for Felix and asked him to act as reader and interpreter. As he came in Anna thought how utterly fortunate she had been in recruiting him to aid her investigation. Felix made it clear that he too was pleased to have the Da Ponte missive, sharing her curiosity as to what the famed poet would say.

DAMAGING WINDS

My dear Miss Rochlitz,

How timely was Signor Carpani's letter seeking my insights into the relationship between two of my maestros. I am in the process of preparing my memoirs and I have taken the liberty of drawing from those memoirs in answer to your queries.

I must begin by begging your indulgence. I do implore you to grant me one favour which I trust will not overly burden you but will unburden me enormously. When I left Vienna more than 30 years ago, I was at odds with the good Maestro Salieri, a man whom I loved and esteemed both out of gratitude and inclination, with whom I passed many learnedly stimulating hours, and who for six continuous years had been, more than a friend — a brother to me. It was, naturally, a disagreement over a woman or more properly two women — prima donnas — that drove us apart. Such is the story of my life. Cherchez la femme as the French say! I favoured the Ferraresi, a marvellous woman and singer, and he was pushing the career of his Cavalieri. With the passing of the years and the great distance between us his friendship has become more valued by me and I so regret the terms on which we parted. Would you please at your earliest convenience make it known to him that his former dear friend has come to detest the cause of the disagreement between us and sincerely and completely apologizes.

Anna asked Felix to bring her a notebook and pencil but that was just an excuse to permit her to reflect on what he had just read to her. Surely Mozart's librettist, of all people, would know of the difficulties that Salieri had caused Mozart. Why would he be seeking to re-establish his friendship with Salieri. This was an unexpected turn of events. Looking at the stack of pages that Felix had set down, she could see that much remained to be read. Do not jump to conclusions, she reminded herself.

When Felix returned, he picked up the letter and resumed translating it to her.

I owe Signor Salieri a huge debt of gratitude. He was instrumental in my obtaining my post as court composer. I came to Vienna from Dresden where I had come to know the poet Mazzola. When I told Mazzola that I was leaving for Vienna he took a piece of paper and wrote to his friend Salieri. I knew of Salieri of course. He was one

of the outstanding composers of those days, an intimate friend of Mazzola, and, I would learn, a favourite of the Emperor. He was cultivated, well-read for a musician, and fond of men of letters.

I did not fail to deliver Mazzola's note to him on my arrival in Vienna and in time it produced the most far-reaching results for me. It was the real beginning of the favour I attained with Joseph II. Salieri managed the affair so deftly that I went to Caesar for my first audience not to ask a favour, but to give thanks for one.

I found myself as a court poet responsible for producing librettos for the new Italian opera company. Yet I had never written a libretto. I was, as the Emperor referred to me, 'a virgin muse.' My first production was to be set to music by Salieri (who was, to tell the bare truth, a most cultivated and intelligent man). I proposed to him a number of plans, a number of subjects, leaving him to choose one. Unfortunately he elected the one which perhaps was least susceptible of beauty and of theatrical treatment — *Rich for a Day*.

I set courageously to work but very soon realized how much more difficult in any undertaking is the execution than the conception. The difficulties I met with were beyond count. This theme did not provide me with the number of characters nor the variety of incidents required to last two hours. My dialogue seemed dry, my songs laboured, my sentiments trivial, the action languid, the scenes cold. I felt, in a word, as though I had undertaken to wield the club of Hercules with the hands of an infant.

Ten times I was at the point of burning what I had done and going to beg leave to resign. At length, by dint of biting my nails, squinting my eyes, scratching my head, invoking the aid of Lucina and of all of the saints and midwives of Pindus, I completed not only my first finale, but the whole opera. I locked it up then in my wardrobe and did not take it out for a time, that I might read it as a whole with unclouded mind.

When I did so I found it colder and worse than it had seemed at first. I was urged, however, to get it into Salieri's hands. He had already set several scenes to music and was calling for the remainder every day. I went to him with my ears laidback, like a donkey ready for the lash, and put the libretto into his hands without saying a word. He read it over and said, 'It is well written, but we must see it on the stage. There are songs and scenes I like very much. I will,

DAMAGING WINDS

of course, need to make some little changes here and there, more for the musical effect than for anything else'.

I left him as cocky as a paladin but soon learned that the 'little changes here and there' consisted of: shortening or lengthening most of the scenes, introducing new duets, trios, quartets, changing meters half way through a song, mixing in choruses, deleting almost all of the recitative. When the drama went on stage I doubt whether there remained a 100 verses of my original.

Before it could be performed there arrived in Vienna both the celebrated Abbe Casti, a poet of the greatest notoriety in Europe, especially for his risqué tales, as well as the celebrated Paisiello, a composer very dear to the Emperor and particularly popular among the Viennese. The two wrote an opera and it was not long before the opera was produced and had an astonishing success. It couldn't have been otherwise! The singers were excellent without exception, the set was superb, the costuming magnificent, the music heavenly. Casti with a smile of approbation, took in the applause for the singers, the decorations, the tailors, the conductor, as though it all belonged to him. At any rate the sensation the opera made so frightened Salieri that he no longer dared propose Rich for a Day to the directors for that season. He shortly left for Paris to do the music for *Les Danaïdes*. I was glad of the postponement. It gave me time to reflect on things and study the stage. In fact, I discovered both the secret intrigues of my powerful rival against me and how to produce a libretto without the defects of my first.

Salieri returned from France and my opera was suddenly to be produced. The lead was given to Mademoiselle Storace, who was then in her prime, and the delight of all Vienna. But she chanced to be ill that evening and her part went to another lady who was as much fitted to replace her as a dove would be an eagle. To make matters worse Casti, having been shown a copy of my libretto, worked with someone I had thought a friend to produce a scathing review of the work even before it was produced. The fiasco was complete.

I am telling you this story because it demonstrates the battles that I had to fight over the years with my countrymen and the malice of my persecutors. After the failure of my opera, it was not only the partisans of Casti, my personal enemies, who led the shouting

against me. The singers themselves and at their head Salieri said things that made me shiver. The singers did not know how they had ever been able to recite such wretched words and the maestro did not know how he had ever managed to set it to music. Salieri, a judicious man and no dunce, solemnly swore that he would lose his fingers rather than again set my verses to music. Casti, however, was the one that I had to fear by virtue of his unquestioned merit and even more his skilful artifices and his omnipotent protector, Count Rosenberg, the director of the theatres. Thank goodness, the Emperor protected me.

I then had the good fortune to work with another composer Martin Y Soler whom I have always referred to as Martini. I chose the theme of the Good Natured Grump for our opera and set to work. The moment my choice was known, Signor Casti, still hoping to obtain the post of Court Poet, began announcing in public that my subject was unsuitable for a musical comedy. In fact, the opera was put on stage and was from beginning to end applauded. Many spectators, among them the Emperor, sometimes applauded even the recitative. After the opera he whispered to me ‘we have won!’ Three words that were for me were worth a hundred volumes of praise.

The letter went on and on but the themes remained the same. Salieri was a friend and ally. Mozart and Martini, as Da Ponte called Martin Y Soler, were also special. There were intrigues galore but it seemed that it was almost always Abbot Casti and his friends conspiring against poor Da Ponte. There was very little of anything about any intrigues by Salieri against Mozart. Anna was further disappointed when Da Ponte explained that he knew nothing of the death of his beloved Mozart since at the time of Mozart’s death Da Ponte was in exile in Trieste.

Was any of the letter helpful in her investigation, Anna asked herself. Da Ponte did write of Salieri’s “fiery letter” recalling him from Prague and preventing him from attending the premier of *Don Giovanni*. That much substantiated Weber’s earlier assertion. But he provided no evidence of whether the recall was warranted. That was surely the question that needed to be answered and Da Ponte failed to do so. What he did say was that on his return to Vienna he and Salieri finished *Axur* which was presented in “due time.” Anna had so hoped that Da Ponte would prove a

DAMAGING WINDS

useful source of information about Salieri's intrigues but there was virtually nothing in the letter. Da Ponte was almost equally flattering of Mozart and Salieri. In fact in discussing *Axur*, Da Ponte's comments greatly surprised Anna. Writing of *Axur* he stated that such was its success that he wondered whether *Don Giovanni* or *Axur* was "the most perfect in words and music." Surely no one could have any doubt as to the answer to that question? And yet here was the librettist for both posing it. The letter ended as it had begun with Da Ponte begging Anna to bring his apology to the Kapellmeister over their disagreement three decades earlier. Obviously this still troubled the old poet.

Anna did not know what to make of the letter. Was he currying favour with the Kapellmeister? But if so why? What could Salieri do for him now? Had old age affected his memory? There were many detailed recollections. Certainly his memory did not seem to be failing him. But might he have intentionally altered events or tried to hide the Kapellmeister's part in them? Perhaps he thought her a friend and promoter of Salieri. She and her uncle were interviewing the composer. Had Salieri been behind some or all of the many intrigues he outlined? But, Anna realized, at the least the first of those intrigues had been focussed on the work that Salieri had written with Da Ponte, this Rich for a Day opera. She resolved at the first possible moment to share the letter with Carpani. He was a poet. He might read more into the letter. But even if he could would he? Would he not, as he always did, point out that the letter did not support the rumours about the Kapellmeister? So if not Carpani then to whom could she turn?

At this point Anna's uncle returned home. Anna decided to share the Da Ponte letter with him. "Uncle, I would greatly appreciate your views on a letter that I have just received."

"From whom is this letter?"

"Mozart's librettist, Lorenzo Da Ponte."

"Da Ponte! Certainly, I would be most pleased to see it. But why is he writing to you? How does he even know that you exist? Do I detect the hand of Signor Carpani in this?"

"You do. He suggested to me that I write to Da Ponte asking about the relationship between Herr Mozart and the Kapellmeister. But the response is not really about that relationship. I would appreciate your views."

Later that afternoon after hours of careful study of the letter, Anna and her uncle were shown into the parlour where Salieri awaited them. At her uncle's suggestion they had brought the Da Ponte letter with them.

The old Kapellmeister still had their little concert on his mind. As soon as they entered the parlour he asked if either of them had ever attended a proper, full performance of one of his operas. Anna's uncle replied that he had taken in performances of *Les Danaïdes* while visiting Paris and of *La Cifra, Palmira* and *Axur Re d'Ormus* in various German cities. Salieri turned to Anna and said that that other than the little student affair he assumed that she had not experienced any of his operas.

"That is correct, which is why I was pleased to have the opportunity to hear the excerpts that the students performed. Are any of your operas still being performed in the theatres?" she asked.

"Oh, yes, although not here in Vienna at the moment. Last year *La fiera di Venezia* was performed in Moscow, *Axur Re d'Ormus* was performed in Konigsberg and *L'Angiolina* was staged in Warsaw. But Paris — that is a different matter. My operas *Les Danaïdes* and *Tarare* are still in favour and being performed there regularly. I periodically receive letters from composers or would-be composers in Paris commenting on my works. The reason that I brought this up is that just today I received a letter from a young medical student telling me that he is considering leaving medicine to pursue a career in music because of the joy he receiving on hearing my opera *Les Danaïdes*. Here is what he said.

'I might have added another name to the long list of bad doctors but for a visit I made to the opera recently. There I saw your *Les Danaïdes*. The gorgeous splendour of the spectacle, the rich fullness of the orchestra and the chorus, the wonderful voice and pathetic charm of Madame Branchu, Derivis' rugged power, the aria of Hypermestre, in which I seemed to trace the influence of Gluck, according to the ideal that I had formed from some fragments of his *Orfeo* in my father's library, finally the crashing bacchanal and the voluptuously dreamy dance music added by your countryman Spontini, filled me with excitement and enthusiasm. I was like a lad with the inborn instincts of a sailor, who, never having seen anything but fishing-boats on a lake, suddenly finds himself transported to a three-decker in mid ocean.'

DAMAGING WINDS

Salieri smiled and said "He writes more like the poet than the composer."

"We shall see what comes of his conversion." Anna's uncle responded.
"By the way what is his name?"

"Berlioz...Hector Berlioz."

Anna's uncle interjected. "Perhaps someday people will say that you inspired the great French composer Berlioz."

"Perhaps but I somehow doubt it. Many are called but few are chosen. People are much more likely to talk of Ferdinand Hérold. Now he is someone who is likely to be a household name for many years to come. Perhaps you attended the recent performance of his opera here in Vienna."

Anna's uncle replied that he had not.

"Well he is my biggest supporter in Paris — he studied briefly with me here in Vienna. I have a letter he wrote to me a few years ago" Salieri looked about on a bookshelf and found a letter. "Here it is. It was 1817. My goodness already five years have passed. He wrote when he learned that *Les Danaïdes* was to be revived by the Paris opera." Reading the letter, Salieri quoted.

"All Paris will hear this beautiful opera, and the vast crowds which besiege the doors of the theatre at each performance prove that we know how to appreciate your works. One thing we heartily lament — that we cannot see you in Paris. Happy they who like me can listen to you and benefit from your instructions. How much I regret that I did not remain longer in Vienna. I shall never forget what you have done for me, and least of all the kindness with which you gave me many an excellent piece of advice. The good fortune which I have had so far on the stage I attribute entirely to the instruction which I had from you — your teachings are invaluable."

Anna's uncle responded by saying, "All of these compliments for *Les Danaïdes* say to me that today we should talk about your Parisian operas."

"Fine," the old composer replied. "But first I want to put those operas in context. It is important that you realize that those operas were very much in the Gluck school of musical theatre."

"The Gluck school?"

"I am of course referring to the reforms that Gluck sought to bring to opera. Rochlitz, you are a poet and Anna, you say you see yourself as a writer. Surely you will understand what Gluck was trying to achieve."

Words and Music

Salieri asked them to bear with him and went to another bookshelf. After but a moment he pulled a volume off the shelf. "The published score of *Alceste*," Salieri explained. "You may recall that Gluck wrote a dedication of the printed score to the Emperor Leopold, then Grand Duke of Tuscany. Let me read you a few passages." Salieri proceeded to read with great care. In no time at all it became clear to Anna and her uncle that he had in fact committed the passages to memory.

"I thought that I would restrict the music to its true function of serving the poetry in the expression and situations of the story, without interrupting the action or chilling it with useless, superfluous ornaments...to seek for a beautiful simplicity; and I avoided making a show of complexity at the expense of clarity; I have not deemed the discovery of new things praiseworthy in itself when not called for naturally by the expression and the situation..."

"These words have been my musical credo, my guiding code ever since I heard them from Gluck himself. I had been in Vienna but a year when I had the great good fortune to be present at the debut of *Alceste* with my mentor Gassmann. I had the honour of playing the harpsichord at a number of performances of that great reform opera. In fact, in early 1768 it was at a performance of *Alceste* that I first laid eyes on Mozart and his father. Mozart was then a boy of eleven but already a star performer. You can image the effect that working on the performance of a Gluck opera under the direction of the great master himself had on me as a young, impressionable student. To this day I thank God for giving me the opportunity to learn from this great master at just the time when he was working to return simplicity, truth and natural beauty to opera."

Salieri rose from his chair and walked over to yet another bookcase. As he sorted through a number of musical scores he said over his shoulder to Anna's uncle, "I am looking for Kunzen's piano forte arrangement of my *Armida*. It was done in the early 1780's. It has a preface by Herr Cramer, the editor of the musical magazine at Altona. He captured very well in a few sentences what I tried to do in fulfillment of Gluck's teachings. Oh, here it is." He then pulled a much handled musical score off of the shelf. It fell open to the preface. He then began to read a passage that he clearly referred to often and knew well.

"Following in the footsteps of Gluck, the conqueror of hearts, he has like him turned away from the old conventional paths; treat-

DAMAGING WINDS

ing with contempt the old useless ritornels and da capos, the sing-song of expressionless passages, the glitter of mere musical effects which only destroyed the illusion of the scene, he has introduced more fitting proportions in his arias, a judicious shortening of the numerous choruses, not seldom more labour than is common in his recitative, the more imposing picturesqueness in his overtures, and great variety in his instrumentation; song and dance are joined; everything is calculated for the general effect and he has succeeded everywhere in expressing the passions of the text with such heartfelt, melting, soul-touching song, that the entire opera from beginning to end seems to be nothing but such a pezzo di prima intenzione, as it rejoices one to find even one or two examples of it in the works of the better masters; while beyond that there is opportunity enough, in the rest of the arias, that the hearer to cool the fire kindled in his heart."

Looking up at Anna's uncle, Salieri said, "I have yet to find anyone who has better expressed what I have tried to do in following in Gluck's footsteps. If only he had not messed with my opera, I would have nothing but warm feelings towards Herr Cramer."

Anna's uncle, picking up on Salieri's criticism, asked, "What did he do if I may ask?"

"When translating my work into German he decided that certain recitatives were too long. He replaced them with three arias from other composers. I was exceptionally angry when I learned of this. How can someone who so captures what I was trying to do be so cavalier in changing it?"

"You have said to me before that you consider Gluck to have been the greatest opera composer because he alone knew how to portray characters and to bring about the greatest effect with the fewest notes. I am reminded that Joseph II said that Mozart used too many notes."

"Of course, you would know of that unfortunate phrasing. It is all that people remember of Joseph II's many comments on music. Before responding I must point out that the Emperor was quite knowledgeable about music and thought Mozart one of the greatest original geniuses. But yes he did make that comment. I, as his Imperial Kapellmeister, must take some of the blame for that often misunderstood remark. You see I had shared with the Emperor what Gluck had taught me, namely, to avoid undue orchestration and unnecessary musical affectations, what

Words and Music

Gluck called passages that ‘smelled of music.’ In making his infamous remark the Emperor was invoking Gluck and suggesting that at times Mozart had forgotten that the role of the music is to augment the libretto and not to overshadow it or distract the listener from the story being told. It was this that the Emperor had in mind.”

“But surely Mozart knew how to write wonderful operas,” Anna interjected.

“Of course, he produced several delightful works, but what I would stress is that Mozart did not have the benefit of Gluck’s tutelage. With that instruction he could have done even better.”

Salieri suddenly paused and seemed deep in thought. “I remember so well the last time I spoke with Gluck. I was engaged in the composition of my *Last Judgment* cantata. It was the fall of 1787. I called upon Gluck to discuss with him how I should introduce the voice of Christ into the cantata. I asked him if he would approve my plan of writing the part in high tenor on the ground that the work was for Paris where that voice, referred to as *haute-contre*, is in common use. I thought it more penetrating than any other. I remember my beloved master turning to me and saying ‘In a short time I shall be able to inform you with certainty from the other world in what clef the saviour speaks.’ Just four days later he died. I felt a great loss but at the same time a great gratitude for what he had done for me. Without his intervention I would not have had the opportunity to do my opera for the opening of La Scala in Milan. Nor would I have had the opportunity to do *Les Danaïdes* in Paris and of course my work with Beaumarchais thereafter. I owed so much to him. He was a teacher — although I received no formal instruction from him — a mentor, and a friend.” Tears welling in his eyes, Salieri turned away.

Anna’s uncle enquired, “If I recall correctly, after *Les Danaïdes* you wrote *Tarare* with Beaumarchais. We know Beaumarchais primarily through Mozart’s *Marriage of Figaro*. Can you tell us of Beaumarchais? What was he like.”

“What delicious irony that you say you know Beaumarchais through Mozart’s *Figaro*. What you really mean is that you know him through Da Ponte’s adaptation of *Figaro*. Did you know that I was the one who brought Da Ponte’s adaptation to Paris for Beaumarchais? When he read it he remarked that it had been changed so much as to be a new work. He was not entirely pleased.”

Anna’s uncle asked, “How so?”

DAMAGING WINDS

“You must understand that Beaumarchais had a very particular political reform agenda that he sought to pursue through all of his stage works. Da Ponte, to get his opera adaptation past the censors in Vienna, left much of the political aspects of Beaumarchais’ play out of his version. But more than this Beaumarchais also had some strongly held views on the subservience of music to the dramatic thrust of the libretto. He told me on more than one occasion that I must avoid “too much music — too much music is one of the greatest mistakes of our grand opera.” It was this approach that he asked me to help him bring to the operatic stage in *Tarare*. Not many composers would have been willing to submit themselves to such an approach but to me it seemed a natural extension of Gluck’s philosophy. I must admit, however, that it took great effort on my part to eliminate much beautiful music that graced my first setting of his libretto.”

“How did you meet Beaumarchais?”

“It was during my second visit to Paris. I did not meet him while I was first in Paris for *Les Danaïdes* but I was asked by the French Academy of Music to take his initial draft of *Tarare* back with me to Vienna. I, of course, was happy to do so. I read it with great interest but thought it needed some work. I sent a letter to Bailly du Roullet, my contact at the Academy, with many comments and suggestions. He replied some time later saying that Beaumarchais had read my letter with interest and had found the comments helpful. Beaumarchais then personally sent me the revised libretto and I worked on setting it to music here in Vienna. When it was well progressed I obtained leave from the Emperor and returned in Paris. It was the spring of 1786, not long after the competition at Schönbrunn. That fall I put on another French opera, *Les Horaces*. Let us just say that everything that could go wrong did. But it did not trouble me as much as it might otherwise have done because I had then joined Beaumarchais at his home in Paris where I lived for more than 6 months, working with him daily.” Salieri then broke into a broad smile and gave a little chuckle.

Anna’s uncle looked at the old composer and said, “You have remembered something. Might you share it with us?”

“I was just remembering an evening meal that I had with Beaumarchais and his family shortly after I started living with them. One of his daughters suggested to him that in honour of my presence that he tell the story of his visit to Vienna. Beaumarchais was very reluctant to do so but

Words and Music

my interest was piqued and I pressed him to tell me the tale. Reluctantly he agreed. I was of course expecting to hear how impressed he was with the city but what I got was very, very different." At this point Salieri broke into laughter. He kept repeating "very, very different."

It was Anna this time who interjected. "Kapellmeister you must not keep us in suspense. What made it so different?"

"Because he spent most of his time here in one of our jails!"

Again it was Anna who replied, "How did that happen?"

"I shall tell you the story but then I want to return to our discussion of *Tarare*."

"Agreed," said Anna's uncle.

"Beaumarchais had come to Vienna in the summer of 1774, the year before his *Barber of Seville* was first staged in Paris. He had journeyed here in search of the author of a scurrilous pamphlet about the childless relationship between Marie Antoinette and her husband Louis XVI. When our dearly missed Empress Maria Theresia learned of the pamphlet, she suspected that Beaumarchais himself had written it and had him arrested! It was only after the French ambassador intervened on his behalf that he was released. When the Empress learned of her mistake she offered him compensation but he left in a huff refusing her offer. Poor Beaumarchais — even more than a decade later it so upset him. And I made matters worse by breaking into laughter as he told his story."

"That must have upset him," Anna commented.

"It would have been we not by this time good friends and had his own family not joined me in laughing. He simply replied that clearly I had no idea what it was like to spend 44,640 minutes in a prison cell."

"44,640 minutes?"

"Remember that Beaumarchais was originally a clockmaker. He was always very precise with time. We might say 31 days but to him every minute counted." Again the old composer broke into laughter. This time Anna and her uncle joined him.

But then Anna's uncle reminded him that they were to return to the story of *Tarare*.

"Oh, yes. Forgive me. Where were we?"

Anna consulted her notes and said, "You were saying that you lived with Beaumarchais at his home in Paris for more than 6 months and worked with him daily."

DAMAGING WINDS

“Yes, yes. It was then that I learned that he valued the words over the music. He in fact wanted a dramatic opera not a concert that uses the libretto as an excuse to make music.”

“And this approach was well received?”

“Very much so. *Tarare* has been put on the stage hundreds of times since.”

“Has it ever been performed here in Vienna?”

“No and yes.”

Anna and her uncle looked suitably puzzled and Salieri, laughing, continued. “Let me explain. Emperor Joseph heard from his poor, ill treated sister Marie Antoinette of the success of *Tarare* in France. He asked me to have it translated into Italian and performed here. I turned to Da Ponte and he and I set to work on the translation.”

On the mention of Da Ponte’s name, Anna’s uncle said, “Oh, we quite forgot. We have a letter from that very man, from the poet Lorenzo Da Ponte, to share with you.”

At these words Salieri looked quite perplexed. “How, might I ask, do you happen to have such a letter?”

Anna was quick to respond, “We had learned that he was writing his memoirs and so we wrote to him asking him to share his memories of you.”

The old composer had taken the letter from Anna’s uncle as she spoke and quickly reading the opening words added, “oh, I see that my old friend Carpani has come to your aid.” Reading further he added, “and I see that it is my relationship with Mozart that especially interests you.”

“Well yes. We were, of course, interested in him as well,” Anna replied.

“I am neither surprised nor offended. Both Mozart and I set Da Ponte’s words to music with great popular success.”

“Indeed you did,” Anna’s uncle interjected. “But read further. You will see that he wanted us to bring you his greetings.”

“And an apology, I see,” said the old composer. “An apology — how wonderful even if it is a few decades late in coming. Oh, Da Ponte what a talent but what a dissolute life.” Salieri held the bulky letter in his palm as if in an attempt to guess its weight. “I can tell that he is as prolix as always.” He returned the letter to Anna’s uncle and sat quietly for a moment with his head down reflecting. He then looked up, “But he had a wonderful sense of the theatre. What he did with me to turn *Tarare* into

Axur is but one example of his skills as a theatrical poet. He and I soon realized that Beaumarchais' approach would not suit the Emperor and the opera goers here. It was too sparse a musical work for Vienna. So we set out to adapt the words and the music for Vienna. The result was *Axur Re d'Ormus*. Interestingly it became my most successful serious opera not only in its Italian version but in a number of translations, including, you will be happy to know, a German version."

"I have seen the German version in Leipzig. It was quite delightful but I am not sure that I would characterize it as a serious opera."

"Like life itself it was a mixture of happiness and sadness, tragedy and comedy."

"Well said. But I have not seen *Tarare*. How different was *Axur Re d'Ormus* from *Tarare*?"

Salieri smiled. "Very different as the Emperor came to learn in a humorous manner. Let me tell you the story."

It was now the turn of Anna and her uncle to smile. They had come to expect and to enjoy Salieri's many anecdotes.

The old composer, always happy to have an audience, continued. "Normally I would have led the Emperor through the score and explained how and why we had changed the work but as it happened I had rheumatism in my knee while I was working on the adaptation. For three weeks I was confined to my room. This was both good and bad. The good part, if one can call it that, was that I was unable to do anything else and so I was able to devote my full time to the writing of the new music for *Axur*. The bad part was that I was out of contact with the Emperor. Da Ponte and I were under a deadline so as Da Ponte prepared his Italian text I wrote the music for it scene by scene. Initially I wrote the voice parts and the instrumental bass and sent it off to the copyist who I thought would add the further orchestration later on. It however came to the attention of the Emperor that work was progressing on what he thought of as the translation and that in fact three acts had been done and were at the copyist. He then sent orders to the copyist to send him the new Italian text with music. He gathered together the musicians of his chamber group. They immediately noticed, however, that the scores contained nothing but the vocal parts with here and there some hint of some musical accompaniment. The rest of the staves for the instrumentation were blank. The Emperor was not to be put off, however. 'Oh, that's of no matter,' he said. 'We have the printed score of the French opera. The instruments will play

DAMAGING WINDS

from that and the singers will play from the Italian manuscript.' So they all took their places, the emperor sitting at the pianoforte. He began 'Act 1, scene 1, duet'. The musicians were confused. 'The French opera begins with a prologue.' 'They probably omitted that in the translation,' answered Joseph. 'Let's turn to the first scene.' The musicians pointed out, 'It begins with a dialogue in recitative.' 'In my copy,' replied the Emperor, 'the opera begins with a duet, which serves as an introduction, followed by an aria and then by a short duet.' 'There is none of that in our score,' the musicians noted. For about two hours they examined and compared the French version and our new Italian opera finding hardly anything the same. At last the Emperor exclaimed, laughing, 'It is enough to drive one crazy! What in the world have those two been up to! Go to Salieri and tell him of the pretty comedy that we just played out.' And so they did come to me and I then went to the Emperor and explained that a simple translation would not have done. The music had been composed for French singing actors and was generally wanting in the melodies that Italian acting singers require."

Turning to Anna, Salieri said, "You want to be a writer and to write librettos. Let me ask you which is more important, the words or the music?"

"We have discussed this question before. Surely they are equally important."

"Are they really? So what happens when the poet and the composer are at odds with each other? Who prevails?"

"The one with the strongest personality," interjected Anna's uncle.

"Spoken with the experience of age, but Anna and I are in a discussion of musical theory. Perhaps I ought to have said which ought to prevail."

Anna replied somewhat tentatively, "Ought they not to work collaboratively together in an equal partnership?"

"Spoken with the idealism of youth. Would that your approach was always the case. Regrettably it is not." Looking more serious for a moment, Salieri added, "This is a very important question. The answer will influence much of what we see on the operatic stage. As a would be writer you owe it to yourself to give this question serious thought. Gluck knew the answer and he taught me. Surprisingly, Gluck the composer conceded precedence to the poet and his words. Excuse me, his or her words. What Gluck taught me was that the words, the story, ought to guide the music, to give it focus, direction."

Anna was silent as she absorbed the import of Salieri's message.

Words and Music

"That is enough for today," the old composer stated. Then glancing at Anna he added, "Remember that your lessons start tomorrow."

"Lessons?" Anna's uncle asked.

"Oh, I forgot to tell you. The Kapellmeister has been kind enough to offer to instruct me in composition and voice as a way of preparing me to be a music critic."

"Aren't you full of surprises," her uncle chided her.

The Lessons Begin

ANNA ARRIVED MID-MORNING FOR HER first lesson. She had agreed to the lessons in the hope of learning the truth about Mozart, but now that she actually had to take the lessons, she was nervous and uneasy. For the first time she would be alone with Salieri. She tried to console herself by saying that she was following in the footsteps of such greats as Beethoven and young Schubert. Somehow this just made her more nervous and anxious.

When she was shown into the parlour she found old Salieri at the pianoforte deep in thought and seemingly oblivious to her presence. She hesitated. Had the old man forgotten about her lessons? She secretly hoped so. Perhaps he would send her away. After what seemed an eternity she said rather timidly, "Kapellmeister, I do not want to disturb you but I have come as we agreed for my first lesson."

He looked up and smiled. "It is your lesson that has me thinking. We have only a short time to work together. You are leaving in a month or so I understand."

"That is correct."

"That does not leave us much time." He rose and approached her. "Mia cara Anna, you have such natural talent. I must decide how we can best use the time we have. I often spend years working with my students but we shall have no such luxury here."

Anna could hardly believe her ears. The man who had taught Beethoven and so many others was saying that she had talent. He was troubled that he would have little time to teach her. She felt a deep sense of guilt. She had not taken the lessons seriously. To her they were a means to an end. Just now she had been hoping they would be cancelled.

Salieri, sensing her inner tension, continued, "Moreover, I am concerned that you do not have the same motivation as do most of my stu-

The Lessons Begin

dents. People travel many miles to study with me. You may well be the only person in my entire career who had to be convinced to accept my tutelage." When Anna looked embarrassed, he took her hands in his. "So, mia cara, I want to take a different approach with you. Most of my students come to me with the creative spark burning brightly. With you I feel that I need to kindle that spark." He let go of her hands and began to pace about the room. "We shall spend each lesson with some vocal coaching, starting with your breathing of course. But I thought that we might start with a simple musical composition to teach you the joy of composing. You say you like the German songs of my pupil Schubert. Let us write a little German song together."

A German song? Had she heard him correctly?

Salieri continued. "First we must choose a poem. Do you have a favourite?"

Anna hesitated. Then she offered tentatively, "I have recently been reading the poems of Friedrich von Matthisson."

"Yes, so which is your favourite?"

"Well...I do enjoy his poem *I Think of You.*"

"Oh, yes. I know it. It is also a favourite of mine."

Anna could not believe her ears, but then as if to prove it to her, he recited it from memory.

"I think of you when through the grove
the nightingales' harmonious song echoes,
When do you think of me?

"I think of you in the twilight
Of evening at the shady spring!
Where do you think of me?

"I think of you with sweet pain
With anxious longing with burning tears!
How do you think of me?

Oh think of me until we meet
In a better world; however distant you are
I shall think **only** of you."

DAMAGING WINDS

The old composer could see that he had impressed her. With a proud smile he said, "Let me guess. You like the poem because it expresses your own thoughts as your fiancé studies in another city far from you."

Anna's blush made an answer unnecessary and Salieri continued, "I thought so. As a composer, what you want to do is to provide suitable musical accompaniment for the poem so as to invoke in your listeners those same feelings. We are writing it for your voice so we shall use the soprano clef. What tempo do you think we ought to adopt?"

"It is beautiful, tender but quite simple — only a few words per line. I would want to capture its deep emotional content but not distract the audience. I imagine it sung slowly and passionately with a minimum of musical accompaniment."

"Va benissimo. I knew that you had the soul of a composer."

And so the two of them sat together at the pianoforte trying various notes for the vocal part and different approaches to the musical accompaniment. Anna found herself caught up in the moment. Any reservation about the lessons and spending time with the old man were forgotten. She was genuinely interested in what they were doing. She learned that at times it was most effective to have the voice unaccompanied for a space while at others it seemed best to have musical accompaniment. At times it seemed best to play the same notes as were being sung and at others, variations on the vocal line. At times it was best to have the voice and the musical accompaniment offset so that one would play a set of notes and stop while the voice then sang the same notes. At the end, they added a brief musical introduction and then a brief musical conclusion.

Salieri told her to stand and he started to play the brief introduction and looked to her to join in at the right moment which she did with a heartfelt passion that came through clearly in her voice. At the end she smiled broadly. Salieri rose up and bowed to her. "Brava! Bien fait! Congratulations on your first composition."

"Our first composition," she corrected him.

He smiled and said. "I have but given guidance to your inner voice. Now let us turn to your outer voice. What do you sing?"

"I enjoy opera."

"Tres bien. Sing something for me."

Anna began to sing a few lines from Constanze's first aria from Mozart's *Abduction from the Seraglio*. On hearing the first few notes, tears well up in Salieri's eyes. Anna, not knowing why, stopped abruptly.

“Was I that bad?”

“No. No. Quite the opposite. Your choice of aria brought back some very powerful memories. That aria, *mia carissima Anna*, was written by Mozart for one of my very favourite people, my student Catarina Cavalieri. It was after her that my daughter Catarina was named.” He seemed lost in thought for a few moments before adding, “You and your uncle want to know about Mozart and me. So much of what was good and bad in our relationship is reflected in the story of the *Abduction from the Seraglio*.”

“Oh please tell me of it,” Anna gushed. This was after all why she agreed to the lessons in the first place.

“Perhaps later but now we must work.” Then for an hour Salieri talked to her of the most simple yet most important aspect of a singer’s life — breathing. He asked her permission to stand behind her and to wrap his arms around her so that he could help her understand the function of her diaphragm. She reluctantly agreed. He told her that from that moment on he wanted her to think of her breathing as she sang. He patiently worked with her to understand how to control her diaphragm to her singing benefit. Gradually he got her to think differently and more deeply about something that she did without thinking every moment of the day.

After having done as much as he thought appropriate for the first lesson and having stressed to her the need to do her breathing exercises, he announced the lesson at an end.

“But do we not have time for you to tell me about my favourite voice student, Catarina Cavalieri?” She intentionally did not mention Mozart but she hoped, based on Salieri’s earlier comment, that her story would provide the overture to the drama of Mozart and him. But the old composer did not take up her suggestion.

“Not today. You have taken enough of my time today. Now off you go.”

Anna could not have been more disappointed. She had been so sure that the old composer would want to tell the story.

The next day Anna again made her way to the Salieri home. In the hours since her last lesson she had given much thought to how to get the old composer to open up about Mozart. She was sure that Caterina Cavalieri was the key. After the old composer spent more time working with her on breathing, she asked him if her voice was like Caterina’s. He nodded yes but said no more. She decided that she might have to be more bold.

“When did Mozart first hear her sing?”

DAMAGING WINDS

"When he arrived in Vienna my Chimneysweep opera was in the theatres. She sang the lead."

"He must have been impressed if he then chose her for the *Abduction*."

"How could he not be? Caterina was a wonderful singer, well known and respected by me and by your Mozart." Then a smile came to his face as if he was remembering a very happy moment. "You know one of the most enjoyable evenings I ever spent with Mozart was in her company. I remember it so well. It was in the fall of the year he died."

"Oh, please share it with me."

"We have much work to do. This is not story time."

"Oh, please do share it with me. I promise to work extra hard on my lessons. Please."

"You young women are so persuasive. How can I say no?" Anna smiled broadly. "Wolfgang had heard that Catarina and I were planning to attend a performance of his *Magic Flute* at the suburban theatre where it was being performed. He told me that he had already arranged for a carriage to bring his son Karl Thomas from his boarding school to this performance and offered take us out to the theatre. We could sit with his group in his box which would mean that we could go later and avoid having to stand in line to buy tickets. We were very pleased to accept."

Anna realized that she had read a letter from Mozart to his wife about this event. It had stuck in her mind because it seemed to suggest that Mozart and Salieri were getting along just before his death. Would Salieri cast any light on whether this was really true?

The old composer was oblivious to Anna's knowledge and she did not mention it to him for fear that it might influence his decision to share his story with her. The old man continued. "That afternoon Wolfgang fetched Catarina and me. His box gave us a wonderful view of the stage. It is hard to exaggerate how much we liked it. We both assured him that it was an opera worthy of being performed at the most important occasion for the greatest of kings, and that we would like to see it often. I could not thank Mozart enough for giving Catarina and me this opportunity. Those fools who prattle on about the bitter rivalry between Wolfgang and me should have been there."

"Kapellmeister, was Caterina not one of the singers who sang for Mozart at the Schönbrunn competition?"

"She was."

The Lessons Begin

"I thought so. You mentioned her during our outing. Her name has stuck in my mind because it is an Italian name but you said that she sang in German."

"Oh, yes. You will recall that I told you of Kapellmeister Bonno. Someone born here of an Italian musician parent. Well the same was true of Catarina."

"Please tell me more and, as you promised earlier, you must share with me your story about you, Mozart and the *Abduction*."

"We shall see. For the moment let's talk of Caterina. Sadly she died young, in June 1801 before you were born. She was only 46. She was my star singing pupil. She had a most beautiful voice. Bella, bella...bellissima!"

As the old man spoke Anna heard something in his voice, the same depth of feeling as she had heard when he had spoken earlier of his dear, departed wife. It occurred to her that Salieri the teacher might well have fallen in love with Catarina his student. The more she listened to him speak of her the more certain she became. Had the old composer and his student been lovers? Anna had her strong suspicions but she could not yet tell and clearly she could not ask the Kapellmeister.

As if Salieri could hear her inner thoughts, he stated. "Yes, Catarina was very special to me and later to Mozart." When Anna looked surprised, he added, "Yes, to Mozart also." These last words were said with a sense of resigned acceptance, as if this had been something unwelcome but eventually tolerated.

Suddenly Anna had another thought. Had the two composers vied for her affection? Had there been a love triangle that gave the rivalry between the two men a deeper, more personal, emotional base? What were the words that Da Ponte had used? Cherchez la femme? Then it struck her. Was it not Salieri's preference for Cavalieri that had come between Salieri and Da Ponte? When she had heard the Da Ponte letter read by Felix she had not focused on the singers names. Her interest had been elsewhere. But now she had a new and very strong impulse to learn everything that she could about the singer and the Kapellmeister. She focused intently on what the Kapellmeister was saying.

"I began to train her voice when she was but a young girl of nine or ten — just a few years after I came to Vienna. She first appeared in public at age 15 (about 1775 if I remember correctly). She did not debut in one of my operas. I so wanted that but the scheduling did not work out. No, she

DAMAGING WINDS

first sang in Anfossi's *La finta giardiniera*. In September of that same year, however, she sang in my *La finta scema*. I wrote a role especially for her to showcase her coloratura abilities. Her aria Se spiegar potessi appieno was sung marvellously, absolutely wonderfully and greatly pleased me. In 1780 when the Emperor pressed me to write a German opera I chose her for my lead. In fact, I wrote the role of Nanette in *The Chimneysweep* expressly for her. The role featured a wonderful showcase coloratura aria for her, "When the eagle's feathers." I wanted to showcase her vocal range and stamina to the world."

"And I take it that Mozart heard her sing in your German singspiel?"

"Yes he did and he was quite taken with her. We began to compete for her services because she quickly became a favourite of his as well, especially because she was German speaking. He attended my opera and was so impressed with her that the next year he chose her to play Constanze in his *Abduction from the Seraglio*."

Again Anna detected a strong emotional undercurrent in the old composer's words.

Salieri was animated when he said, "And of course being Mozart he was convinced that he could showcase her talents even better than I had done. He chose my star pupil and gave her an even longer and more demanding aria in which Constanze sings of how she is tormented in every respect. That was our jealous Mozart. He could not stand the fact that I was the Imperial Court composer instead of him. He always strove to show the world that he was a far better composer. He entirely missed the point of Gluck's teaching. To him the music must always act as a testimony to his genius. Why would one write a simple melody when a complex one could better remind people of his superiority?"

Pausing for a moment, Salieri seemed deep in thought. He then said, "You are, of course, familiar with the *Abduction*. You must be. You chose an aria from that singspiel to sing for me."

"Yes, it is one of my favourites," Anna quickly responded.

"You will recall then that Constanze's showcase aria is preceded by a lengthy musical introduction."

"Yes, I recall it. It is striking music."

"No doubt, but what are the actors to do in the more than two minutes while this music is being played?"

"Well, as I recall they try in various ways to advance the plot through the show of emotions — her ambivalence, his disappointment."

The Lessons Begin

“For several minutes? Without words? How does that advance the plot?”

Anna looked uncomfortable, not knowing how to respond.

“You say you want to be a writer of librettos. Would you write such a scene?”

“I am not sure. I am certain that Herr Mozart had something in mind. Who am I to criticize him?”

“This from a would be music critic and poet? I am very, very disappointed. You must be ready to analyse and question and criticize. Ought Mozart to be beyond criticism simply because he is Mozart? Remember yesterday that I asked which took precedent the words or the music.”

Anna nodded somewhat hesitantly, not knowing where the old composer was leading her.

“Well, that lengthy musical introduction was Mozart’s answer. Would someone who valued the words and the plot over his music have written such an introduction?” Anna hesitated and Salieri looked sharply at her. “Of course not.”

“But it is such wonderful music,” Anna replied.

“True, but it had no place in his opera. He wrote that aria as a concert piece and it should have been used as such.”

Anna was slow to respond, deep in thought. What the old composer was saying seemed to make sense but she could not bring herself to entirely agree. It was beautiful music and the aria was magnificent. How could its inclusion in the opera be a mistake? How could she criticize a musical genius like Mozart? Nevertheless, she had begun to see the aria in a different light.

“But do you not think that Herr Mozart had something in mind when he wrote the long introduction.”

“Oh, I certainly do, but it had nothing to do with the opera or the advancement of its plot.”

“What then?”

“His place in the musical world — showing off his musical superiority.”

“That seems unfair ...and overly critical.”

“Oh, no. It is the simple truth. He was trying to show me up and to prove himself the better composer. As I pointed out a moment ago, he was trying to better my showcase aria for Catarina. My aria was introduced with what I thought was a very long introduction — almost a minute. His

DAMAGING WINDS

had to be longer with more varied music. Mine was almost a minute; his would be over 2 minutes. But he did not stop there. My aria was about 4 minutes long. His would be twice as long."

"You have me at a disadvantage," Anna commented. "You know both works. I know only one of the two. It would help me follow your argument if I knew what your aria was like."

"Well that is certainly something that can be corrected. Wait here I shall retrieve a copy of the vocal score for my aria." Salieri then went over to a large cabinet and sorted through papers before he exclaimed that he had found it. He walked over to her and handed it to her. He then proceeded to the pianoforte. "We shall perform it together."

Even after a quick glance Anna could see that the aria would be a very real challenge for her but she did not want to admit that she might not be up to the task.

"Let me set the scene for you. Nanette, your character, is a young singer who wishes to issue a challenge to an older prima donna. She sings this as a vocal throwing down of the gauntlet. She wants to make it clear to the older singer that she shall prevail over her and win the better parts."

"Yes, I see what you mean. Certainly the words reflect the challenge. She says that she is like the eagle, before whom everyone bows, is awed, stunned, terrified. Oh, she goes further. She even says 'Diva, fear my triumph. To humble you is my goal.'"

"I shall play the introduction and then you shall give it a try. I know that it is a difficult aria — intentionally so. It is a showpiece. But I just want you to get the flavour of the work."

Anna did a passable job of the very challenging aria and Salieri was suitably complimentary. But Anna's mind was elsewhere. The theme of the aria that Mozart had chosen to improve upon seemed to accord so well with Salieri's interpretation of Mozart's motives. Ironically Mozart must have seen himself as the young Nanette and Salieri as the old diva, as a challenge to be overcome. What better way, Mozart must have thought, to issue his challenge to Salieri than to have Salieri's favourite student sing an expanded, improved version of Salieri's own showcase aria. How clever in an insensitive, uncaring way. Anna could well imagine that it must have hurt Salieri terribly.

"And so how did you react when you heard Mozart's piece?" Anna inquired.

“Many thoughts occurred to me. To some extent I saw it as the reflection of an impudent, immature, young musician trying to establish his place at my expense. To some extent I saw it as the flawed work of a talented instrumental composer trying to adapt skills learned in the concert hall to the opera stage. But was I envious? Was I jealous? Is that not what people say — that I was envious of his talent and out of jealousy I tried to block his advance?”

Anna hesitated, “Well, perhaps.”

“Oh Anna, you need not worry about offending me. I know the rumours, only too well!”

“Yes, that is what some people say.”

“Well it is nonsense. Complete and utter nonsense. Jealousy was never my reaction. Never. I found him a trying man at times but I was not jealous. What did I have to be jealous of? I was the Imperial Court Composer. What was he? I was famed throughout Europe as an opera composer. What opera success had he had? His *Idomeneo* had been a flop in Munich. His *Abduction* was his first effort in Vienna and it was a German singspiel that failed to meet Gluck’s principles. No, I was not jealous. I did, however, admire his skill at orchestration. He had some very good ideas, for example, when he adapted my overture from *The Chimneysweep* for his *Marriage of Figaro*. ”

When Anna looked surprised, he added, “Yes, the overture to *Figaro* that is so often praised was in fact based on one of mine — very closely based on mine, I might add. Yes, he was superb at orchestration but I saw his talent squandered because he never had the benefit of Gluck’s tutelage. Remember Mozart was an exceptional virtuoso performer,” Salieri pointed out. “He learned to compose as a youngster with the goal of showcasing his skills and dazzling his audience with his ability to play complex pieces that others could not master. This approach carried over to his composition so that he crammed too much music into his operas. ‘Too many notes,’ as the Emperor once said. And that excess orchestration at times competed with his singers for the attention of the audience.”

Suddenly the old man paused and sniffed the air. “Ah, we are in for a treat. Come with me.” Anna was left wondering what had triggered his reaction. Salieri, half way out of the room signalled that she was to be quiet and follow him. They made their way in silence to the back of the house. As they approached the kitchen the smell of fresh baked goods filled the air and Anna smiled knowingly. But just as old Salieri was

DAMAGING WINDS

about to enter the kitchen he stopped. Gently he pushed a startled Anna to the side and again signalled that she must remain quiet. He guided her into a nearby pantry and softly informed her that some guile would be needed if they were to enjoy their treat. Anna was again at a loss to understand what was happening. The old man instructed her that she was to return to the parlour. Once there, she was to ring for the servant and ask if he could summon Catarina. When she came, Anna was to explain that her father had asked Anna to seek her assistance in locating the score for *Il mondo alla rovescia*. Anna hesitated. The old Kapellmeister assured her that it was absolutely essential that she did as bidden. When she still hesitated, a puzzled look on her face, he impatiently shooed her out of the pantry. A still perplexed Anna played along. A few moments later, after Catarina had found the sought after score and left, old Salieri crept back into the parlour with a plate filled with the light, flaky custard filled pastry that Anna had enjoyed with Catarina on an earlier visit.

“My loving daughter insists that I not indulge in my favourite pastry before meals. But these little delights are heavenly when just out of the oven. It is a moment that is to be savoured at every opportunity. You likely did not see her in the kitchen but I caught a glimpse of Catarina as we approached. We had to lure her away if we were to gain access to these little treasures.”

Anna laughed adding, “I am happy to have been of assistance.”

By the time that they had eaten their treats, it was getting to be late morning and Salieri insisted that he must call the lesson to an end. Before he let her go, however, he addressed her in a very serious, sombre tone and said, “Today I have shared with you aspects of my life and my relationship with Mozart that I would not have ever told your uncle. They are not for the general public, so you must swear not to share them with your uncle. Will you so swear?”

Anna paused, not knowing how to react. She so wanted to share what she had learned about Salieri and Mozart. Could she ever agree to keep such a secret? “How can I keep such information from my uncle and he from the public?”

“You must. You absolutely must do so. I ought not to have been so open with you but I have come to see you as a special person, another daughter. I must insist that you do this for me.”

Anna chose her words carefully in responding, “I can assure you that I never intended to share your remarks with the general public — never.”

The Lessons Begin

Anna hurried home her mind abuzz with all that she had learned. She now strongly suspected that Catarina Cavalieri had played a key role in the rivalry between the two composers. And it was clear that Salieri had resented the young upstart and his efforts at showing up his more experienced, older rival. Finally she felt that she was making progress in understanding what had turned Salieri against Mozart. She could hardly wait until her lesson.

Her eagerness and impatience drove her to arrive early the following day. To her frustration the Kapellmeister was not at home when she arrived. He had been called away early in the morning to deal with some matter at the Singing Academy that he directed. Although Catarina Salieri made Anna comfortable, bringing her tea and some of the wondrous Viennese pastries, Anna chafed at the delay. She virtually jumped out of her chair when a short time later the old composer arrived home. He assured her that he would be with her shortly but he insisted on dealing with a few matters before the lesson could start.

It was not long into the lesson before Salieri noted that Anna's mind seemed to be elsewhere. He looked at Anna angrily and said, "I have clearly mistaken your eagerness this morning for an interest in musical composition, but it is becoming clear to me that you are eager for Act 2 of our Mozart saga. You are not concentrating on your lesson. Need I remind you that you gave me your commitment to study music with me. I am tempted to cancel this morning's lesson"

Anna was quick in her response. "Oh, no Kapellmeister. Please do not do that. I promise to concentrate."

It took all of Anna's inner strength to fulfill her promise. She focused on the lesson and a smile returned to the face of the old composer. After he was satisfied that enough had been achieved in the lesson, he turned to her and said, "Fine, young lady. You have been suitably diligent."

"Oh, thank you Kapellmeister. Last night I gave your comments about Cavalieri and Mozart a great deal of thought — I did not share them with anyone. I am coming to understand why you disliked Herr Mozart."

"Do not get me wrong. I did not dislike Mozart. It might be more accurate to say that I had mixed feelings about the man and his music. I admired his playing ability and his superb skill at orchestration. I did not, however, like his lifestyle, his partying, his wasteful spending, and I did not like the fact that he supported his lavish lifestyle by borrowing from friends and acquaintances. He and I lived very different lives. I was

DAMAGING WINDS

more circumspect in my life, more careful in my spending and I lived by Shakespeare's adage, neither a lender nor a borrower be."

"Did these differences heighten the rivalry between you?"

"You need to appreciate that Mozart and I were never truly rivals — not the way that people seem to think (not that anyone openly discusses these matters with me, but I hear things). The way that people talk suggests that the two of us were pitted against each other, vying for the same post. It was not like that. Not at all like that. By the time that Mozart arrived in Vienna in 1781, I had given up the writing of instrumental music other than the occasional imperial fanfare or wind ensemble piece. I was Court Composer and Director of the Italian Opera. I was focusing all of my composing energy on the production of operas. I had written 18 operas by then and was averaging two a year. He, however, had no official position. He was a composer for hire, turning out a never-ending string of symphonies and concerti and quartets. He had done very few operas before Vienna. Our musical talents were differently focused. Even when he decided to turn his attention to the writing of operas, he was but one of many composers writing operas for the National Theatres. The Emperor's court attracted many composers. We had Righini. We had Martín Soler. For a time we had Gazzaniga and Paisiello and others. And there was a constant demand for new operas. Certainly there were times when scheduling issues arose at the theatre or when access to the best poets or singers was an issue. This is to be expected. But I managed as best I could."

Anna looked unconvinced. "But you did compete for teaching assignments."

"Did we? I am not aware of any such competitions."

"Mozart wrote to his father that the daughter of a nobleman wished to choose him but that the Emperor preferred that you be her teacher."

"I did not know that. Poor Wolfgang. I had no idea that such a teaching job meant so much to him. I did not seek out such posts. I had many students and I did not really need the income. By the way, how do you know this?"

"Some time ago my uncle was given copies of Mozart's letters for a series of articles he was writing. I had the job of organizing and cataloguing them."

"I had no idea. So you likely know things about Mozart that I do not. When was this teaching job that you alluded to supposed to have arisen?"

The Lessons Begin

"I do not recall exactly. I believe it was in the first year or two of Mozart's time in Vienna — 1781 or 1782 I think."

"Oh that might explain it. You need to know that in those years the Emperor was promoting German singspiels. Italian operas were not being performed and the Italian opera company had been dissolved so I, as the director of the Italian opera, was not fully occupied. I had returned to Vienna from Italy but was not writing operas for the court theatre (other than my one attempt at a German singspiel). I was writing an opera for the Munich Residenz theatre. By the way, is that not where your fiancée is now working?"

"No. He is employed at the new National Theatre."

"Oh, I do not know it. I can say that the Residenz theatre is lovely. In any event, I suspect that Joseph II wanted to give me something to do to earn my substantial income."

"So you do not think that he was preferring you over Mozart?"

"At that point I doubt that the Emperor knew Mozart very well. He would, of course, have known of him as a child prodigy but little of him as a mature composer. Undoubtedly, however, he would have heard of his breach with the Archbishop of Salzburg. That would not have endeared Mozart to the Emperor. That incident was much discussed by the Emperor's courtiers and might well have come to the attention of the Emperor himself. It was widely thought in the court that Mozart was a head-strong, disloyal servant, not attributes usually sought out in a court musician. But nevertheless he and I did work together and I assisted him at times. I recall him coming to me in the early years and asking to go over scores with me."

"Really, I did not know."

"So he did not write of that in his letters? I hate ingratitude."

"I am sure that he was appreciative. But what did Herr Mozart think of you?"

"You have read his letters. You likely know better than I. What I can tell you is how I perceived his views. I believe that he resented my position and the favour that I enjoyed with the Emperor and felt frustrated that he did not really know how to ingratiate himself with the Emperor and his courtiers. He assumed that his skills as a composer of instrumental music and as a performer, which I admit were superior to my own, would bring him both fame and fortune and courtly appointments. That of course was naive."

DAMAGING WINDS

"Are you admitting, Kapellmeister, that he was a better composer?"

"I did not say that. He played beautifully and he wrote wonderful concerti and quartets and symphonies. It was a joy for me to be the first person to conduct his 40th symphony. But he was not my equal in opera. But, of course, he suffered from a lack of instruction. I was so fortunate to have studied with Gassmann and Gluck and Metastasio. Wolfgang had only his father who did not write operas."

The old composer sat back and reflected for a moment. "Beethoven once told me that he wished that he had had a father like Leopold Mozart. You know I wonder whether Leopold really helped Wolfgang. Certainly he recognized and helped develop his musical talents but he never taught Wolfgang the skills of a courtier, how to prosper in a courtly society. Instead he dragged him about Europe and filled his head with his own specialness. Mozart grew up the centre of attention, being treated as a very special person to whom the usual rules did not apply. He felt entitled to special treatment. When as an adult he was no longer treated that way he struck out at those who he saw as denying him that to which he was entitled."

"What do you mean?" asked Anna.

"Let me give you an example, and then we can discuss what I mean. Surely you must have heard of the incident when Mozart was literally kicked out of the Archbishop's court. That must have been in Mozart's letters."

Anna nodded.

The old man paused and reflected. "It has just occurred to me that at almost exactly the same time as Mozart's falling out with the Archbishop, I had found myself in a similar position. I can assure you, however, that I handled it entirely differently. Perhaps if I tell you my story you can see why Mozart was never as successful as I was at the Imperial Court. If you recall Mozart had his falling out with the Archbishop over Mozart's desire to remain in Vienna and not return with the Archbishop to Salzburg. The Archbishop apparently was so incensed that he literally booted Mozart out of his court. At about the same time I was in Naples on a leave of absence. As I mentioned earlier the Italian opera had been closed down. In 1778 I went to Italy with the Emperor's permission. I wrote operas in Milan and Venice and Rome and had then gone to Naples where I had a commission for a new opera. I was away for two years. Every few months I would write to ask for an extension of my leave of absence and it had

always been granted. Before leaving Rome for Naples I had written and requested an additional three months extension of my leave. Then while in Naples I received a letter saying that the Emperor did not care if I ever came back. This was clearly a sign that I had overtaxed his indulgence and had offended him. He was effectively saying what the Archbishop had said to Mozart. If I wanted to keep my job I had to return to his court. Mozart, being very independently minded, seems to have been upset with the Archbishop and to have in a sense welcomed his dismissal. I reacted very differently. Even though I knew that there was no real need for my services in Vienna, I realized that the Emperor was an important supporter and mentor. I immediately asked the theatre in Naples to release me from my contract. I then rushed back to Vienna, travelling night and day. When finally I arrived, I made my way directly to the Hofburg. I did not go to the Emperor's chamber as was my right. I wanted to make it clear to the Emperor that I did not take his on-going patronage and support for granted. Instead, to demonstrate my submission to his will, I waited in the corridor where every day at three o'clock in the afternoon the Emperor received oral and written petitions. When the Emperor returned from his usual outing, he walked through that corridor, dealing with petitions in the manner and tone of an affectionate father. When he noticed me he promptly approached me with the words: 'Well look who's here. Salieri! Welcome! I did not expect you so soon; did you have a good journey?' 'A very good one, Your Majesty,' I answered timidly. Wanting to re-establish myself with him I added that I had travelled day and night the sooner to resume my duties at court. 'That was not necessary,' the Emperor replied graciously and I knew that I had achieved my objective."

"So you mean that Mozart ought to have bent to the will of the Cardinal Archbishop and gone back to Salzburg with him?"

"Perhaps but not necessarily. The wise courtier need not always do as he is bidden but he must always be seen to do so." The old composer could see that his young student had not fully grasped his point. "Let me explain. When I wanted to go to Italy for several years or to Munich or Paris for extended periods, I was able to go in each case. Of course, I needed the Emperor's approval — his 'yes, you may go'. Courtly skills are about getting to that yes. So let us apply this to Mozart's situation. He really wanted to remain in Vienna but his master wanted him in Salzburg. As it happened he was defiant and disobedient and was understandably dismissed as a result. But suppose that instead Mozart had suggested in-

DAMAGING WINDS

directly through well placed friends at court that the prestige and influence of the Cardinal Archbishop would have been greatly enhanced by him staying for a time in Vienna. He might well have been granted permission to remain and thus both retained his position and achieved his immediate goal."

"But it would have been at the cost of his pride and honour."

"Does pride and honour pay the bills and put a roof over his head?"

Anna still looked sceptical, so Salieri asked, "Have you ever heard the story of Haydn's farewell symphony?"

Anna shook her head no. Salieri stated, "I assume that you consider Haydn a man of honour and deserving of our respect."

Anna nodded her agreement and the old composer continued. "First you need to know that Haydn and the Esterhazy court orchestra did not enjoy being confined in the beautiful but very remote Eszterháza palace. They wished to be able to spend more time with their families, many of whom were in Eisenstadt. Haydn had to decide how best to obtain the Prince's approval for them to return to their homes for a time. After more routine requests were denied, he came up with a very clever way. He wrote a symphony that had a very unusual feature. In the last movement the number of instruments playing is gradually reduced. As a player's part was finished he left and extinguished the candle that illuminated his sheet music. By the end there were no players left. The prince got the message and consented to a leave of absence. It was not something forced upon him. No words were spoken but the message was conveyed. The prince was made to feel clever for having solved the riddle and he was able to characterize the leave as his idea and as a gift he generously gave to his players. Haydn was a genius in more than just music. Mozart was not."

"I see your point. Was it this difference in your acceptance of the court's ways and his refusal to do so that created the rivalry between you?"

"Once more you ask of this rivalry. As I have already told you, we were not truly rivals."

"Are you saying that there was no rivalry between you and Mozart at all?"

"There were times when we did compete for resources. I remember when Da Ponte was working with me on the adaptation of *Tarare* for Vienna. Mozart asked Da Ponte to help him adapt Gazzaniga's *Don Giovanni* for Prague. To make matters worse, as Da Ponte could so often do, he also took on an opera for the Spaniard Martin y Soler. So here was

The Lessons Begin

Da Ponte trying to meet the demands of three composers. In any event, Mozart had the audacity to take Da Ponte off to Prague to prepare for the opening of *Don Giovanni* just at the time when I needed him for *Axur*. I had to write to Da Ponte ordering him back to Vienna."

Anna recalled her discussion of this event with Carpani but she wanted to hear how Salieri himself explained his actions. "But Kapellmeister, was not Herr Mozart entitled to have his librettist with him to prepare for the opening?" Anna asked.

"In the abstract, perhaps. But he knew that Da Ponte was my court poet with responsibilities at the National Theatre here in Vienna. I was preparing for an opening of my own at the very theatre where Da Ponte was employed and my opening was scheduled to coincide with the marriage of Archduke Franz (later the Emperor). Mozart's opera was a private commission and not sanctioned by the court. How could he think that his opera could take precedence over my need to prepare an opera for a court occasion? But he did! If he wanted to avoid this type of competition with me he could have chosen another librettist."

"But surely this event demonstrates that there was at least some rivalry between the two of you."

"Not in the sense that you mean. We generally got along well enough and after he died I tried as best I could to help his family."

Anna paused for a moment recalling Weber's criticism. Then, somewhat hesitantly, she said, "But when Mozart died, leaving his wife and children in difficult financial circumstances, I understand that the widows and orphans pension fund refused to provide them with any money. Did you not feel sorry for them? Isn't there something that you could have done?"

Salieri, somewhat huffily, replied, "Of course I personally felt sorry for them. But you have to understand the circumstances. Mozart was to a large extent the author of his family's misfortune. He received substantial revenue from his court appointment and from the various concerts that he conducted and his lessons and his share in the opera proceeds. But he never thought to save money. His wife Constanze helped later in his life when she assumed financial responsibility. But he always lived beyond his means. And as to the widows and orphans pension fund, it is a pension society. In order to be eligible for the pension benefits Mozart would have had to join the society and to have regularly contributed to it as all of the rest of us did. It would have been quite unfair to the people who saved

DAMAGING WINDS

their money, joined the society and did contribute to have then paid out something to Mozart's widow. However deserving she and her children might have been, Mozart didn't contribute as everyone else had done. It was most unfortunate that he died before he had served as a court official for 10 years. That, by the way, is the period of time that you had to be in active service in order to qualify for court pension. But it is not as if we did nothing. Constanze applied to the court explaining that through negligence her husband had not obtained membership in our society. The court had no legal obligation to her but nevertheless it granted her an annual pension of 266 florins, a third of her husband's salary. And then in December, 1791, when our society's December concerts had to be cancelled because of the illness of one of the singers, we ceded our place in the Hofburg Theatre to Constanze so that a concert could be held to raise money for her and her family. To suggest that we were uncaring or that we did nothing to help the family is simply false. And then later when Constanze came to me and asked if I could give free instruction to her young son Franz Xavier I happily agreed to do so. I worked with the boy for some time to help him launch his musical career."

Anna recalled the comments made by Franz Xavier to her and realized that Salieri was, if anything, underplaying the important role that he had played in assisting the son of his so-called rival. Yes, she thought to herself — the old man is constantly surprising me.

Anna looked at the little old composer and, with as sympathetic a tone as she could muster, said, "Kapellmeister, may I ask why you have consistently avoided discussing Herr Mozart with my uncle during his interviews and why you have insisted on my not sharing the comments that you have made to me. I am sure that he would find them very interesting and very revealing."

"Of that I have never had any doubt. But no they are not to be shared with him. You see, Anna, if you were to share them with him he would undoubtedly share them with his readers."

"But then people could better understand you and your relationship with Mozart."

"Mia cara Anna, one lesson that life has taught me well, again and again, is that the world will brook no criticism of their darling Mozart. None! None whatsoever! No matter how well founded. He is quite simply beyond criticism."

"But surely," Anna began.

The Lessons Begin

The old composer stopped her by putting both of his hands up as if to stop a runaway horse. “No, no no. They will not listen. I assure you that they will not. And I shall be seen as a jealous old man trying to cast aspersions on my superior rival. I have learned this lesson. There is no need for further public beatings.”

That evening Anna had a great deal to think of. Her uncle’s words on the first day that he had met Salieri came to mind. “He openly confessed his dislike..., but he did so with intellect and feeling, and in no way with hostility.” The same could be said of his comments on Mozart. What she had learned shed new light on the much bandied about rivalry between the two composers. She so wanted to share her new insights with Otto. There was so very much that she had come to understand about Mozart and Salieri. But she knew that this news especially could not be shared with him. Not yet. He would need to be prepared to accept it. That could only be done in person. How surprised he would be! But what an insight they would have into the much discussed but so little understood relationship between the two composers. How she hoped that it would not be long before she could open herself up to Otto (in more ways than one she snickered to herself). She was confident that her news would bring them even closer together. How could it not? They would be cognoscenti — a select group who knew the real truth — who truly understood Mozart’s relationship with Salieri.

An Anniversary Remembered

WHEN ANNA'S UNCLE INFORMED HER that he had made arrangements for a two day visit to the spa at Baden, Anna insisted that she must stay in the city. How, she pointed out, could she explain such a disruption in her music lessons to the old composer? The lessons meant so much to the Kapellmeister. And to her, she thought. She was learning so much about his relationship with Mozart. Although very reluctant to leave her alone in the city, her uncle finally agreed when she assured him that Felix would act as her protector.

A few days later, her uncle returned and was met by an exuberant Anna who rushed to the door to greet him. He had barely removed his hat when she gushed, "Oh uncle, you shall never guess where I went last night and with whom!" But Anna gave her uncle no time to think of an answer let alone mouth a response. In her obvious enthusiasm she rushed on. "I went to a Schubertiad — as the personal guest of Franz Schubert himself!"

"A Schubertiad? What my dear niece might that be?"

"Oh that is how an evening of Schubert's music and companionship is referred to by his friends." Spinning about her uncle in a grand dance, she continued. "It was wonderful. He played the pianoforte, we sang, we played charades, we danced. It was marvellous. I had such fun — such great fun. And both before and after the event I had the opportunity to talk to Franz about Kapellmeister Salieri."

"Whoa, slow down Anna." Her uncle said grabbing hold of her shoulders and stopping her in front of him. "Let me absorb what you are saying. You are telling me that last night Herr Schubert invited you to a party

that you attended with him without a chaperone where there was dancing and singing."

"Yes, yes. It was marvellous."

"And afterwards he returned here and stayed some time alone with you?"

"Yes, so you can imagine how excited I am."

A look of deep concern crossed her uncle's face and he said in a sombre tone, "Need I remind you that you are engaged to be married to a quite wonderful person who might not take kindly to you partying with and entertaining another man in his absence."

"Oh uncle, you are such a prude at times. I did not attend this affair alone. Felix accompanied me and he was here with me afterwards."

"And Felix stayed by your side the entire evening?"

"No, no, of course not. He was in the servants' quarters. But I could have called him if there had been a problem."

"I do not think you fully appreciate the role of the chaperone as the preserver of your chastity and reputation."

A look of both disbelief and embarrassment chased away Anna's joyful mood. "Uncle how can you suggest any such thing? I deeply and truly love only one man — Otto. I would never do anything to jeopardize that relationship. Never, never, never!"

"You would not knowingly do so perhaps, but I fear that you have indeed already done so."

"Nothing sordid or inappropriate happened." But even as Anna mouthed these words she realized that they were not strictly true. Nothing had happened to her but certainly some of the couples had become more openly amorous than she would have expected. But she knew that she must not share any of that with her uncle. It would simply feed his already exaggerated fears. Nor would she mention to him the anti-establishment, republican views that were expressed by several in attendance including Schubert. Whatever slim foundation there may have been for her uncle's concern, she refused to acknowledge it.

Her face made it very clear to her uncle that she was deeply offended by what he had said to her. "I am very concerned for your reputation. You may not realize it yet but it is one of your most valuable possessions. It needs to be carefully nurtured and protected. It can be quickly tarnished or even permanently damaged beyond repair."

DAMAGING WINDS

"Uncle please try to see this as I saw it and share my joy at being invited to such an event. If Otto were here, I am sure that he would be happy for me."

"I certainly do hope that you are right. Perhaps I would be better able to do as you suggest were you to calmly and slowly start at the beginning and tell me how this came about and what actually occurred."

A smile returned to Anna's face and she replied in a slow and deliberate manner. "I would be most pleased to do so. Perhaps we should sit in the parlour and I shall tell you everything." Or at least everything of importance, she thought to herself. They walked the few steps to the parlour and Anna guided her uncle to his favourite chair. When he was comfortably seated she pulled a chair close to him and began. "It was just like the day that you were visited by Kapellmeister Salieri except that in this case Felix was here and answered the door. He came to tell me that Herr Schubert was asking for you." Anna omitted telling her uncle that Felix had then said to her that this would be her best, perhaps her only, chance to question Schubert about Salieri and why they were no longer on good terms. Leaving this unsaid, Anna continued in the exaggerated style of a lady of station and importance. "I, of course, went myself to the door to greet our distinguished guest and to offer him tea. He was kind enough to accept." But Anna's impatient and enthusiastic nature would not let her continue her ladylike discourse for long and she laughed and said, "Uncle you will be interested to know how he characterized his relationship with the Kapellmeister."

"I most certainly would be but it was a hot and trying trip and I am still in my travelling clothes. Would you indulge me long enough to let me change and have Felix bring me something to drink?"

Anna, impatient as she was to tell her uncle everything (or at least most of what happened), sat and waited the ten minutes it took her uncle to return to the room she occupied. When he did, she began to sing to him from some sheet music that she held in her hand.

Kindest and best of all
Wisest and greatest of all!

As long as I have tears
And refresh my spirit with art
Both shall be dedicated to you
Who bestowed both on me.

An Anniversary Remembered

Both goodness and kindness flow benignly from you, God's image
You are my angel here on earth
I long to show my gratitude.

Our universal Grandfather
Stay with us a lot longer!

"Anna, what are you singing? Who is this paragon of virtue? This universal grandfather?"

"Believe it or not that, my dear uncle, is what Franz Schubert wrote as his tribute to Kapellmeister Salieri on the Kapellmeister's 50th anniversary."

"Truly? How very interesting. And I assume he himself gave it to you?"

"Yes, can you credit it? When I expressed an interest in Kapellmeister Salieri to Franz at our tea, he pulled a blank sheet of musical paper from his waistcoat and wrote out the tribute from memory."

"Franz? You seem to have become quite familiar with Herr Schubert in your evening together. This evening when you say nothing untoward happened. This evening that ought to cause neither Otto nor me any concern."

"Uncle, he insisted that I address him so. He is simply less formal than you are accustomed to being."

"Clearly" is all that her uncle said in response.

Anna refocused on the score in her hands and looking at her uncle said, "He apologized for the adolescent tone of his simple musical tribute but he assured me that he had written it with the most sincere and heart felt appreciation of what Herr Salieri has meant to him."

"The depth of his feeling for the old composer certainly shines through."

"But even better, he and I then sang it together. Look at the musical notations. You will see where he adapted it to the soprano clef for me. Imagine Uncle, I sang with Schubert and he specially adapted it for my voice, all as I sat by him in this very room! It is a moment that I shall cherish for the rest of my life. I shall not let your overly paternalistic concerns cast any shade upon my moment in the sun!"

Her uncle smiled and took Anna's hands in his. "Yes, I am certain that you shall cherish the moment and so you should. But you ought to take my concerns seriously because I am sure that Otto would. Anna, my dearest Anna, if this ever became public I fear that both Otto and you would be embarrassed."

DAMAGING WINDS

Anna, however, was not in a mood for reflecting on any such future embarrassment. She was still caught up in the moment. "Uncle you know that from the first day I have had serious doubts about the Kapellmeister's treatment of Herr Mozart. So you can imagine my reaction when Franz stressed to me what a wonderful man the Kapellmeister was and how good he had been to him. I then questioned him, asking why, if he had had this grandfatherly affection for the old composer, he had broken off his lessons and why does he not now visit him? What had happened?"

Her uncle looked at her and said, "Anna please tell me that you did not actually pose these questions in such a blunt, pointed fashion."

Anna blushed and replied. "I realize now as I listen to myself that it was forward and inappropriate to do so but those were the words I used." She then quickly added, "But he did not take offence. In fact he assured me that his feelings have not changed. He simply said to me that a time came when he felt that he had to develop his own style and to assert his independence. Apparently old Salieri was constantly discouraging Franz from writing German songs and always pressing Franz to follow in his footsteps and become a court composer and writer of operas. Like a young bird when his wings were strong enough he left the nest and flew away."

"That's very poetic and very interesting. But he assured you that he still thinks highly of the Maestro?"

"Yes. He told me that he had dedicated a set of his songs to the Kapellmeister. I jotted down the names of the ones in case you might want the list."

"I remember his dedication. They were settings of Goethe poems, if my memory serves."

"It most certainly does. They were what he calls his opus 5 numbers 1 to 5."

"How deliciously ironic that Herr Schubert should dedicate German songs to the man who discouraged him from writing such works."

"Perhaps it was an attempt to change the old composer's mind."

"Perhaps." The look of reflection on her uncle's face confirmed to Anna that she had fully engaged his interest. His concerns about the evening with Schubert had, at least for the moment, been replaced by his interest in the relationship between the old composer and his bright young student. "So what else did you learn?" her uncle inquired.

"I mentioned that the Kapellmeister is giving me lessons and he warmed to me immediately. He said, 'So the Maestro has you singing.'

An Anniversary Remembered

That is a compliment to your voice. You are rather old to be starting as a voice student. He must think you special.' I did not know whether to smile or to frown. But then he told me that I was in a large but nonetheless select group of singers and composers. Anyone who is anyone in the musical world, he assured me, has studied with Salieri — from Mozart's own son, to Meyerbeer and Moscheles and Weigl and to Hummel, Eybler, Czerny, Hérold and Beethoven. The list goes on and on he said. But he stressed that while the numbers were large the quality was never diluted. To tell you the truth, he made me feel very, very special."

"Anna you should listen to yourself. You, who so wanted me to cancel the Salieri interviews, are now saying you are so proud to be one of his students."

Anna looked sheepish and tried to change the subject. "Uncle, you would be interested in what else I learned."

"And what might that be?"

"Franz told me in detail of the Kapellmeister's big day in 1816 — his 50th Anniversary in Vienna."

"Oh, that would be most interesting. Do you remember the Maestro telling us something about it the very first day we met him? When he took us to the Minorite Church?"

"Yes, I remember. May we go over my notes?"

"Certainly. I am all ears."

"It seems that the Kapellmeister's friends and students and his four daughters had decided to celebrate the 50th anniversary of his arrival in Vienna in a grand manner. The anniversary day was a Sunday. There was not a cloud in the sky, Franz recalls. He himself was not at the morning sessions when the Kapellmeister and his four daughters attended at the Italian Minorite Church in this very square to attend morning mass. Nor was he there when a court carriage took them to the palace of Prince Trautmannsdorf-Weinberg (I think that was the name). Franz learned of these events from the Kapellmeister himself later in the day. In any event this prince was the chief marshal at Court. Franz assured me that this carriage ride was the first real hint that the old composer had as to the extent of the celebrations that were planned. He found all the members of the chapel awaiting him in the anteroom. The prince and Count Kueffstein, the general director of Court music, immediately entered and led the Kapellmeister into the room selected for the ceremony. The members of the chapel came in and arranged themselves in a semicircle in front of

DAMAGING WINDS

which these officials stood with Salieri between them. The chief marshal explained in what Franz described as the most flattering terms, the grounds upon which the Emperor had decided to give the Kapellmeister a great gold medal and chain of honour. At the close of the address, the Prince hung the chain about his neck and embraced him. The other official then followed with a short speech and embrace. The Kapellmeister was very touched as you can well imagine. Given the ease with which tears seem to come to his eyes, I suspect that there were more than a few that day. Apparently he gave a simple expression of thanks. He did take the opportunity to express his sincere gratitude to his fellow-servants of the chapel, for their unremitting zeal in sustaining him, and in gaining the chapel its widespread fame. After a few minutes spent in receiving the congratulations of the gentlemen present, he drove to the palace chapel to conduct the usual eleven o'clock high mass. He chose one of his own masses for performance with gradual and offertory, also by him.

"Franz explained that the Kapellmeister then had a simple dinner in the company of his four daughters and a few close friends. Then about six pm, his past and present pupils assembled. Hummel and Moscheles unfortunately were not then in Vienna and Beethoven declined. But Franz stressed to me that those assembled were a very impressive group. They numbered twelve including Joseph Weigl and Franz of course. There were also fourteen of his female singing pupils including Maria Theresia Rosenbaum and Maria Anna Fux, the daughters of his old teacher. Franz told me that the Kapellmeister was like a father to the Gassmann girls. He not only taught them as young women but even after they became noted prima donnas he coached them for each major performance.

"The evening was a night of song. The Kapellmeister seated himself at the pianoforte with his daughters beside him, all dressed alike; at his right hand the fourteen female pupils in a semi circle; at his left the twelve men similarly placed. In front two seats were placed for the court officials, one of whom, however, happened to be called out to Schönbrunn by the arrival of the Emperor from Italy. Between the seats placed for these noblemen, they placed the bust of Joseph II. Do you remember that first day when the Kapellmeister told of his having it made after the equestrian statue was unveiled? This makeshift chorus then sang some pieces from an oratorio by Salieri — *Jesus in Limbo*. Have you heard of it uncle?"

"I have."

An Anniversary Remembered

"Well, this was followed by a series of tributes by each student. Each of his composition students had been asked to write a special piece. These were then sung, beginning with the most recent of the students. Even the absent Hummel and Moscheles sent in pieces. We, of course, have heard the Schubert piece. Do you think that they all were so flattering?"

"I am sure that they were."

"Well, the informal concert closed by singing some further numbers of the Salieri oratorio."

"How marvellous. To think that one could be so blessed as to have students of such calibre and to then have them gather and write and sing tributes to you. Can you imagine how the old man must have felt?"

"But I have saved the best for last. Franz tells me that there was some controversy about one of the honours bestowed on the Kapellmeister that day."

"Anna, surely you are not still trying to dig up dirt about the Maestro?"

"What makes you say that? All I have ever been seeking is the truth. In any event, let me tell you this story. It is very, very interesting."

"Fine, please continue."

"Well, on the same day, the Kapellmeister received permission from the Emperor to accept his diploma as a member of the French Academy and the medal of the Legion of Honour."

"I fail to see the controversy."

"Oh, Uncle you are not thinking about when this happened. This was 1816 just a year after the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo. You see it was none other than Napoleon who first offered these honours to the Kapellmeister."

"Now I see how the honour might not have been welcomed by the Emperor."

"Yes, it was only after Louis XVIII renewed the offer that the Emperor consented."

"Well, Anna you have had an interesting time in my absence and, it seems, you have added to our understanding of the Maestro, and given me even more evidence of his importance."

Anna realized the truth in what her uncle was saying and knew that she had lost whatever opportunity she might have had to convince her uncle to drop the interviews.

DAMAGING WINDS

As she formed these thoughts, her uncle went even further, saying, "I am so happy that you have abandoned your efforts to prove the Maestro an evil schemer."

Anna wanted to object that she had done no such thing but the words would not come. Her mind was too caught up in the questions that she was asking herself. Had she accepted the old Italian's view of things? Had she abandoned her quest?

After a few silent moments, she assured her uncle that she had not yet made up her mind.

Her uncle smiled. "Oh, so you think that you have not yet done so. I am not so sure."

A Walk in the Park

WHEN ANNA AND HER UNCLE were next shown into the parlour in the Salieri home, they saw Salieri sitting at the pianoforte working on some sheets of music. “Kapellmeister, what are you working on today?” asked Anna.

When he looked up the old man’s face seemed troubled and he spoke as if in pain. “My Picciolo requiem. It shall be played for the first time at my funeral. I hope that you do not have the opportunity to hear it for many years but on days like today when my gout is acting up I fear that you may hear it any day.”

“We trust that such will not be the case,” responded her uncle.

Anna to her wonder realized that she truly shared this sentiment, but before she could comment her uncle continued. “The piccolo seems an odd instrument for a requiem.”

Salieri replied sharply. “That damnable, squeaky whistle? Indeed!! No, I forbid its use in any of my works. I did not say not piccolo but picciolo (little in Italian). I call it my little Requiem because it was composed by and for me — God’s picciolissima creatura.”

“Kapellmeister, you seem in poor spirits today,” said Anna. Looking to her uncle, she added, “Perhaps uncle we should postpone our interview until the Kapellmeister is feeling better.”

Salieri replied before her uncle could do so. “No. I apologize for my mood. But I have a better idea of how to deal with it. Today is a bright sunny warm day — the sort of day that one ought to be outside. It is too stuffy in here. I greatly enjoy excursions out into the country with my students. As you will remember I especially like to sing canons of a humorous nature. Let us pack some sugar cookies and do the interview in the country. I cannot walk today but with your help I can get into a carriage

DAMAGING WINDS

and when we arrive at the park I have in mind you can help me to where I can sit under one of my favourite trees. We can sing and talk and I am sure to feel better."

"Certainly," her uncle replied. "I am sure that we would all enjoy some country air."

Anna was concerned. She did not want to be difficult but she knew that she could not go walking and sit under a tree in the dress that she was wearing and she had neither a sun hat nor a parasol.

Old Salieri could see the troubled expression on Anna's face. "Do not worry Anna. My wife may have been dead for a number of years but I remember that look — the look of a woman who feels she is not dressed properly for the occasion. We shall ask our driver to stop at your rooms on our way so that you may change."

"Thank you. That is very considerate. But surely we should also take the opportunity to pack more than sugar cookies, Herr Salieri." Anna chimed in.

"Oh, I am sure that such cookies will do us very well. Recall my story about when I was young and my father's discipline of bread and water. Since then I am never far from my supply of sugar cookies, which serve me and my guests quite well."

And so Salieri drove with Anna and her uncle by way of Hinteldorf to Weidlingau and the romantic garden of Prince Dietrichstein. The old composer walked with difficulty but he managed with a stick and assistance from Anna and her uncle. With each taking an arm, Salieri managed to reach the sought after tree in the park. He settled on the grass and pulled some sheet music from his bag. Anna could see Salieri's spirits rise as if a heavy burden had been lifted from him. They sang a trio that he composed on the spot in praise of the grandeur of creation. The old composer was deeply moved, and turning his eyes to the clouds that at that moment shielded the sun, he said: "I feel that the end of my days is drawing near; my senses are failing me; my delight and strength in creating songs are largely gone. I who once was honoured by half of Europe is forgotten. Nothing remains to me but trust in God, and the hope of an untroubled existence in the Land of Peace." Anna and her uncle tried to assure the old man that he would soon be in better health and better spirits and would undoubtedly live for many years to come. Despite their efforts his mood had soured and he talked of death and his legacy.

A Walk in the Park

When they had returned to the city, Salieri presented them with a beautiful prepared musical setting of one of the psalms on which he had written a kind dedication — “To my dear friends Friedrich and Anna Rochlitz, the keepers of my musical legacy”. They were both deeply touched. Anna was saddened by the day’s tone and insisted that because they would soon be seeing each other there was no need for such a present. Old Salieri smiled but explained to her that a seventy-two-year-old man must take every farewell as if it were forever. He then turned to Anna’s uncle and insisted that Rochlitz give his word that if God were to call the old composer to his side, he would report what he had been told in the interviews in as kind a manner as he could. Anna’s uncle, with great solemnity, assured Salieri that he would do so.

On their return to their rooms, Anna felt very troubled. Her mind was crowded with questions. Was the old man as innocent as he seemed? Were Weber and the others who accused him of crimes against Mozart so very wrong? Surely they must know more than she had been able to discover. Perhaps she had missed some key evidence or had misinterpreted what she had found. And yet she could not think what that might be. But if she had not missed or misinterpreted something then how had these rumours started? And why had Mozart written to his father about the Italian cabals? Could Mozart and his father have themselves been misinterpreting events and motives? Was this a case of a talented young composer seeking excuses in an imagined Italian cabal to explain his limited success to his father?

“Felix, I need to take a walk to clear my head.”

“Whatever you wish, Fräulein. Perhaps we could walk in the new People’s Park that is nearby.”

As they walked Felix noted the troubled look on Anna’s face. After a few moments he decided to speak. “Fräulein, I can tell that something is troubling you. Is there anything that I might do to ease your mind?” When Anna did not reply immediately, he promptly apologized for his impertinence in addressing her in this familiar fashion.

“Oh, I was not in any way offended. Felix, I have come to think of you as a colleague, a co-venturer in my quest rather than as a servant. You may certainly address me. No, that is not why I hesitated. I simply did not know how to respond to your kind offer.”

DAMAGING WINDS

"If I am not mistaken you are troubled because we have not found the evidence of the Maestro's mistreatment of Herr Mozart that you expected to find."

"Yes, I suppose that you are right. But why should that so trouble me. I said from the beginning that all I sought was the truth."

"Yes, but you said that thinking that you already knew what that truth was." Anna's face revealed that she was taken aback by this remark — that she perceived it as a sort of criticism. "Fräulein, please do think that I am being critical of you. You like all of us came to your investigation with some preconceived notions. That is only human nature. And it is only right that when the evidence seemed not to support those notions that you asked why. Was it something that you had missed or that you had not fully understood?"

"Yes, that is exactly what I have been asking myself."

"You would not be a good investigator if you did not ask these questions. But I suspect that there is another aspect of your concern."

"What do you think that is?"

"Fräulein, I believe that you know full well what that is. Your preconceived notions came to you from Master Otto and his teacher Herr von Weber. Those are people that you know and trust and respect. You are asking how they could be wrong in this."

"You are a very perceptive man, Felix. I am most fortunate to have asked you to assist me."

"As a servant one has much opportunity to observe people."

"But I am sure that not all servants are as skilled at it as you seem to be."

"Perhaps that is why the secret police recruited me those many years ago."

"Or perhaps they assisted you in honing your skills."

"Perhaps, but in any event Fräulein you should take comfort in knowing that the doubts you have are a natural and a good thing. If you were not truly committed to the truth none of this would bother you. You would focus on the negative evidence that we have uncovered and feel reinforced in your views."

"Do you think that there has been much evidence of that sort?"

"No I do not but there has been some. Did not Herr Kelly say that the Maestro possessed crooked wisdom? Did not Herr Da Ponte talk of the cabals of his countrymen? Did you not tell me that Herr Beethoven said

A Walk in the Park

that the Maestro had used his influence against him in 1808 and that he likely did so against Herr Mozart?"

"Yes but they said more that put such comments into an understandable and more acceptable context."

"You do not need to convince me Fräulein. But not everyone would look for such context. You are to be complimented for your openness to these additional facts."

"For the longest time I thought that a weakness on my part."

"What changed your mind?"

"For me the turning point was my visit with Herr Schubert. When I heard from his lips what a kind and generous man the Kapellmeister was, I began to accept that I might be seeing the real Kapellmeister."

"I am confused. You yourself have been meeting with the Maestro day after day. You have taken music lessons with him. But you did not think that you knew this man's true character?"

"Yes, that is exactly what I thought. In the beginning when I began to warm to the Kapellmeister I felt gullible and guilty, like I was letting his charm overcome my reason. I suspected that beneath the surface lurked the evil man who had so damaged Herr Mozart. But as Signor Carpani and I researched and found no support whatsoever for the rumours I began to question my earlier views. But still I could not shake the feeling that I was missing something. That the evidence was there but I had not found it. My time with Herr Schubert changed that."

"But you spent but a few hours with Herr Schubert. Why was this the turning point?"

"I may have only met Herr Schubert but I know his music. To me his songs are reflective of a man who is so perceptive and knowledgeable of human nature. I have always thought that Schubert understands and captures human emotion better than anyone. He understands people. So when he spoke so warmly of the Kapellmeister and laughed at the rumours, it was like a weight was lifted from my shoulders."

"I am happy that you seem to have come around, whatever the reasons and however circuitous a route you took. You will recall that when you first asked me to assist you that I said that I have never believed the rumours about Maestro Salieri."

Anna nodded sheepishly. Then Anna's face took on an even more troubled look.

DAMAGING WINDS

Felix said, "I fear that I have added to your worries rather than comforted you, as was my hope."

Anna smiled weakly and assured Felix that his words had been encouraging. "I am just thinking what it must be like for the Kapellmeister to hear these terrible and seemingly baseless rumours. He has said to my uncle and me that he who once was respected throughout Europe is now forgotten. But it is much worse than that. He is not forgotten. He is maligned and slandered."

"Yes, I fear that you are quite right."

On their return, Anna went to her room to change. Shortly thereafter, the maid brought her a note that had been delivered in her absence. She recognized the hand of her beloved Otto. Because of the presence of the maid, she tried to be suitably decorous as she opened it but she was so anxious that it proved a real chore. When she read its brief contents she smiled broadly. She finished changing quickly and went to see her uncle. When she found him she burst out, "Otto is to be here in Vienna, tomorrow. Tomorrow! He has been summoned by Herr Weber to assist him." She immediately asked her uncle if they could entertain Otto and his mentor at dinner the next evening. Her uncle of course agreed. Anna then rushed off to the kitchen to talk to the cook. Everything had to be just right.

Later that evening when Anna was alone in her room, her mind turned to the afternoon's events. Salieri's concern about his legacy was still much on her mind. Otto and Weber would of course know nothing of all of the evidence that she and Carpani had collected. Heavens, they probably still thought Salieri a murderer and would not understand the nuanced relationship that Salieri had had with Mozart. Without a doubt she had to share her new found knowledge with them. And, of course, once they knew what she knew they would see the Kapellmeister in a new light. They had to. How could they not? She decided then and there that she owed it to both Salieri and to Weber to try to reconcile them. She could not have the people in the world that she cared most about (other than her uncle of course) disliking each other. Especially when that dislike was based on a false understanding of what had really transpired. Otto would not be a problem she was sure. Weber might be more of a challenge. But he was bright and certainly knowledgeable about human nature. Yes, she must bring them together she decided. Such a return to cordial relations

A Walk in the Park

between the two composers would make life so much easier for Otto and her and would permit her to keep in contact with both composers.

But it would have to be orchestrated well. She had already had Felix deliver the dinner invitation to Otto and Weber. In the morning she would arrange to have her uncle invite Salieri. She gave great thought to how she would effect the reconciliation. She would have Otto arrive first — an hour would likely be enough. She would share with Otto her evidence and when Herr Weber arrived, she and Otto together could win him over. Then an hour later Salieri would arrive and be greeted by the newly informed Weber.

All day Anna fretted about the dinner party. There was so much to do. The event had to be one worthy of the occasion. She imagined that she would be shaping musical history. People would later write of the reconciliation of the two composers. She would let Otto take the credit. It would help his career and endear him to both composers. With these supporters behind him how could he not succeed?

When the evening arrived so did a heavy rain. Anna refused to see it as in any way a bad omen. That was superstitious nonsense. Nevertheless as she looked at the downpour that beat up against the window pane, she realized that it would make travelling about the city more difficult and less pleasant. She asked Felix to watch for the arrival of Otto's cab. She hoped that in that way he could get into their rooms with little effect on his evening dress. Anna could hardly wait to tell Otto all that had happened. She was ready before his appointed arrival time. When that time came and went without the appearance of Otto she began to get concerned. Hopefully all of the guests would be equally slowed by the weather. She needed time with Otto for her plan to work. Oh, well, she thought, I did not need an hour. A half hour would do. When 30 minutes went by and still there was no Otto she became seriously concerned. She approached her uncle and told him that she would need some time alone with Otto when he arrived. He smiled knowingly and said that he had been in love once and could understand. He agreed that he would give them some privacy and that when Weber arrived he would keep him occupied in conversation for a time while she and Otto became reacquainted.

When neither Otto nor Weber had arrived at the appointed hour for Weber's appearance she became increasingly concerned that the delay might play havoc with her carefully worked out timing. Finally she heard a cab pull up outside their door. To her surprise both Otto and Weber

DAMAGING WINDS

descended from the cab. They were together! When they were announced she went to the vestibule. After greeting Weber she begged his indulgence to have a few moments alone with her fiancé. Then leaving Weber with her uncle, she took Otto into the study. When they were alone in the room, Anna, looking very agitated, chided Otto, "You are very late! And you have come with Weber! We don't have much time".

Otto, looking perplexed, tried to take her into his arms but she resisted. He explained, "Herr von Weber was delayed by an important matter that required my assistance. I was sure that you would understand. And then the cab driver had to make some adjustments to the horses' harnesses and in the heavy rain that proved a most time consuming task further delaying us. But we did not think that our lateness would cause any problems".

"Perhaps not. Let me explain." She went to him, gave him a hug and a kiss and then holding his two hands, gushed out, "Oh Otto, so much has happened. You won't believe what I have learned. Salieri is not the monster that you think he is. He is no devil. He did not harm Mozart in any meaningful way. They were even friends at the end. Salieri is actually a very nice, kind and helpful man. He is teaching me composition and giving me voice lessons."

Otto gruffly let go of her hands and stepped back. Looking at her intensely he spoke harshly "What are you talking about? I thought we agreed that you were going to drop this Salieri investigation. How do you know he is innocent? And what are you doing accepting lessons from this man? You know my feelings about him. You know that von Weber believes that he murdered Mozart and that even if he didn't, that he made Mozart's life miserable. And here you are, my fiancée, accepting composition lessons and singing lessons from him!"

"No, no. I explained to you that I was going to get help in looking into the Salieri allegations from Herr Carpani. You remember. And once I got to know Salieri and he asked me if I could sing and what I knew about music. The lessons just happened. It seemed so natural."

"While I was away you wrote to me often. Did you once tell me of your investigations? Of these lessons? No, not a word!"

"But I wrote that my days were filled with Salieri."

"How cleverly deceptive! You knew how I would interpret those words and it was not that you were carrying out an investigation and certainly not that you were studying with Salieri!" Then Otto's voice became calm-

er but very firm. “Clearly you do not care what I think about any of this. I thought that we were a couple. I thought that you respected my views. I could not have been clearer. I was understanding when you explained that your uncle was making you take notes during the Salieri interviews. But there was nothing said about you working closely with him or you taking music lessons from him. What were you thinking? How could you do this knowing my attitude and Carl’s attitude to this man? You know that Carl will have nothing whatsoever to do with him. He won’t even join the same social club as Salieri. And how am I going to explain to him that my fiancée has been taking music lessons from him. Lessons that she took after she learned from Carl’s own lips what he thought about this despicable Italian. Everything is about you. What about me? What about my career? What about our future?”

“Oh, I have thought of that. I wanted to meet you separately so that I could share my evidence with you. It is quite convincing. Then you and I can inform Herr von Weber before Salieri arrives.”

“What? Have you lost your mind? You have invited Salieri here? Tonight? Carl shall refuse to stay. We shall be humiliated and he shall never forgive us.”

“No, no. It need not be that way at all. It is a chance to bring the two together and to rebuild their relationship.”

At that moment they heard noise from the hall. Otto opened the door just in time to hear the words, “I assume that you know the First Imperial Kapellmeister, Antonio Salieri.”

Immediately Otto rushed into the hall and took a place beside Weber who had yet to respond to the unexpected introduction. Weber was just staring at the tottering old composer with a fierce gaze. Otto took Weber’s arm and bent to whisper in his ear, “I did not know that he had been invited. It was Anna’s uncle.”

Weber turned to Rochlitz and said in a very firm tone, “I am sure that you did not realize that Herr Salieri and I do not engage in social discourse of any kind. I am, however, willing to remain and break bread with you if the Kapellmeister will openly acknowledge the superiority of my cousin the immortal Mozart and will apologize for his ill treatment of that musical genius.”

Without waiting for Rochlitz, old Salieri stated, “I am happy to acknowledge that Wolfgang was in all respects my superior in the compos-

DAMAGING WINDS

ition of instrumental works. His symphonies, piano concerti and string quartets are better than any that I ever managed."

"And his operas as well?" Weber interjected.

"Ah, there I shall not go. Mozart and I had very different views of what constituted a great opera both as to the role of music and the role of the musical composer. You may be the judge of what better suits your taste but I shall remain guided by my mentor Gluck."

"Of that I have no doubt. While you dig in the dirt seeking out Gluck's droppings, the immortal Mozart soars above you like an eagle."

At this Rochlitz interjected himself physically between the two. Although one was over 70 and the other looked frail and emaciated, he feared that they might come to blows. He asked Weber to withdraw the last remark. "It is inappropriate for even someone as gifted as you, Herr von Weber, to insult another of my guests."

Weber nodded to Rochlitz and turning to Salieri said, "For the sake of Herr Rochlitz and for that of Anna and Otto, I withdraw my last remark. I was moved beyond polite discourse by my fervent love of Mozart. He is a god in my eyes."

Salieri, his face red and angry, burst out, "Blasphemy! I cannot imagine anyone who was less god-like than that man. Do you really know anything of his life, of his character?" Then seeing the horror in Anna's face, he softened his tone. "Weber, surely we can at least be civil to each other. Why must our relationship be governed by someone dead more than 30 years?"

With these words, Weber turned on his heel, took his coat and hat from the servant, Felix, who had been holding them all of this time, transfixed by the drama unfolding in front of his eyes. Weber then violently opened the door and, despite his limp, strode purposefully away, ignoring the rain that continued to fall. Otto, fearing that his future would be forever compromised, rushed after him leaving his hat and cloak behind and saying nothing to Anna or anyone else.

Anna, shaken and dismayed, went to the door and called after Otto but he continued on his way trying to catch up with Weber. Realizing that he was not coming back, she burst into tears, rushed into the study and slammed the door. Tears poured down Anna's face in a never ending torrent. She was certain that she had ruined her life and had forever lost Otto. The image of Otto chasing down the street after Weber was seared into her mind. He had left without even a look back at her. That image

made her realize how badly things had gone. How could she have been so naïve as to think that she could engineer a reconciliation of the two composers in a single evening? She was so stupid. So very, very stupid. And now things had blown up in her face. Not only had she been unable to bring the two composers together but she had ruined her relationship with Otto. She had to think how she could reconcile with Otto. But suddenly Anna stopped herself. She realized how angry she was at Otto. Was he worthy of her? Was he the man that she thought she knew so well. The man who she thought so understood her and appreciated her. He had refused to listen to her! Refused! If he truly loved and respected her surely he ought to have heard her out. Could she ever forgive him for this? He was so focused on the fact that she had disobeyed him. Disobeyed — as if she were some servant who could be ordered about. She may have been naïve in seeking to reconcile the two composers but her intentions were honourable and right. What of him? All that he could think of was his relationship with Weber. Not his relationship with her! Did not his relationship with her count for more? She had known him for years. They had shared so much together. But here he was choosing his mentor over her. Someone he had known only two years!

Anna was surprised when in a few minutes Felix came into the room. She signalled him that she wished to be alone. She had no desire to see anyone nor be seen at that moment. Nevertheless, Felix in as soft and sympathetic a tone as he could muster, announced that Herr Salieri very much wanted to have a word with her. Initially she refused, saying that she simply wanted to be alone. But then she thought better of it and fearing to alienate the old composer as well, agreed to see him. She did the best that she could to make herself presentable. Wiping her tears from her cheeks, straightening her hair and her dress. She then told Felix to show the old Kapellmeister into the room. When Felix led him into the room, he immediately came over to her, reaching out and taking both her hands into his. Holding her at arm's length he told her, "when your uncle explained to me about what you hoped to achieve tonight and I realized that your disagreement with Otto was over me, I felt I had to come to talk to you. *Mia carissima Anna*, it would trouble me terribly if I thought that I had come between you and your fiancée. It has become clear to me over the time that we have known each other that you care deeply for this man and I do not want to be a source of conflict between the two of you."

DAMAGING WINDS

Anna looked at the aging composer, tears once more welling in her eyes. "But you are not the problem. It's him. He won't listen to me. He is being incredibly insensitive and stubborn. He is so convinced that you made life difficult for Mozart, one of his idols, that he simply won't listen to the truth. When I tell him what a wonderful man you are, how kind you have been to me, how you have been helping me with voice and composition lessons, he won't even listen. Instead he criticizes me for disobeying him."

Salieri gave her a reassuring hug and then suggested that they both sit down. Looking at her with kind, reassuring eyes he explained, "Anna you have much to learn about relationships with men. We can be very proud, self-centred individuals at times. You have to make allowances for that. Otto is no different than any man. Imagine what he must have felt like when he learned that you, his fiancée, had acted contrary to what he thought that you agreed upon."

"But we did not agree. He simply stated what he wanted."

"It matters not. He interpreted what happened as an agreement. When you did not comply with what he saw as your agreement, he felt hurt and to some extent betrayed. He thought that you were not paying attention to him. Remember that he wants to think that he is the most important man in your life. That what he says will be listened to and respected. You remember the other day that I spoke to you about Mozart's inability to adapt himself to the Imperial Court and to learn the art of diplomacy. The same can hold true for relationships between husband and wife. Confrontation invites confrontation. I am not saying that you need always agree with what your husband thinks or do what he wants but the skilled wife learns how to make him think that you are doing so while at the same time helping reshape his views to better accord with what you think is appropriate. If mastered, it is a skill that will serve you well in your relationship. My Therese was a master at it."

With these words, Salieri rose to go, but before leaving the room he turned to her and added "Just think about what I have said. Don't make any rash decisions. And whatever happens I want you to know how much I appreciate your belief in my innocence and your understanding of my relationship with Mozart. It means a great deal to me. I know that you were not always of the view that you have now." And with those words, the old composer limped quietly out of the room. And retrieving his hat from

A Walk in the Park

the foyer table went out the door. It had stopped raining. He avoided the puddles on the cobblestones and slowly climbed into the waiting carriage.

The Last Illness

ANNA AROSE EARLY ON THE morning following the disastrous dinner party. She knew that she was not without blame. She had not considered things from Otto's perspective. She realized now that anything that would so directly affect his mentor would, of course, be of interest and concern to Otto and would have to be handled with delicacy. But even so she was still angry with him. He had not even listened! She had been denied the proper hearing that she knew that she deserved. How could he of all people treat her in this fashion? How could he have chosen to go with Weber rather than stay with her? With Weber who had shown himself to be so close-minded, inflexible and insensitive! How could he have chosen such a person over her? Everything that she had done, she had done for him!

But what was she to do now? She had given Salieri's words much thought — much, much thought. But could she do as Salieri had suggested? It seemed devious and insincere to pretend to accept Otto's point of view while working to change it. Could she do such a thing? Was it not this sort of deception, this failure to be open and honest with Otto that had got her into the trouble she was in? But what alternative did she have? She just did not know what to do. Otto's refusal to listen to her was wrong. How in light of that could she go to him, apologize and agree to do as he wished? Surely he should be the one coming to apologize to her.

By mid afternoon Anna was still engaged in her internal debate and Otto had not come. She realized that she had an important decision to make. What was more important to her — Otto or her pride? As Salieri had said, Otto was a man and as such he was proud, self-centred, stubborn. That would not change as much as she might want it to. He was not going to admit that he was wrong. The more that she thought of it,

the more she knew there could be only one answer. She did not want to lose Otto — over this incident or any other. She knew that although he might be a proud, self-centred and stubborn man, he was **her** proud, self-centred, stubborn man. If the relationship was to be saved, she would have to save it. She would have to be the practical one, the one to make the first move. She would have to seek him out. And she would have to do as the old composer had advised. Yes, she would go to Otto and seem to give in. She was confident that once she had reopened his heart, she could start the process of opening his eyes and his mind.

As she and Felix made their way to the rooms taken by Weber and Otto, she gave some thought to how she ought to begin. Perhaps she ought to gauge his mood and his position on things before she committed herself. She would say that she had come to return his hat and cloak. Yes, that was what she would do.

Anna, however, proved incapable of implementing her plan, of awaiting his reaction. When she arrived, her planned patient appraisal of Otto's mood went out the window. She had no sooner been shown into the room where Otto sat than she apologized for everything, for not informing him of her activities while he was away, for not sharing her idea earlier and for not seeking his views on her plan for the reconciliation. Otto, for his part, acknowledged that her intentions had been good and he too apologized, in his case for rushing out after Weber. He knew that the fact that he had left and the manner in which he had done so must have hurt Anna. He then laughed and said, "Nature made sure that I regretted my decision. I was thoroughly soaked by the time that we were able to hail a cab."

Anna smiled and the tension eased somewhat. But it returned not long after because Otto made the mistake of assuming that Anna had seen the light and realized that she had been fooled by the old Italian. It became clear to both very quickly that the one topic that they could not come to grips with was how to deal with Salieri. Each had a very different attitude towards the old composer. Anna accused Otto of being closed-minded and Otto accused her of being too easily influenced by the old man's charm and too trusting of his fellow Italian Carpani. But then Anna remembered Salieri's advice and decided to guide Otto to neutral ground. They would agree to disagree. Anna realized that to Otto, acknowledging Salieri's innocence meant thinking badly of his mentor Weber and that he refused to do. Salieri, they agreed, would not be discussed. But Otto

DAMAGING WINDS

did tell Anna how much he loved the fact that she always saw the good in people.

They sealed their accommodation with a long, lingering kiss and tight embrace. Only at that moment did Anna relax, letting go of her frustration and her anxiety. Her love of Otto, temporarily buried beneath this dual burden, came rushing to the surface. When Otto broke the kiss, Anna let only a moment go by before she again pressed her lips to his.

Not many days after Anna and Otto reached this entente, she and her uncle returned to Leipzig. Otto stayed on in Vienna with Weber briefly and then returned to Munich. Through correspondence and the occasional visit by Anna and a chaperone to Munich, they planned their wedding for the summer of 1823. It would take place in Leipzig. The couple would then move to Munich. In preparation, they located suitable rooms to rent and found a couple to act as cook, maid and butler.

The wedding plans, however, suffered a terrible blow in January. The beautiful new National Theatre where Otto had been working burned to the ground. At first Otto, fearing for his job, wrote to Anna suggesting that the wedding be postponed indefinitely. She was terribly depressed. Would she ever marry Otto? She had waited two years while he studied in Dresden. She had then agreed to wait another year while he got settled in Munich. And what was her reward — yet another postponement. Even worse! Otto did not want to set a new date! Things were too uncertain, he said.

But then shortly thereafter Otto wrote with good news. The small Residenz theatre in the palace was to be renovated and to substitute for the destroyed theatre. Rather than being without a job he found himself busier than ever. He suggested that a fall wedding might be best and Anna, relieved that the wedding was merely delayed and not postponed indefinitely, happily agreed.

That summer dragged on for Anna. She kept busy with the wedding preparations and she practised her singing and through correspondence continued as best she could her musical training with Salieri. Then finally September came and with it the wedding. As much as she wanted to she did not invite the old composer. She knew that it would simply reopen the carefully sutured wound. She wrote to him explaining and he replied by return post telling her that he understood. Besides, he pointed out, the long journey to Leipzig was beyond what his fragile health could endure.

The Last Illness

Then an idea came to Anna. She could and would have Salieri at the wedding. If he could not be there in person at least his music would be. She approached her uncle about the two pieces of Salieri music that the old maestro had given to him during their Vienna sojourn. Although prized possessions, he was more than pleased to make them available to her for the wedding. She arranged to have the music transcribed from the beautiful scrolls onto more mundane musical sheets and to then have performance parts prepared for each instrument and voice. She personally worked with the organist, the other instrumental players and the choir to rehearse these works until she was satisfied that they would be performed perfectly. It would be her wedding present to herself, she thought.

The wedding service went wonderfully. She was made to feel so special throughout the day, as her friends gathered to help her prepare, as she travelled with her uncle in a coach pulled by four magnificent white horses, as the wedding mass was celebrated, as she and Otto said their vows and at the seemingly endless party that followed when Otto's many musician friends played and played and played. But for Anna the highlight without a doubt was when Salieri's *Veni Sancte Spiritu* filled the church. The music that she had found pleasant but disappointing that Pentecost Sunday over a year before now filled her with joy. It was like the old maestro was giving her his very special, very personal blessing. Inwardly she had smiled when Otto had turned to her as the music concluded and in a soft whisper had asked her if she knew who had written this very moving piece. Outwardly though she shook her head, pleading ignorance of the choirmaster's choice of music. She refused to take any chances on this day of all days. Nothing could be permitted to in any way spoil this moment. Later, at the right moment she might reveal the maestro's role in their wedding, she thought to herself. But not today.

After the wedding, Anna and Otto travelled to Munich. At every opportunity during the very long trip Anna shared her new knowledge and appreciation of music and composition with Otto. By their arrival he had come to appreciate and to some extent to rely upon both her newly developed knowledge and her interest in his work. He even went so far as to acknowledge that whatever else Salieri might be, it seemed that he was a good teacher. Beethoven and Moscheles and now his very own Anna stood as testaments to Salieri's teaching acumen. Anna smilingly acknowledged Otto's comment but, true to her promise, she did not further discuss the old composer.

DAMAGING WINDS

To their mutual surprise and delight, Ignaz Moscheles was also in Munich, preparing for an October concert at Otto's theatre. He was their first dinner guest in their newly established residence. Anna insisted that her new cook try her hand at some Viennese pastries — to make Moscheles more at home Anna told Otto. To herself Anna admitted that her love of these delicacies was to prove to be another legacy of the Kapellmeister. During dinner Anna had to work hard to suppress her natural desire to tell Moscheles that she too had taken lessons from Salieri. In fact the name of the Kapellmeister never came up.

A few days after the Moscheles concert, the young Franz Liszt gave a concert at Otto's theatre. The audience was noticeable smaller for the 11 year old boy than it had been for Moscheles but the Bavarian ruler made an appearance. Anna, who had only seen Liszt briefly on his way to take a lesson from Salieri, was quite impressed. This time Anna had an opportunity to talk to the boy and his father alone without Otto present. She was so happy to be able to talk to them about Salieri's teaching. It felt so good to be able to openly share her affection for the old Italian. Young Franz was very appreciative of Salieri's help and his father even more so. The father could not say enough about the generosity of the Kapellmeister. Several times he repeated that he was so lucky to have been able to have his son trained by such a skilled, dedicated and generous teacher. Anna rewarded the warmth of their affection by sharing with them a few of the Kapellmeister's many anecdotes. For a time she considered having Otto hear this, but she then thought about how well their life together was going. She did not want to sour this marital bliss by a breach of their covenant of silence about Salieri.

Shortly thereafter word reached Otto that an ailing Weber was in need of his help with the premier of his new opera *Euryanthe*. He hurried back to Vienna to assist. Anna was disappointed both because he had to leave her just when things were going so well and because she was unable to join him. Nevertheless she knew that Otto owed a huge debt to Weber and had to do what he could to assist his mentor at this time when Weber's health was failing.

Anna feared loneliness but she was lucky to have made a new friend. Freda was also newly married to a musician. The two young women began to take long walks together each day. They shared their joys and their frustrations. One warm fall day a few weeks after Otto had returned to Vienna, they were walking in the English Garden. Suddenly, Freda blurt-

ed out, “Oh, I almost forgot to tell you. Fritz told me this morning that the old composer Salieri recently confessed to the poisoning of Mozart and then tried to commit suicide. Can you imagine that? Apparently he is in the hospital in total despair. So it seems that those rumours were true after all.” The words hit Anna like a hard slap on the face. The best she could utter was an “Oh, no.” Her mind was in a frenzy. Could she have been so wrong in her assessment of Salieri? Could her investigations have been so inadequate? Surely not. The doctor had insisted that Mozart had not been poisoned. But could he have been lying to protect a court official? What of the views of Beethoven and Schubert and Franz Xavier Mozart? Could all of these people be so wrong? Perhaps. After all none of them had been present at the relevant time. Had they not based their assessment of the Maestro on an older, more mature Salieri? She felt light headed and a knot formed in her stomach. Begging the indulgence of her friend, she hurried home.

When she arrived, the apartment was empty. Neither the butler nor the housekeeper was in. She sat alone in the empty apartment for some time tormented by the many questions she posed to herself. There seemed an endless number of questions but not a single answer. She determined that she must visit Vienna and learn the truth. She would tell Otto that she had grown lonely and wanted to be with him. She did not want to lie to Otto but neither did she want to tell him that she was undertaking a journey to visit a composer that Otto still believed to be at best a conniving Italian. Oh how she hoped with all of her heart that Otto and Weber had not been right all along. Surely the little man whom she had grown to love as a grandfather had not actually done these terrible things. Surely not. But...

Her doubts and unanswered questions kept her company as she packed her bags. When the housekeeper returned, Anna had her arrange for passage by post coach to Vienna. Anna did not look forward to the six day journey. She had travelled enough to know that it would be exhausting and unpleasant. The post coach would be the fastest means to get to Vienna but it meant travelling night and day with only brief stops every 40 kilometres to change horses and drivers and to permit the travellers to eat and stretch their legs. It would be an ordeal even if she was treated with kindness by the other passengers. She could not help but think of Mozart’s letter to his father on his much shorter trip from Salzburg to Munich for *Idomeneo* — “the carriage jolts your very soul out of your body and the

DAMAGING WINDS

seats — hard as a rock.” And Mozart had had an opera premier to look forward to and to lighten his mood. There was no such prospect for her. The travails of the journey would only darken her already sombre mood.

Regrettably her premonitions about the trip turned out to be only too true. What sleep she managed was fitful at best. Not only was her mind in a constant whirl of self-doubt and fear, but the unending jostling and the occasional jarring bump made deep, refreshing sleep impossible. Then as they had made their way to Vienna the weather had turned colder and the skies more threatening. And to make matters even worse, on the last stop before Vienna, an older, well dressed and very chatty couple had joined her in the coach. Despite all of the signals that she endeavoured to give them they had insisted on engaging Anna in conversation. The man explained that he was a merchant and that he and his wife were going to Vienna to visit their son and his new wife. The woman then asked Anna where she is going and why.

Reluctantly Anna replied, “To Vienna to visit a friend who is ill and to reunite with my husband.”

“Oh what does your husband do?” inquired the older woman.

“He is a composer — an assistant Kapellmeister at the Residenz theatre in Munich. At the moment, however, he is in Vienna helping his mentor, Herr Weber, with a new opera.”

“Oh we love the operas of Kapellmeister Weber,” the woman gushed. Then a thought occurred to her and in a conspiratorial tone she whispered, “And speaking of Vienna and opera did you hear the news that the old Italian composer Salieri has finally admitted his guilt in the death of Mozart?” When Anna looked suitably shocked, she added, “Yes, he tried to end his life — out of shame!” Then looking at her husband with pride, she noted, “Our son wrote to us to tell us all about it. He is very well connected in Vienna and he knows we adore the music of Mozart. But who does not?”

Anna hesitated. She was accustomed to the fact that few people spoke of Salieri in a positive tone. It seemed that everyone believed the rumours of his complicity in Mozart’s death. Now, however, the words of this insensitive and chatty couple were like salt rubbed into an open wound. Anna again took a book from her bag and starting to read. The woman was not ready to stop. She continued to talk. How inappropriate it was that the old Italian was still Imperial Kapellmeister when everyone knew

The Last Illness

he was a murderer. Finally Anna could endure no more and spoke up, "Have you ever met Kapellmeister Salieri?"

"Oh no" the husband replied. "We would not stoop so low."

Anna, now out to prove a point, persisted with her questions. "Have you heard any of his music?"

"Oh no," the wife replied.

"Is it played anymore? Surely not," the husband added.

"It is not very good we understand. Not like the joyous, wonderful music of Mozart or Herr Weber," the wife continued.

"It is so sad that Mozart was taken from us at such a young age and totally unjust that he was not made Kapellmeister instead of that horrible Italian," the husband chimed in.

Anna, despite her own nagging doubts, had had enough. "I do not believe that Kapellmeister Salieri's guilt has ever been proven. You must not believe everything that you hear." Turning to look at the husband, she added, "And yes his music is still played in Vienna in the Imperial Chapel and at state occasions. It is quite wonderful in its own way."

"Oh let us not waste our time talking of the old Italian schemer. Let's talk of Herr Weber's new opera. Have you heard it?"

The older couple seemed oblivious to the point that Anna had been making. And thus the remainder of the trip was spent discussing *Euryanthe* and the other operas of Weber. Anna participated but without any joy in the conversation and with increasing anxiety that such mindless, unthinking people might be proven right after all. She could not accept that she might have been fooled into believing Salieri innocent. Oh please God, she prayed, do not let people like this be proven correct!

It was with immense relief that Anna saw that the coach had entered the suburbs of Vienna. Just a few more kilometres of their stupidity, Anna thought to herself. Upon their arrival in central Vienna, the older couple said in almost perfect unison, "We do hope your friend recovers." The wife added, "We have been so unthinking. We did not ask. Is he also a musician?"

Anna replied simply, "Yes."

The wife continued, "Do we know him?"

Again Anna replied simply, "No you do not. Indeed, you do not."

The wife, seemingly unaware of Anna's discomfort at this line of questioning, carried on, "Oh perhaps we have heard of him."

DAMAGING WINDS

Anna, tired and piqued at the insensitive, uninformed couple, replied "The friend whom I am visiting is the Imperial Kapellmeister, Antonio Salieri."

"Oh my. Oh my...oh, my!"

Anna could not tell if their red faces and shocked expression, only partially hidden behind the hands that covered their mouths, were a reflection of their horror at having spent the trip with a friend of the murderer or their embarrassment at having shared their views of him. And to be honest she did not care.

She was tired and sore but she knew that she must uncover the truth and the best place to start was with Carpani. She had heard that he was now living at the Lichtenstein Palace. Before going to see Otto, she made her way there. On her arrival she was shown into a small sitting room where the old Italian poet sat by a roaring fire in a comfortable chair with a blanket over his legs. He smiled broadly on seeing her and apologized for not rising. Anna, however, did not return the smile. She was brusque in her response, informing Carpani of what she had heard. She insisted that she be told the truth. Had she somehow been misled as to what had happened between Mozart and Salieri?

The old poet was visibly shaken by her tone and her questioning. "Dear Anna, I am so happy to see you but I must strenuously object to your suggestion that somehow our researches were incomplete or that I withheld facts from you. I am offended that you would think anything like that was possible."

"I do not know what to think. How could the Maestro have confessed and tried to take his own life?"

"What makes you think that any such things took place? Because you heard some rumour? Have you learned nothing of the nature of rumours? There need be no basis in fact for them." Looking intently at her he asked, "Am I wrong? Have you been presented with any proof?" When she shook her head, he continued in a calmer, more friendly tone. "I can confirm that indeed Salieri is in the hospital. He has been in poor health and suffering fits of depression. But that unfortunately is only too common in elderly men burdened with failing health. During one such period he apparently tried to hurt himself. There is some doubt whether he did indeed try to take his own life but there is no doubt that he is in a bad way. That much is true but, I do not believe for a moment — not for one moment — that there has been any confession. How could there be? The evidence that we

The Last Illness

gathered proves that there can have been no poisoning — Mozart was not poisoned by anyone. As you know, he died of natural causes. You personally interviewed the doctor who treated Mozart. You also interviewed Mozart's own son as well as Beethoven and young Schubert. You read the letters from Kelly and Da Ponte. How can you have any doubts now?"

"I know that you are right and I am sorry if I have offended you. But I must know the truth. I thought that perhaps I could visit Kapellmeister Salieri."

"If you came here expecting to see the Maestro I am afraid that you have travelled all this way for nothing. No one is being permitted to visit him without the permission of the Imperial Court."

Anna was shaken by this news. It had never occurred to her that she might not be permitted to see old Salieri. She sat for a moment in silence, not knowing how to respond. She felt such frustration! To have come so far, to have endured the bumpy ride and the idiocy of the chatty couple! She looked at Carpani with a new found intensity and determination. "I simply cannot sit back and do nothing! There must be a way that I can see him. He must be in terrible spirits. Surely at a time like this he ought to be comforted and not locked away. Have you yourself visited him?"

Carpani sank further into his chair and seemed wracked with guilt. With a quivering voice and tears starting to well up in his eyes he responded. "I am very sorry to say that I have been unable to bring myself to visit my old friend. I just cannot do it. I cannot. I myself am not well. It would be too much. Too much. Such a visit would be more than my own health could take. No, I prefer to remember him as he was — full of energy and good spirits, always joking and enjoying life."

A puzzled look crossed Anna's face. "But if you have not tried to see him how do you know that he is not being permitted visitors?"

The old man responded with more confidence than before. "I know because I have worked to get permission for one of his students, Ignaz Moscheles, to visit the Maestro. It was no easy task. It was easier to arrange the meeting between Beethoven and Rossini! But I have finally succeeded and Moscheles has recently been granted permission. In fact he is visiting Salieri this very day."

On the mention of Moscheles' name, a broad smile broke out on Anna's face. "Oh, Señor Carpani, Herr Moscheles is well known to me. I first met him at a dinner with Herr Weber last year. Then just a few weeks ago my husband and I entertained him at our home in Munich. Do you

DAMAGING WINDS

think that I might accompany him? I could attend as his personal secretary. I would be no bother to him and it would mean so very much to me. I am sure that if he would agree and if you provide me with a letter of introduction I am sure that I could gain admittance."

The old poet smiled. This was the Anna that he had so come to admire as they had worked together. Someone who was both resourceful and persistent.

And so shortly thereafter Anna, her cloak wrapped tightly about her to ward off the cold autumn winds, was in a carriage accompanied by Ignaz Moscheles. The Carpani letter was clutched in her hand. Together they travelled to the General Hospital in the Alsergrund suburb where Salieri was a patient. As the carriage made its way, Moscheles turned to Anna and said, "Your presence here and your insistence on seeing the Kapellmeister surprises me. I recall that at our first meeting you and your fiancé were of a like mind with Weber that Salieri was a murderer. Even when we dined together recently you and your husband spoke of Weber and not at all of Salieri. What changed your mind?"

"Many things, Herr Moscheles. Not long after our that first dinner party I had reason to recall your words about Herr von Beethoven and Kapellmeister Salieri. You may remember that you mentioned having seen the 'student' von Beethoven's note on the Kapellmeister's hall table and your conclusion that the Kapellmeister might be able to teach you something. Well not long thereafter the Kapellmeister offered to teach me singing and composition. Given Herr Weber's views, I was reluctant to take him up on his offer. But I did so and, as I gather was the case with you. I learned that he was a wonderful teacher and a wise and helpful adviser." Moscheles nodded his assent but a worried look clouded Anna's face and she added, "But now I cannot help but wonder if I have been taken in by his charm and his diplomatic skills."

"I remember our dinner conversation of that night very well. You may recall that I made it quite clear that I did not believe Salieri a murderer and I remain of that view. I put no stock in the rumours circulating about his supposed confession to the poisoning of Mozart."

"I do so hope that you are right."

"It is odd that when I met your husband yesterday at the theatre he did not mention to me that you were here in Vienna or that you wished to see the Kapellmeister."

"Otto does not yet know that I am in Vienna. It is to be a surprise."

The Last Illness

“And he too has changed his view of the Kapellmeister?”

“No, I regret that he has not yet seen the light. We have agreed not to discuss the Kapellmeister.”

“Oh, that must be awkward.”

“Not as awkward or unpleasant as the alternative. Last year I tried winning over Otto, and Herr Weber as well, with no success whatsoever.”

“You tried to convince Carl that Salieri did not murder Mozart?”

“More than that I am afraid. I tried to bring them together to see if they might be able to be friends or at least civil to each other. I invited them to a dinner party at my uncle’s rooms.”

“You invited Carl and the Kapellmeister to the same party? And did each know the other would be there?”

“No.”

“Another surprise?”

“Well yes but I had a plan. I hoped to convince Otto first and then to have him talk to Herr Weber before the Kapellmeister arrived. Unfortunately the timing was off and it did not work.”

“Well, I for one applaud your good intentions and your courage. I have long tried to convince Carl to meet the Kapellmeister and resolve their differences. I am sorry that it did not work out.”

“Since that time Otto and I have not discussed Kapellmeister Salieri. For that reason I would greatly appreciate it if you would not mention our visit today to him.”

“Your secret is safe with me. It shall be your reward for trying to bring those two together.”

Just at this point their carriage pulled up at the doors of the massive, grey general hospital. When Moscheles opened the carriage door to let Anna descend to the pavement at the foot of the hospital steps a gust of chilling autumn air hit her. She shuddered and pulled her cloak about her and started with Moscheles up the steps. He begged Anna’s indulgence and went to talk to the hospital authorities leaving her in the Hospital lobby. As she waited she was approached by a man dressed as a hospital attendant. He explained that he had overheard her talking with Moscheles about the old composer. He introduced himself as Giorgio Rosenberg, one of Salieri’s hospital attendants. As it happened Giorgio was just arriving to replace Amadeo Porsche, Salieri’s other attendant. While Moscheles was off explaining Anna’s presence, using Carpani’s letter and his own persuasive skills to gain her admission, Anna took the opportunity

to talk with Giorgio. A pleasant chat with an attractive young woman was an agreeable diversion from his usual duties and it took no coaxing to get Giorgio to speak to her. He explained that either he or Amadeo had been with Maestro Salieri at all times. When one was away the other was always in attendance. He asserted that Salieri had made no mention of Mozart whatsoever and certainly Salieri had never confessed to any poisoning. He and Amadeo had discussed this when the rumours had begun. They knew that there was no basis for this latest rumour — neither had heard any such thing. "How do these rumours start? he asked.

"Heaven only knows," Anna responded. "As you may be aware Herr Carpani, the Imperial Court Poet, has been looking into the rumours that are circulating about the Kapellmeister. Would you be willing to give him a sworn statement from both of you? I shall bring it to Herr Carpani in the hope that he might publish a defence of the Kapellmeister."

"Yes. I am happy to do so and I am sure that Amadeo would also agree. We have become quite attached to the old man. Oh, sorry, Herr Imperial Kapellmeister Salieri. I did not mean to be so informal and familiar."

Anna merely smiled, happy to realize that the old composer had not lost his charm. At this point, Moscheles reappeared, a smile on his face. "We are both to be admitted," he shared with Anna.

But the moment was no longer a happy one when they entered the room where Salieri lay in bed. It was Spartan and utilitarian to a fault. There was none of the cosiness of Salieri's parlour. But it was not the lack of furnishings that struck Anna the hardest. The sight of Salieri, pale, emaciated, fragile and with a large bandage on his neck, startled her and brought a torrent of tears to her cheeks. She saw the same look of shock on Moscheles face.

It was Moscheles whom Salieri first noticed. He beckoned him to come closer. The fragile old man repeated over and over how happy he was to see Moscheles and how much he appreciated the visit. He then spoke to Moscheles in broken sentences of his approaching death. Only at this point did Salieri notice Anna. Although her face was streaked with tears, he smiled when he saw her and with what little strength he could muster propped himself up and reached out to her.

"Mia carissima Anna. You have come to see your old teacher. How wonderful. My own angel. to prepare me for death."

"Do not speak of death, Maestro."

"But I am dying."

The Last Illness

“Hush. I am sure you will be better soon and have many more happy days.”

“No, no. This is the end. But I am ready.”

Taking her hand in his, he said with a quivering voice, “Sing for me. Please, please.”

Anna thought for a moment. Could she compose herself enough to sing? Would the words find their way out of her tightened throat? Even if they could, what could she sing?

Salieri, seeing her hesitation, pleaded with her. “Please, please” he repeated.

Finally, she took several deep, calming breaths and began to sing the song that they had written together at her first lesson.

“I think of you when through the grove
the nightingales’ harmonious song echoes,
When do you think of me?

“I think of you in the twilight
Of evening at the shady spring!
Where do you think of me?

“I think of you with sweet pain
With anxious longing with burning tears!
How do you think of me?

Oh think of me until we meet
In a better world;”

As she struggled to continue, tears began again to pour down her cheeks. It took every ounce of her strength to get the final words out.

.... However distant you are
I shall think only of you.”

His voice thick with emotion, the old man said, “Bellissima! Brava! You have been practising.” Grasping her hand, he pulled her closer to him. “This is my last illness. I know that. As God is my witness, I can in all good faith swear that there is no truth to the absurd rumour; you know — I’m supposed to have poisoned Mozart. But no, it’s spite, nothing but spite; tell the world, mia cara Anna, that old Salieri, in full knowledge that he is going to die soon, told you that. Promise me.”

DAMAGING WINDS

Her throat seemed to have tightened so much that it was painful and difficult to speak, but Anna managed to squeak out the words, "Maestro, I shall try." She bent down and kissed him on the forehead, leaving several of her tears behind.

Old Salieri smiled and, in a voice deep with emotion, asked, "Might you call me Papa?"

"Yes, mio caro Papa."

As they prepared to go, the old man began to cry and say softly "I have been an honest man...an artist... who spent my few free hours doing good to my neighbour...without any ulterior motives." When Anna and Moscheles both began to cry, he repeated again and again, "I have. I really have."

With tears still running down her cheeks Anna accompanied Moscheles down the steps of the hospital to their waiting carriage. This time the cold wind went unnoticed. Anna's thoughts were elsewhere. She sobbed to herself, "Oh, Maestro, would that I could share your message with the world but I know they will not listen. They simply will not listen."

Epilogue

“**H**ERR MICHOTTE, I AM SO very happy that you sought me out. What a joy it has been to have you share with me the conversation between Wagner and Rossini. It is most certainly publishable. It will be of great interest to the musical community. To me it is fascinating. How utterly surprising that at least part of it related to Salieri. I would never have thought it. Never. Oh, it has brought back so many memories. I have often thought that I was incredibly lucky to have been in Vienna in the summer of 1822. It was, as I am sure you realize, a very special time in the history of music, a sort of turning point. Salieri and Carpani, whom I came to know so well, had such strong ties to the previous era. But in Vienna that summer while they talked to me of the past, of Gluck and Mozart and Haydn, they dealt on a daily basis with the changing world of music. They sang and laughed with Rossini and assisted him to meet the man who changed music forever, the inimical Beethoven. They also helped me meet the little giant of music, Franz Schubert. As if that was not enough also in Vienna that summer was Carl Maria von Weber, the man who would take German music into the new Romantic era and who would serve as a role model for Richard Wagner.”

“You were indeed lucky to have been there and to have interacted with these musical giants, just as I was so fortunate to have been in Paris when Rossini and Wagner met. Just as I was so very, very fortunate to have met you today. You have put the few remarks that Rossini shared with Wagner into context and now I know so much more of Salieri.”

“The composer behind the great composers.”

“So it seems.”

“You know I have never visited the old composer’s grave. Our conversation today has convinced me that I must do so. I learned of Salieri’s

DAMAGING WINDS

death through the news accounts. He lived about 18 months after my visit to see him with Moscheles, dying on May 7, 1825. I did not attend his funeral although I read that many of the composers then in Vienna did so. I understand that it was held in the Minorite Church and that his Piccolo Requiem was performed at the service for the first time." She could not help but smile as she recalled Salieri's explanation about the naming of the little requiem for his littlest self. "His death initiated a very sad time for me and for German music. As you may know, his death in 1825 was followed in short order by the tragic deaths of Weber in June, 1826, Beethoven in March, 1827 and the young Schubert in November 1828. At least Salieri lived to the age of 75. Not so the others whose flames were snuffed out far too early."

As soon as she could arrange it, Anna set off to visit Vienna to see Salieri's grave. She went alone, travelling by train. What an improvement over the old post coaches, she thought to herself. The journey gave Anna much time to reflect on her life. There had been many happy moments — the birth of her three children (two boys and a girl), the fact that all three had survived (thank God), her successful career as a music critic, the performance of the one act singspiel that she and Otto had written. Yes, there had been much happiness. She thanked old Salieri for at least some of her marital joy. She had often acted on his sage advice and had become quite adept at getting her way without undue confrontation with Otto, who had proved to be less understanding and sympathetic to her views and wishes that she had expected. And there had been other disappointments — Otto's compositions had never been as well received as they both had hoped. She wondered if things had gone better at the disastrous dinner party if Otto's career would have been more successful. Influence was so important to advancement. Imagine if he had had the support of both Weber and Salieri and if both had lived longer. Instead he had had the benefit of neither. Their position and influence had been denied him. Weber had never been as warm to Otto and her after that evening. He left for London shortly after her unplanned visit to Vienna and died prematurely. And old Salieri had been a mere shadow of his former self in the last year of his life. But she refused to become morose or to blame anyone. Overall she had had a good life. Otto may not have been the musical success that they had both expected but neither had he been a failure. He had worked in several important theatres over the years and they had met and worked with some of the greats of music. Moscheles had introduced them

Epilogue

to his student and friend, Felix Mendelssohn, and to the Schumanns. She liked to think that she had played a part in helping her uncle attract first Mendelssohn and later Moscheles and the Schumanns to Leipzig. Yes that had been special. And she had come to know Liszt quite well over the years and his rebel countess Marie d'Agoult. They had in fact become good friends and through Liszt they had met Chopin. What talent! But the premature deaths of Mendelssohn, Robert Schumann and Chopin had been such a shock. Yet, overall it had been a good life.

But she had long ago given up on trying to change Otto's mind on Salieri himself. Her husband had gone to his grave as unenlightened about the old maestro as he had been decades before in Vienna.

When she arrived in Vienna she quickly got herself settled and set out immediately to find the grave. How silly, she thought, that there should be any sense of urgency. After all it had been decades since the old composer had died. And yet she felt driven, as if she had to make up for lost time. When she found the grave she immediately noticed that there was no overarching tree. The old maestro had been denied his wish to be buried under one of his favourite trees. How sad, she thought. But his monument itself seemed somehow quite appropriate. It consisted of a large rough hewn rock out of which rose a moderately tall obelisk topped by a simple cross. It brought to mind his rocky youth that had nevertheless proved a suitable foundation for his rise to fame. The monument's simplicity reminded her of Salieri's belief that at times less is more. She noted that Joseph Weigl's German poem, the poem that Carpani had read to her after her disastrous first interview, had in fact been inscribed on the monument. The words of Salieri's pupil and long time assistant had sounded so hollow and inappropriate to her for a person thought a murderer. Now it struck her as ironic:

Rest in peace! Uncovered by dust
Eternity shall bloom for you.
Rest in peace! In eternal harmonies
Your spirit now is dissolved

He expressed himself in enchanting notes
Now he is floating to everlasting beauty.

Regrettably she realized that Salieri's works were gathering much dust and that earthly peace and harmony had not yet bloomed for the old com-

DAMAGING WINDS

poser. His operas were never performed anymore but the rumours of his jealousy inspired enmity towards Mozart, as unfounded as they may have been, grew and prospered. By now they had spread throughout Europe. She had learned that in the fall of 1830, Aleksandra Sergeyevich Pushkin, a Russian poet, had written a poem entitled *Mozart and Salieri* that cast Mozart in the role of the brilliant composer and Salieri in the role of the envious, second rate composer driven to murder by his jealousy. Had the Russian ever met Salieri or even heard his music? She doubted it. He was seemingly inspired solely by the rumours circulating about Salieri and by some equally ill-informed articles that appeared in music journals. She had also learned that two years later the noted German composer Gustav Albert Lortzing had written a one act German singspiel entitled *Scenes from Mozart's Life*. The German too had cast Salieri as the scheming arch-rival of Mozart, although at least he did not allege murder. Perhaps unfairly she blamed old Carpani. They had gathered much evidence. He had promised it would be put to good use. Why, she asked herself, had he chosen to publish his defence of Salieri in an Italian journal. How could he have expected this to have any effect in Germany?

She turned to Salieri's monument. I know that I have failed you Maestro. Can you ever forgive me? She remembered her promise to him on his death bed to tell the world of his innocence. The feeling of guilt gripped her, twisting her stomach into knots and making her ill.

Then suddenly a man's voice spoke to her in an accented German. "I am surprised to see anyone visiting the Maestro's grave. I was becoming convinced that I was the only one who cared about him."

"No, he is very much on my mind and in my heart," she assured the stranger.

"I am very pleased to hear it. I have become fond of the little, dark Italian although I only know him through Mosel's biography."

"I prepared the notes upon which that biography was based," said Anna proudly. She smiled to herself as she remembered her initial reaction to providing such assistance to Mosel.

"Oh, this is my lucky day. Please let me properly introduce myself. I am Alexander Wheelock Thayer. As you may be able to tell from my accent, I am an American but I am living now in Europe. I am researching the life of Beethoven, spending time here as well as in Bonn and Berlin. I intend to write the definitive Beethoven biography."

Epilogue

“An admirable goal and that work brought you into contact with Salieri?”

“Yes, that is correct. Until I came across Mosel’s biography I had no idea how important and influential Salieri once was.”

“Beethoven once told me that Salieri was the Pope of Music.”

“Really? All one hears of him these days are the rumours of his conspiracy against Mozart.”

“Yes, I know that only too well. I am Anna Klempner although you may know me as A. Rochlitz.”

“The music critic? Oh, this truly is my lucky day. Perhaps we might have tea this afternoon and you could tell me what Salieri was really like.”

“Nothing would make me happier provided that you promise to tell the world.”

“I am only too pleased to agree. I envisage a series of articles that tell his story. As I mentioned I confess to a sort of liking for the little, dark, miserly, quaint, odd, rather vain (I judge) and envious Italian.”

“Have you ever thought that it might have been Mozart who was envious of Salieri?”

Historical Note

THE 1979 PLAY *AMADEUS* BY Peter Schaffer begins with the Venticelli, the little winds: “purveyors of fact, rumor and gossip”. These little winds did much damage. It is likely that much of what you know of Antonio Salieri comes from the movie *Amadeus* or from seeing the play *Amadeus* upon which it was based. As a result you may have a conception of Salieri as a second rate composer who gained favour with the tin-eared Emperor Joseph II and who, out of envy for the talents of Mozart, conspired against him. The reality was quite different.

In 1863–4, Alexander Wheelock Thayer did in fact write a series of articles about Salieri in which he assessed the rumours about Salieri’s mistreatment of Mozart and dismissed them as unfounded. He expressed a fondness for the little, dark Italian. It was stumbling upon Theodore Albrecht’s 1989 edition of Thayer’s articles published as *Salieri Rival of Mozart* in a used book store that started me on the road to writing this novel. Albrecht added a series of appendices to Thayer’s account. These were reminiscences of Salieri by contemporaries to which Thayer referred his readers. One of the appendices that Albrecht added was an article by Friedrich Rochlitz based upon an interview with Salieri in Vienna in the summer of 1822. You see Rochlitz did in fact attend mass at the Hofkapelle and two days later Salieri did arrive at his rooms as an unexpected visitor. Rochlitz wrote of the visit and Salieri’s views on Mozart, Haydn, Gluck and others. I was amazed that the actual Rochlitz interview and the fictional interview of Salieri by the visiting priest in the movie *Amadeus* were so close in time. Based on the fact that Salieri was portrayed in a mental institution after having attempted to cut his throat, the fictional *Amadeus* interview would have taken place in late 1823 or early 1824. The real life interview with Salieri took place in May, 1822. But although the dates of

Historical Note

the two interviews were close in time much else differed. The picture that Rochlitz painted was such a contrast to the movie portrayal. Unlike the priest in *Amadeus*, Rochlitz, the real life interviewer, knew Salieri and his work well. He was the chief music critic of the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*. Rochlitz described Salieri as “a kind, cheerfully comprehensible, highly agreeable man”, “friendly, obliging, benevolent, full of the joy of life, witty, inexhaustible in anecdote and quotation”. I chose to recreate Rochlitz’s interviews with Salieri so that you could listen in as the aging composer and the music critic talked about the greats of classical music and opera and about Salieri’s life in Vienna and elsewhere. In putting words in Salieri’s mouth I drew wherever possible on the article Rochlitz published about the interviews, on Salieri’s memoirs recorded by his biographer Mosel and on letters that Salieri wrote. Salieri’s statement at the end that he was an honest man who tried to do good for others was taking from a letter that Salieri wrote to Prince (Paul) Anton Esterhazy in August 1791. In some cases, I have taken words written about Salieri by people like the singer Michael Kelly or the composers and Salieri students Franz Schubert, Joseph Eybler and Anselm Huttenbrenner and adapted those words so that they might come from Salieri’s mouth. The Moscheles visit to the dying Salieri as well as the letters from Kelly and Da Ponte to Anna and the letter by Berlioz to Salieri were all derived from the memoirs of these people. In real life Salieri never got to know that Da Ponte wished to be reconciled with him, not did he learn of the impact that his Parisian opera had on Berlioz. The fan letter by Hérold to Salieri, however, appears in the novel as actually written.

The fact is that most of what you have just read is true or at least based on actual people and events. Rossini did meet Wagner in Paris and Michotte did in fact take notes which he later published. The discussion between Rossini and Wagner that begins the book is drawn from that published account. They did discuss the summer of 1822, Weber, Beethoven and Salieri. The summer of 1822 was indeed a special time in Vienna. Rossini and his new bride were there for a Rossini festival. It was Michotte who tells us that they sang canons with Salieri and that Salieri, through Carpani, did introduce Rossini to Beethoven. Weber, who was there for the staging of his *Der Freischütz* opera, did believe Salieri a scheming Italian and refuse to associate with him. His friends tried to reconcile him with Salieri to no avail. Beethoven’s conversation books do suggest that he also heard the rumours about Salieri and was upset by

DAMAGING WINDS

them. An eleven year old Liszt was there studying with Salieri and he and Moscheles did perform in Munich in the fall of 1823. And Moscheles did visit the dying Salieri.

I did alter history to some limited extent for dramatic effect. Moscheles, for example, was not in Vienna that summer. He was touring. Young Mozart was also not there although he had visited Beethoven and Salieri in 1820.

Anna, the thread that sews all of these people and events together, is a figment of my imagination as are Otto and Felix. Creating Anna, giving her a life story and a personality very much her own was one of the challenges and the joys of writing this novel. As an older man writing about a young girl, I felt especially challenged. I appreciated the comments and helpful suggestions of some early female readers like Claudia Morrow and later by my editor Sarah Kidd.

Anna's co-investigator Giuseppe Carpani was a real life defender of Salieri, publishing in September 1824 a *Letter in Defence of Salieri Regarding the Accusations of His Having Poisoned Mozart*. It appeared in *Biblioteca Italiana*, an Italian journal. Some of the evidence that I have Anna discover such as the doctor's opinion of the cause of Mozart's death and the testimony of Salieri's hospital attendants was drawn from Carpani's defence. Carpani is a fascinating character in his own right. A spy for the Austrian secret police during the Congress of Vienna, he was the Imperial Court Poet and a friend of and one of the first biographers of both Haydn and Rossini.

The suggestion that Salieri conspired against Mozart did not begin with the movie *Amadeus* or even with Peter Schaffer's play. Already in the early 19th century it was rumoured that Salieri had led an Italian faction that worked against Mozart and may even have poisoned him. These rumours were heard in 1803 by Weber who believed them. They were used by Alexander Pushkin as the basis for his play *Mozart and Salieri* published in 1830, just 5 years after Salieri's death. As best we can tell, Pushkin had never seen a Salieri opera. They are also found in the 1832 German singspiel, *Szenen aus Mozarts Leben* (Scenes from Mozart's Life) written by Lortzing. While Lortzing's work was soon forgotten, Pushkin's work was adapted by Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov into the one act opera *Mozart and Salieri* in 1898. These works in turn inspired Schaffer.

The Rochlitz interviews and the investigations of Anna and Carpani let us look beyond the rumours at both the professional and personal life

Historical Note

of Salieri. It should be clear to the reader that Salieri literally lived his life at the centre of classical music and experienced first hand most of the major social trends of the era.

As the movie *Amadeus* correctly pointed out, Salieri wrote more than forty operas. Many were immensely popular and performed throughout Europe. It was Salieri, for example, who was chosen to write an opera, *Europa riconosciuta*, to open the most famous opera house in Europe — La Scala in Milan in 1778. Today critics talk of the sophistication, characterization and realism that Mozart and his librettist, Lorenzo Da Ponte, brought to comic opera. Both men worked closely with Salieri and both were influenced by and in turn influenced him. It was Salieri who convinced the Emperor Joseph II to make Da Ponte the court poet and who worked with Da Ponte on his very first libretto, earning in the process Da Ponte's friendship and respect. But what of the immortal Mozart? Salieri and Mozart were at different times competitors, collaborators and ultimately perhaps even friends. As I hope this book has helped show it was Mozart who competed for people's attention with the better established Salieri. Wanting to learn everything he could about Italian opera, he studied Salieri's operas. The two not only collaborated on a tribute piece to celebrate the recovery of Nancy Storace (Salieri's Ofelia in *La Grotta di Trofonio*) but they were required to work together in the staging of Mozart's Italian operas in Vienna, where Salieri was the director of the Italian opera. And there is some evidence to suggest that by the end of Mozart's short life, they had become friends. We know from Mozart's own pen that Salieri attended *The Magic Flute* as Mozart's guest.

Mozart must have had at least some respect for Salieri's work. Again as the movie *Amadeus* noted, Mozart wrote six variations on a theme from Salieri's dance scene in *La fiera de Venezia* (K180/173c). When Mozart is first introduced to Salieri in the movie, he says "I know your work well Signor. Do you know I actually composed some variations on a melody of yours...mio caro adone...a funny little tune but it yielded some good things". The movie does not note that Mozart later patterned his dance scene in *Don Giovanni* after Salieri's or that his overture for *The Marriage of Figaro* was effectively a variation on Salieri's overture for *Der Rauchfangkehrer*.

What history of classical music does not stress the importance of Haydn, Beethoven and Schubert in its development? Again Salieri has a role or a series of roles to play in the lives of these giants of classical music.

DAMAGING WINDS

As the noted music critic, Franz Endler, says in his *Vienna, A Guide to its Music and Musicians*, Salieri was “the composer behind the great composers” — a line that I liked so much that I put it into Anna’s mouth. Haydn staged several of Salieri’s operas at the Esterhazy court theatre and chose Salieri to play the pianoforte under his direction for the first performance of *The Creation* oratorio. Years later Salieri conducted a performance of that work to celebrate Haydn’s career with both Haydn and Beethoven in attendance. Beethoven and Schubert? They were both students of Salieri. Salieri in fact was Imperial Court Composer and Kapellmeister in Vienna for so many years that Beethoven referred to him as the Pope of Music. Beethoven adapted passages from Salieri works for at least one of his early works — the rondo of his piano concerto in C Major Opus 15 was derived from Salieri’s overture to *Les Danaïdes*. Beethoven also wrote a set of piano variations on a Salieri theme from the opera *Falstaff* (WoO 73) and dedicated three sonatas for piano and violin to him (Op. 12), one of the very few times Beethoven did so for one of his teachers. On his death, Beethoven was found to have kept a published score of Salieri’s opera *Les Danaïdes* among his valued possessions and to have hand copied numerous passages from it for study. Schubert, who thought of Salieri as the music community’s universal grandfather, dedicated a set of Goethe songs to him and wrote a musical tribute to him.

If we turn to the social and political history of the time, we find the same pattern. Once more Salieri is at the centre of key events, well known to many of the key personalities of the age and involved with key trends. This was, of course, the age of the Enlightenment. Historians talk of the reforms of the enlightened despots like Joseph II, who was, of course, Salieri’s special patron. Historians also talk of the excesses of the Ancien Régime in France as exemplified to some extent by Marie Antoinette and Versailles. Salieri was no stranger to Versailles, visiting it a number of times to meet with Marie Antoinette, with whom he sang duets, some of the very same music that Beethoven would later study. Salieri even did a special presentation of his opera *Les Danaïdes* for Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette, to whom he dedicated the work. Historians also talk of the plays of Beaumarchais, *The Marriage of Figaro* and *The Barber of Seville*, as reflections of a changing attitude that would eventually challenge the Ancien Régime and spur the French Revolution. Ironically it was Salieri who provided Beaumarchais with a copy of Mozart’s *Marriage of Figaro*. Salieri’s own French operas were known to and much liked by Beaumar-

Historical Note

chais. In fact, Salieri worked with Beaumarchais on an opera, *Tarare*, that anticipated the French Revolution. This was also the age of the Napoleonic Wars and the Congress of Vienna. Salieri was in Vienna with Haydn and Beethoven when Napoleon's forces bombarded and occupied that city. When Wellington defeated Napoleon's Spanish army at Vittoria, Beethoven wrote a symphonic tribute entitled *Wellington's Victory*. At the premier of this work, Salieri directed the drums and cannons that formed the percussion section. Later he was the musical co-ordinator for much of the entertainment for the Congress of Vienna where he led a choir of 500 supported by 100 pianists in a Te Deum in honour of such figures as the Russian Emperor and the diplomats Metternich and Castlereagh. At the request of the famed French diplomat, Talleyrand, Salieri conducted a special tribute and mass at the Congress to honour the memory of the beheaded Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. In 1816, on the 50th anniversary of Salieri's arrival in Vienna, a day of celebrations was held in his honour. The Austrian Emperor gave him a special medal of honour and granted him permission to accept the Legion of Honour from the King of France.

All of this from the orphaned son of a bankrupt merchant in Legnago Italy. How can we not be fascinated with someone who rose from these humble beginnings to play music for and with Haydn and Rossini, to collaborate with Mozart and Lorenzo Da Ponte and to teach Beethoven, Schubert and even young Franz Liszt?

Such was the life of Antonio Salieri. Forget what you saw on stage in Schaffer's *Amadeus* or in the movie adaptation by Milos Forman — the facts of Salieri's life are so much more interesting. Salieri was quite simply one of the most important composers and teachers of his era. He truly lived at the very centre of classical music.

So why is it that these composers and the public took Salieri seriously and today we know so little of his work? There are many reasons. First, Salieri's music went out of fashion. With a few exceptions it did not appeal to the 19th century Romantic sensibilities. This was not unusual. Remember that Bach and Schubert were almost ignored until they were revived through the efforts of others. Until recently there has been no such concerted effort to call attention to the works of Salieri. Second, Salieri was the victim of rising German nationalism. Salieri, an Italian by birth, never really mastered German. French was the language of the court and Italian largely the language of opera. He wrote only one quasi German singspiel *Der Rauchfangkehrer* and in that work he cleverly worked with the libret-

tist to make it an opera about an Italian chimney sweep who speaks mangled German but pretends to be an opera composer. Although there are some German arias there are several Italian ones as well. How was Salieri, an Italian, to fare in 19th Century Austria when German culture was being promoted? He was seen as an interloper who frustrated the career of the true German hero of operatic composition — Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. And the rumours that Salieri led a cabal of Italians in the Imperial Court to keep Mozart's work off the stage were the third reason why Salieri's work was ignored or ridiculed. Some went so far as to say that Salieri murdered their hero Mozart. There seems little doubt that it was the letters of Wolfgang and Leopold Mozart that inspired the rumours. The statements that Salieri led an Italian cabal out to block Mozart's career were taken at face value. Early Mozart scholars like Otto Jahn were able to disregard the evidence of Salieri's personality by resorting to jealousy as the motive behind Salieri's actions. Jahn stated "Salieri is described as a good-natured, kindly man, blameless and amiable in private life and justly honoured with a reputation for noble and benevolent acts; but these good qualities could not stand the trial when they came into conflict with jealousy for [Mozart's] fame and position as an artist." As already noted, this view of Salieri was rendered into the play *Mozart and Salieri* by Pushkin and then into an opera by Rimsky-Korsakov. Peter Schaffer revived it in the play *Amadeus*, which ironically brought Salieri's works to the attention of the public and performers. There is a fourth reason why we do not fully appreciate Salieri. It is because Salieri wrote operas and except for a short period early in his career did not write much instrumental music. Early on he decided that his strength lay in writing for the voice. But staging operas today is an expensive proposition and not likely to be done unless the opera company can expect to fill the seats. One more performance of Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro* is more likely to be staged than the largely unknown work of a person who is considered, rightly or wrongly, as a second rate composer. And thus there is little basis for the average opera fan to judge remarks like the one found in *Opera for Dummies*. "Salieri was not a bad composer. In fact he was a very good one. But he wasn't one of the world's great composers because his work wasn't original. What he wrote sounded just like what everyone else was composing at the time." The fact that Salieri was innovative and inspired Mozart, Rossini and even Beethoven cannot be appreciated by the average fan because Salieri's works are much less accessible. The same can be said of the remark in *The*

Historical Note

Rough Guide to Opera. “Though Salieri is an interesting historical figure (he taught Schubert and Liszt, as well as Beethoven) only a couple of his operas justify a trip to the CD store.” The ones that they recommend are *Les Danaïdes* and *Falstaff* and I would second that recommendation but Christophe Rousset’s production of *La Grotta di Trofonio* is better than either and many other Salieri operas would be equally enjoyable if only there was a first class production done of them.

But thankfully not everyone has been deterred. I want to acknowledge the important role of academics like Dorothea Link, Jane Schatkin Hettrick and John A. Rice and performers like Cecilia Bartoli, Christophe Rousset, Diana Damrau and Thomas Fey who opened my mind and ears to the largely ignored works of 18th century composers like Salieri. John A. Rice has written the definitive study of Salieri’s operas entitled *Antonio Salieri and the Viennese Opera*. Much of what I set out in the novel you have just read began with ideas planted in my head by Rice’s work. Jane Schatkin Hettrick has studied and published editions of Salieri’s masses and other sacred works. Dorothea Link, ironically, was someone to whom I taught bridge when we were both in high school in Kitchener-Waterloo. We each ended up doing a doctorate at the University of Toronto. I arrived first, studying the medieval papacy and then went to law school. It was while I was studying law that she studied music, wrote a dissertation entitled “*The Da Ponte Operas of Vicente Martín y Soler*”. Ultimately she became a professor of musicology at the University of Georgia. She is an expert on the Viennese operas of the late 18th century especially those of Martin y Soler and Salieri. Her study of the arias sung by the leading singers at the court of Joseph II led to the CD “*Divas of Mozart’s Day*”, one of the works that convinced me of the merits of Salieri as an opera composer. She also worked with Christophe Rousset on his superb productions of Martin y Soler’s *La Capricciosa Corretta* as well as Salieri’s *La Grotta de Trofonio*, the later of which is my favourite Salieri opera. Rousset is a world class harpsichordist who heads Les Talens Lyriques in Paris. He specializes in “filling in the blanks” between the well known operas of Monteverdi, Handel and Mozart. Cecilia Bartoli needs no introduction to any opera lovers. She is one of world’s leading mezzo sopranos. She has made a huge contribution to our knowledge of 18th century opera doing CDs and DVDs of little known arias of Vivaldi, Haydn, Gluck and Salieri to name but a few. Her *Salieri Album* has done more for the resurgence of interest in Salieri than any other classical CD. Coming a close second is

DAMAGING WINDS

the debut album by Diana Damrau, a rising star in opera, which features seven Salieri arias. As she explains in the liner notes “Salieri, the man and his music, [are] now very much part of me.” . In 1998, her third year on stage, she stared in the premier of Salieri’s *Cublai, gran kan de Tartari* in Wurzburg. This opera had never been performed in Salieri’s lifetime. Written in 1786–8 as a parody of the court of Catherine the Great, it was suppressed by Joseph II who needed Russia as an ally. In 2004, Damrau was chosen by Riccardo Muti to sing in Salieri’s *Europa riconosciuta*. Written for the opening of Milan’s La Scala in 1778, it was revived for the re-opening. Muti had to find two lead sopranos, each capable of a powerful coloratura aria. Damrau sang Europa and Desiree Rancatore sang Semele. Meanwhile Thomas Fey, founder and music director of the Mannheim Mozart Orchestra, has set out to record all of Salieri’s overtures and ballet music.

I hope that you enjoy coming to know Antonio Salieri as much as I have enjoyed bringing him to life in this book.

By the way, the lines of music used as section dividers are taken from Salieri’s overture to *Les Danaïdes*, an opera influenced by Gluck, admired by Beaumarchais, sung by Marie Antoinette and studied by Beethoven and which in turn influenced Berlioz.

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Brief Biographies

The Austrian Imperial Family

Maria Theresia (1717–1780), Empress of the Holy Roman Empire, Archduchess of Austria and Queen of Hungary and Bohemia. When her father died without a male heir, many rulers in Europe thought that they could seize pieces of the Hapsburg Empire. But she proved to be a strong-willed, determined and effective ruler. In the War of the Austrian Succession (1741–8) she successfully retained most of the Hapsburg lands. Being a woman she could not be elected Holy Roman Emperor but she managed to get her husband Francis Stephen elected in 1745. She was the mother of Joseph II, who became Holy Roman Emperor in 1766 on the death of her husband. Her other children included Marie Antoinette and Leopold II. Her many children sat on many of the thrones of Europe.

Joseph II (1717–1780), Holy Roman Emperor, Archduke of Austria and King of Hungary and Bohemia. He was an enlightened reformer which brought him into conflict with the Pope. His patronage of Salieri was crucial to Salieri's early success.

Marie Antoinette (1755–1793), Queen of France. She had the misfortune to be used as a pawn in her mother's game to build an alliance with long-time enemy, France. As an Austrian she was always suspect in France which fostered many rumours about her both before and at the time of the French Revolution. She was a talented amateur musician. She was a pupil of Gluck and a patron of Salieri.

Francis or Franz II of the Holy Roman Empire and I of Austria (1768–1835), Holy Roman Emperor and King of Hungary and Bohemia. Under pressure from Napoleon he resigned the title of Holy Roman Emperor in 1805. He nevertheless remained an Emperor because Franz had been

Brief Biographies

clever enough to name himself Emperor of Austria in 1804. He was the grandson of Maria Therese and the son of Leopold II who had become emperor when his brother Joseph II died in 1790 without an heir.

François Charles Joseph Bonaparte or Napoleon II (1811–1832), the son of Napoleon and his second, Austrian wife, Marie Louise. His father gave him the title King of Rome (the title for the next Holy Roman Emperor). He was put under protective custody at Schönbrunn on the fall of his father. In 1818 his grandfather the Emperor Francis gave him the title Duke of the Reichstadt.

Schwarzenberg, Joseph Johann Nepomuk (1769–1833) a prince who maintained his own orchestra and sponsored chamber music and oratorios in his palace on New Market in Vienna. This was where Haydn's Creation was first performed in 1798.

Composers and Poets

Albrechtsberger, Johann Georg (1736–1809) an organist, composer and teacher who was noted for his mastery of counterpoint. In 1772 he was appointed organist to the court of Vienna, and in 1792 Kapellmeister of St. Stephen's Cathedral. His students included Johann Nepomuk Hummel, Ignaz Moscheles, Josef Weigl and Beethoven, all of whom also studied with Salieri.

Auenburger, Leopold von the man who wrote the libretto for Salieri's German opera, *Der Rauchfangkehrer*. His daughters Katherina and Marianna studied with Salieri.

Beaumarchais, Pierre-Augustin (1732–1799) a many-faceted Frenchman, writer, playwright, merchant, watchmaker, judge, diplomat and spy. He truly admired Salieri's skill and worked with him on *Tarare*, Beaumarchais' only opera. He is best known as the author of the plays *Marriage of Figaro* and *Barber of Seville* that would become two of the most loved and frequently performed operas.

Beethoven, Ludwig von (1770–1827) pianist and composer. Born in Bonn, he moved to Vienna in 1792. His works revolutionized music. He studied the setting of words to music with Salieri, whose *Les Danaïdes* was found in an annotated form among his possessions on his death.

DAMAGING WINDS

Berlioz, Louis Hector (1803–1869) French composer and conductor who in his Memoirs tells the story of how a visit to the Paris opera house to hear Salieri *Les Danaïdes* spurred him to leave medicine and study music.

Bigot, Marie (1786–1820) an Alsatian composer and pianist who married a librarian in Vienna and came to study with Haydn, Salieri and Beethoven.

Bonno, Giuseppe (1711–1788) an Austrian composer who was the son of an Italian working in Vienna at the Imperial Court. He succeeded Gassmann as Imperial Kapellmeister in 1774. Among his students was Ditters von Dittersdorf who remembered him as possessing “an extraordinary gift for teaching singers”. He collaborated frequently with Metastasio.

Carpani, Giuseppi (1751–1825) an Italian poet, librettist and writer who worked as the Court Poet in Vienna. He wrote early studies of both Haydn and Rossini and a defence of Salieri.

Cartellieri, Anton Kasimir (1772–1807) a Bohemian composer who studied with Salieri at the same time as Beethoven.

Cavalieri, Catarina (1755–1801) a Viennese singer who studied with Salieri. Both Salieri and Mozart wrote parts in their operas especially for her. Many speculate that she was Salieri’s mistress but there is insufficient evidence to permit a firm conclusion.

Chopin, Fryderyk Franciszek (1810–1849) a Polish composer and pianist who moved to Paris in 1831. He was praised by Liszt and Schumann and many others for his originality in piano compositions. He was of frail health and died young.

Czerny, Carl (1791–1857) a Viennese composer, pianist and teacher who studied with Salieri and later helped teach Liszt.

Da Ponte, Lorenzo (1749–1838) an Italian born Jew who converted to Christianity and became a priest. His colourful life is well documented in his memoirs and has been the subject of several books. He is best known as a librettist and poet who worked with both Mozart and Salieri.

Gassmann, Florian (1729–1774) opera composer. He was German-speaking but wrote Italian operas. One of his comic operas known as *Opera Seria* (The Serious Opera) parodies serious opera and is now much in

Brief Biographies

favour in Europe. From 1757 to 1762, he was in Venice serving (as Vivaldi had done years earlier) as a choirmaster in a girls' conservatory. He wrote a yearly opera for the carnival season. In 1763 he became the court ballet composer in Vienna. The next year he became chamber composer to the Emperor, and in 1772 court conductor. It was Gassmann who in 1766 brought Antonio Salieri, then 16, from Venice to Vienna and taught him composition. It was also Gassmann who founded the Tonkünstlersozietät (Society of Musical Artists), which was the first organization to arrange musical concerts for the general public. Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven would all later perform at these concerts (then organized by Gassmann's protégé Salieri).

Gebauer, Franz Xavier (1784–1822) a German organist and composer who served as Choirmaster of the Augustinian church in Vienna.

Hasse, Johann Adolfe (1699–1783) a prolific German opera composer who left Dresden to work in Vienna in the 1760s.

Haydn, Franz Joseph (1732–1809) an Austrian composer who achieved widespread fame and fortune during his lifetime and thereafter. He served as the Kapellmeister for the wealthy Esterhazy family but he began and ended his musical career in Vienna, with several sojourns in London along the way. He staged several Salieri operas for the Esterhazy family and invited Salieri to play the keyboard for the first performance of *The Creation*.

Haydn, Michael (1737–1806) Joseph Haydn's younger brother, also a composer and Kapellmeister. He settled in Salzburg where he was Kapellmeister to the archbishop. He taught Weber.

Hérold, Ferdinand (1791–1833) a French composer of opera and ballet who travelled to Vienna and studied briefly with Salieri. He worked in Paris at the opera with Rossini and greatly admired Salieri's *Les Danaïdes*.

Hummel, Johann Nepomuk (1778–1837) an Austrian composer and pianist who studied with both Mozart and Salieri.

Kelly, Michael (1762–1826) an English singer, theatre manager and music publisher who sang for both Mozart and Salieri during his 1783–87 sojourn in Vienna.

DAMAGING WINDS

Liszt, Franz (1811–1886) a Hungarian composer and pianist who studied with Salieri as a young boy. He moved to Paris where he met and fell in love with the Countess Marie d'Agoult, a married woman. They left to live together for more than a decade in Switzerland and Italy. They had three children.

Lortzing, Albert (1801–1851) a very popular German composer, actor and singer who wrote operettas including *Szenen aus Mozarts Leben* (Scenes from Mozart's Life).

Metastasio, Pietro (1698–1782) Italian poet. Many of his poems served as librettos for serious operas. He became the court poet in Vienna in 1729 and held the post until his death. Salieri set his *Passion of Jesus Christ* and Mozart set his *Clemenza di Tito*.

Moscheles, Ignaz (1794–1870) an Austrian Jew who converted to Christianity and became a noted composer and pianist. He studied with Salieri and later taught Mendelssohn, Schumann and Sir Arthur Sullivan of Gilbert & Sullivan. He settled in London.

Mosel, Ignaz Franz von (1772–1844) an Austrian composer, conductor and writer who studied with Salieri and later became the court librarian. He wrote the first biography of Salieri.

Mozart, Constanze (1762–1842) was a singer and Mozart's wife.

Mozart, Franz Xavier (1791–1844) an Austrian composer and pianist who had the misfortune to be born the son of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

Mozart, Maria Anna (“Nannerl”) (1751–1829) an Austrian composer and pianist who had the misfortune to be born the sister of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. I suggest reading Jane Glover's group biography entitled *Mozart's Women* and the novel *Mozart's Sister* by Rita Charbonnier.

Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus (1756–1791) – surely he needs no introduction. If you need a brief biography of this man I wonder how you came to read this book.

Paradis, Maria Therese von (1759–1824) an Austrian composer and pianist. She was named after the Empress for whom her father was the Imperial secretary. At age four, she became blind but nevertheless became a noted pianist and organist. She studied singing and composition with

Brief Biographies

Salieri. Those who wrote for her include Mozart (piano concerto K456), Haydn (piano concerto H XVIII: 4) and Salieri (his organ concerto).

Rossini, Gioacchino (1792–1868) a very popular Italian opera composer best known for his Barber of Seville.

Scarlatti, Giuseppi (1718–1777) an Italian composer who worked in Vienna in the 1760s and early 1770s.

Schubert, Franz (1797–1828) an Austrian composer who studied with Salieri. He is noted especially for his lieder (German songs) but composed much church music, chamber works, nine symphonies and a few operas and other stage works.

Schumann, Robert (1810–1856) and **Clara** (1819–1896) German pianists and composers. They married and settled in Anna's native Leipzig and founded a music journal.

Wagner, Richard (1813–1883) a German opera composer noted for his innovation. He greatly admired Carl Maria von Weber, a composer he called the most German of German composers. He is best known for his Ring Cycle, the four operas Das Rheingold, Die Walküre, Siegfried and Götterdämmerung.

Weber, Carl Maria von (1786–1826) a German opera composer who was a distant relative of Mozart's wife Constanze Weber. His Der Freischütz opera is regarded as the first great German Romantic opera.

Weigl, Joseph (1766–1846) an Austrian opera composer who studied with Salieri and worked with Mozart. His father had been Haydn's principal cellist. He conducted at the Burg Theatre in Vienna from 1792.

Further Reading

Books about Salieri

Alexander Wheelock Thayer, Salieri: Rival of Mozart, edited by Theodore Albrecht (Kansas City 1989)

Volkmar Braunbehrens, Maligned Master — the Real Story of Antonio Salieri, transl. Eveline L. Kanes (New York 1992)

John A. Rice, Antonio Salieri and Viennese Opera (Chicago 1998)

NOTE: Rudolph Angermüller has published a great deal on Salieri but it is available only in German.

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Michael Kelly, Reminiscences, ed. Roger Fiske, Oxford University Press, 1975

Memoirs Lorenzo Da Ponte, trans. Elisabeth Abbott, New York Review of Books edition, 2000

Emily Anderson ed., Mozart's Letters, Little, Brown & Co, London, 1990

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Ernest Newman ed., Memoirs of Hector Berlioz From 1803 to 1865, Dover Publications, New York, 1960

Else Radant, The Diaries of Carl Joseph Rosenbaum 1770–1829, The Haydn Yearbook Volume V

Further Reading

Books about Vienna, Viennese Personalities and the Viennese Music Scene

Daniel Heartz, Haydn, Mozart and the Viennese School 1740–1780,
W.W. Norton & Co (New York, 1995)

Daniel Heartz, Mozart, Haydn, and Early Beethoven 1781–1802, W.W.
Norton & Co (New York, 2009)

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Franz Endler, Vienna A guide to its Music & Musicians trans Leo Jecny
Portland 1989

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ford, 2001

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Classics 1964

Antonia Fraser, Marie Antoinette, Doubleday, New York, 2001

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Volkmar Braunbehrens, Mozart in Vienna 1781–1791, transl. Timothy Bell
(Grove Wiederfield, New York 1986)

DAMAGING WINDS

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Stanley Sadie, The New Grove Mozart, W.W. Norton & Co (New York, 1983)

Stanley Sadie ed., Mozart & His Operas, The New Grove Composers Series MacMillan Reference Limited, London, 2000

Maynard Solomon, Mozart: A Life, Harper Perennial, New York, 1995

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Karl Geiringer with the collaboration of Irene Geiringer, Haydn, A Creative Life in Music, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1982

Rosemary Hughes, Haydn, J.M. Dent & Sons London, 1970

Jens Peter Larsen, The New Grove Haydn, W.W. Norton & Co (New York, 1982)

H.C. Robbins Landon, Haydn: A Documentary Study, Rizzoli, New York, 1981

Biographies of Lorenzo Da Ponte

Rodney Bolt, Da Ponte: The Adventures of Mozart's Librettist in the Old and New Worlds, Bloomsbury, London, 2006

Sheila Hodges, Lorenzo Da Ponte: The Life and Times of Mozart's Librettist, Universe Books, New York, 1985

Anthony Holden, The Man Who Wrote Mozart, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 2006

Books about Beethoven

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Elliot Forbes ed. Thayer's Life of Beethoven, Princeton University Press, 1967

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Lewis Lockwood, *The Music and Life of Beethoven*, W.W. Norton & Co, New York, 2003

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Maurice Brown, *The New Grove Schubert* W.W. Norton & Co, New York, 1983

George Marek, *Schubert: A Biography*, Robert Hale, London, 1986

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Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years 1811–1847*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1983

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Nicholas Till, *Rossini His Life and Times*, Midras Books, New York, 1983

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Andrew Friese Greene, *Weber*, Cambridge, 1991

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Roger Parker ed., *The Oxford Illustrated History of Opera*, Oxford University Press 1994

Richard Somerset-Ward, *The Story of Opera*, Harry N. Abrams Inc. New York, 1998

Michael Steen, *The Lives & Times of the Great Composers*, Icon Books, Cambridge, 2004

Piero Weiss, *Opera: A History in Documents*, Oxford University Press, 2002

Music to be Listened to While or After Reading

THIS LIST OF SUGGESTED LISTENING is organized by chapter and makes some suggestions on music that might inform your reading of each chapter. You might want to consult this list before reading a chapter. I mention some particular CDs or DVDs that contain the mentioned music but is not intended to be a definitive list.

CHAPTER I **Vienna 1822**

Much music is discussed in this chapter, Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*, Weber's *Der Freischütz* and Haydn's *Nelsonmesse* and *Paukenmesse* to mention only a few. But I suggest that you listen to Salieri's church music. He wrote primarily for the Imperial Chapel after he retired from the opera stage in 1804. We are lucky to have some good performances of some of his church music. I suggest *Musik der Wiener Hofkapelle* performed by the WDR RundFunkChor Keln and the WDR RundFunkOrchester Keln put out by Naxos Phoenix Edition which includes a *Veni Sancte Spiritu* and a *De profundis clamavit* by Salieri. Although it has only one Salieri work, *Justorum animae, Rediscovered Masterpieces* performed by the Cathedral Singers & Chamber Orchestra is also a joy. Harder to find but very good is the recording of Salieri's *Magnificat/Dixit Dominus/Organ Concerto/Emperor Mass* featuring Sandor Vara, Bernard Walchshofer, Uwe Christian Harrer, and Thomas Rischanek (Audio CD – 1997).

DAMAGING WINDS

CHAPTER 2 An Unexpected Visitor

This chapter introduces the changes in music that occurred during and after Mozart's time in Vienna. To put Mozart and Salieri into context you might want to listen to the three disk set Masters of the Mozart Era. In addition to some Salieri (*La Veneziana* symphony), it includes major works by Ditters von Dittersdorf, Gluck, Albrechtsberger, Boccherini, Johann Christian Bach, Paisiello and many others. Having listened to these works, then listen to Beethoven's Third Symphony.

CHAPTER 3 Where there is smoke...

This chapter focuses on Carl Maria von Weber. His *Der Freischütz*, especially the overture and Viktoria, viktoria opening chorus, is quite enjoyable. This opera is available in both CD and DVD. The Staatskapelle Dresden under the direction of Gustav Kuhn has recorded an album entitled *Von Weber Piano Concertos, Symphonies, Overtures*.

The other guest at the dinner is Ignaz Moscheles. Little of his music is now available. I recommend Howard Shelley and the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra recording of Moscheles Piano Concertos 1, 6 and 7 as well as Liu Xino Ming's performance of his Piano Concerto no. 6 which appears on an album of Moscheles' music. Other music on the CD is his overture for Schiller's *Trauerspiel* as well as his Symphony in C Major.

CHAPTER 4 The Very Devil

Like the first chapter, much music is mentioned in this chapter. I suggest listening to music by Gassmann and Salieri. Not much of Gassmann's music is available. There is a CD of Gassmann overtures on the Naxos label (2009) as well as a two CD set of a German rendition of his opera *La Contessina* under the name *Die Junge Gräfin*. It is performed by the Collegium Praga Aurea, (Bayer Records, 1995). There is also a recording of his overture to *L'amore artigiano* (The artisan's love) performed by the English Chamber Orchestra under Richard Bonynge. This overture appears on a 2 CD set featuring 18th Century Overtures by Handel and others. Salieri's overture to *La fiera Venezia* also appears on this CD set. There are several good recordings of a selection of Salieri overtures. My

Music to be Listened to While or After Reading

favourites are Salieri: Overtures & Ballet Music and Salieri: Overtures & Stage Music, both conducted by Thomas Fey, and performed by the Mannheimer Mozartorchester (2007 and 2010). Also very good is Salieri: Symphonies, Overtures with Matthias Bamert conducting the London Mozart Players (2001). Less impressive is Bratislava Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra (Naxos 2000).

CHAPTER 5 **Seeking the Truth**

Little has been recorded of Joseph Weigl's works. There is a recording of his humorous aria *Wenn sie mich nur von weitem sieht* (If she sees me even from afar) from his singspiel *Die Schweizerfamilie* on the Hyperion collection entitled Songs by Schubert's Friends and Contemporaries. The entire singspiel *Die Schweizerfamilie* performed by the Chorus and Orchestra Dreieck is also available on CD.

During the last 25 years of his life Salieri conducted one piece more often than any other. It was Haydn's *The Creation*. At the 1808 retirement gala performance attended by Beethoven among others, Salieri conducted a recently completed Italian translation of the work prepared by Carpani. Many recordings exist of *The Creation*. There is also a DVD of a special recreation of the 1808 event filmed in the University Hall where the original gala took place. The accompanying documentary mentions the importance of Salieri's embrace of Haydn at this event, symbolizing as it did the official court sanction of Haydn's importance.

CHAPTER 6 **Two Very Different Students**

Obviously you should listen to Beethoven and Schubert while reading this chapter. I suggest starting with Beethoven's ten piano variations (WoO 73) on Salieri's *La stessa la stessima* theme from his *Falstaff* opera. There are a number of recordings of it, often as part of a set of Piano Variations. You might want to listen to Salieri's original aria. *Falstaff* is Salieri's most performed and recorded opera. There are at least 3 CDs and a DVD. As for Schubert, I suggest listening to his Magnificat sung by the Vienna Choir Boys on their 500th Anniversary CD (1999). Schubert was recruited for this choir by Salieri. The CD also features a Te Deum by Haydn and one by Salieri.

DAMAGING WINDS

CHAPTER 7 The Doctor Speaks

Since this chapter deals with Mozart's death what better to listen to than Mozart's Requiem of which there are many, many recordings.

CHAPTER 8 What Have You Been Doing

Here I suggest listening to some of the Da Ponte operas. Not just his Mozart operas — *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Don Giovanni* and *Così fan tutte* — but also his Salieri and Martin y Soler operas. *Axur re d'Ormus*, the Da Ponte adaptation of the Beaumarchais opera *Tarare*, is a wonderful opera. It was scenes from this opera that were featured in the movie *Amadeus*. Regrettably the only modern production was very poorly recorded on CD. The overture has been well recorded. We also have some arias from *La Cifra*. Little of the music of Martin y Soler has been performed and recorded. We do, however, have recordings of his *Una cosa rara* and *La Capricciosa Corretta* operas. The latter has recently been recorded by Les Talens Lyriques under the superb direction of Christophe Rousset.

CHAPTER 9 Unexpected Support

Here I suggest starting with some the music of Franz Xavier Mozart. There are a few CDs. *The Other Mozart: Songs by Franz Xavier Mozart* is enjoyable. His music is also recorded on a CD with Hummel: Klaviertrio, Op. 78; Grand Rondo Billant, Op. 126; F.X. Mozart: Grande Sonate; Rondo

I would then listen to Beethoven's Piano Concerto Nos. 1 Opus 15 and especially the Rondo. A recent article by Theodore Albrecht has shown that this Rondo was a tribute of sorts by Beethoven to his teacher Salieri. The theme of the Rondo is a variation on a theme from the overture to Salieri's *Les Danaïdes*.

You also might want to listen to the Beethoven Violin Sonatas (Opus 12) dedicated to Salieri.

Music to be Listened to While or After Reading

CHAPTER IO **A Competition Revisited**

Obviously you should listen to the music that was written by Mozart and Salieri for the musical competition featured in this chapter. There are a few recordings of *Der Schauspieldirektor K.486* of Mozart, I suggest the performance by the Wiener Philharmoniker under the direction of Sir John Pritchard. There are fewer recordings of Salieri's *Prima la musica poi le parole* but there are some. I suggest the CD under the direction of Domenico Sanfilippo.

CHAPTER II **An Offer**

Salieri wrote primarily for the voice so it makes sense to listen to his arias sung by some of the best voices. I suggest The Salieri Album of Cecilia Bartoli (2003) and Diana Damrau's *Arie di Bravura* (Mozart, Salieri, Righini Opera Arias) (2007)

CHAPTER I2 **Words and Music**

First I suggest that you listen to the works that were included in Anna's special programme. Excellent recordings of both *La Grotta di Trofonio* and *Falstaff* exist.

I would then listen to Salieri's *Les Danaïdes*. Several recordings of this opera exist. I suggest Gelmetti, Caballé, 2005 Dynamic Catalog: 489/1-2 performed by Carlo Tuand, Montserrat Caballé, Jean-Philippe Lafont, Mario Trabucco, Christer Bladin, Andrea Martin Gianluigi Gelmetti Conducting the Italian Radio Chorus Rome, Italian Radio Symphony Orchestra Rome

Ferdinand Hérold truly was a Salieri fan. You might enjoy his ballet, *La Fille mal gardee*. It is available on CD and DVD. Some of his overtures and symphonies are also available on a Dynamic CD entitled Hérold Overtures and Symphonies.

Hector Berlioz was really moved from medicine to music after seeing Salieri's *Les Danaïdes*, or so he says in his memoirs. Berlioz is best known for his *Symphony fantastique*. He also produced operas like *Les Troyens*.

DAMAGING WINDS

CHAPTER 13 The Lessons Begin

The song that I had Anna work on with Salieri (Salieri's Ich denke dein) can be heard on the Hyperion collection entitled Songs By Schubert's Friends and Contemporaries.

Then I suggest that you listen to some of the music that Mozart drew from works by Salieri and then listen to the Salieri originals. This is the real world version of the scene played out in Amadeus when Mozart did variations on a Salieri march. Start with Six Variations for piano in G major on Salieri's 'Mio caro adone' K. 180 (K. 173c). There are several recordings. My favourite is by Daniel Barenboim playing Mozart: The Complete Piano Sonatas and Variations Disc 6. Patrice Michaels sings Salieri's Wenn dem Adler das Gefieder aria from *Der Rauchfangkehrer* on the CD Divas of Mozart's Day. There is no shortage of recordings of Mozart's Martern aller Arten aria written the next year for the same singer Catarina Cavalieri in *The Abduction from the Seraglio*. Finally, I suggest that you listen to Thomas Fey conducting both Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro* overture (on his CD entitled Overtures) and Salieri's overture from *Der Rauchfangkehrer* (on Salieri: Overtures & Ballet Music Disk 1).

CHAPTER 14 An Anniversary Remembered

Schubert's tribute to Salieri on his 50th Anniversary has been recorded several times. I suggest the CD entitled An 1816 Schubertiad. You should also listen to the Schubert songs dedicated to Salieri: D 138 Song "Rastlose Liebe" opus 5 No. ; D 162 Song "Nähe des Geliebten" opus 5 No. 2; D 225 Song "Der Fischer" opus 5 No. 3; D 226 Song "Erster Verlust" opus 5 No. 4; and D 367 Song "Der König in Thule" opus 5 No. 5.

CHAPTER 15 A Walk in the Park

Salieri's "little" requiem mass has been recorded. A new 2010 release by the Gulbenkian Chorus and Orchestra makes great listening as you read this chapter.

Music to be Listened to While or After Reading

CHAPTER 16
My Last illness

The account of Salieri's last illness is taken from Moscheles' memoirs. Were it not so joyful, I would suggest that you listen to Moscheles' Piano concerto 6 performed by Lin Xiao Ming. Instead I suggest that you listen to Salieri's *La passione di Nostro Signore Gesu Cristo* which more sets the appropriate tone. It has been recorded several times. I suggest the CD under the direction of Christopher Spering.

Epilogue

Salieri's legacy was adversely influenced by such works as *Mozart and Salieri* by Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov. You might listen to this. You might also listen to the 1832 German singspiel, *Szenen aus Mozarts Leben* (Scenes from Mozart's Life) written by Lortzing. It is odd to hear the fictional Salieri singing in Lortzing's work to the music of Mozart.

But I would not want these anti-Salieri works to be the last that you listen to as you complete your reading of the novel. Might I therefore suggest that we end on a high note (or a series of them) by listening to the Chorus of the Just — *I magnifici portenti* — and the Chorus of the Angels and the Just — *nel gran vortice supreme* — from Salieri's *Gesu al Limbo* as conducted by Alberto Turco. It was these works that were sung by Salieri's students at his 50th Anniversary party.

About the Author



C. IAN KYER IS A distinguished lawyer. For more than 20 years a partner in the Toronto office of Fasken Martineau and head of its Technology and Intellectual Property Group, he is now counsel to the firm. Ian is also a noted historian with a doctorate in European History. Here he brings both his legal skills and his historical acumen to bear on the allegations that Antonio Salieri murdered his rival Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. But this is not a dry academic work but a compelling story of a young early 19th century woman's quest to discover the truth behind the Salieri rumours, a quest that brings her into conflict with those whom she loves. During her investigation she learns much about relationships and herself.