

# Masonic Music & Composers

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In 1956 the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of the greatest Masonic composer, Bro. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, was commemorated in the entire civilized world. The host of musicians, musicologists, and plain lovers of music remember Mozart for his many famous compositions, his unchained legacy to the music of the world, yet so few know him to be a prominent Mason and to have composed music for the Craft which he so dearly loved. That same year, this author was requested by Ill. Bro. Fredric Stevens, PGM and Sovereign Grand Commander of the Scottish Rite in the Philippines, to deliver a lecture on the Masonic music of Bro. Mozart at the Scottish Rite Temple. This, the author gladly did and several recordings of Bro. Mozart's Masonic compositions were played to the delight and enlightenment of those present.

Presently, this writer desires to expand the former lecture and present it in readable form to the brethren of the Craft in this Grand Jurisdiction, and to the hosts of others wherever they are dispersed. I am grateful to Prof. Paul Nettl, now a professor of musicology in the University of Indiana at Bloomington, Indiana, who was formerly a professor of musicology in the defunct German University at Prague, Czechoslo-

vakia, for some of the source materials of this article. Prof. Nettl is himself a brother of the Craft and a prominent member of the Lodge of Research of New York. Bro. Nettl's *Musick und Freimaurerei*, (Music and Masonry, though originally in German, is a source of lasting information on the subject.

Bro. Nettl's book of 190 pages contains not only data on Bro. Mozart but also gives other data on other composers of Masonic music and other masterpieces who were themselves Masons, Bro. Mozart lived (1756-1791) at the time when music was at its golden age. Most of the rulers of kingdoms and empires and the wealthy aristocrats in Europe maintained their own orchestras and delighted in having such orchestras play for them in their halls and concerts. Franz Joseph Haydn, one of the most gifted of composers, himself a Mason, was the conductor of the orchestra of Prince Eszterhazy, one of the richest of Hungarian aristocrats. King Fredric of Prussia, also a brother Mason, was an enthusiastic flutist and it was for him that Johann Sebastian Bach composed a number of sonatas and sonatinas for flute and piano.

To go back to Bro. Mozart, let me recall that he did so much for Masonic music at the time when Masonry was not popular in his country of Austria.

It was practically banned there until 1790 though the emperor, Franz, was a Mason. When his son, Joseph II, ascended the throne that year, Masonry was allowed to flourish. However, shortly thereafter, Masonry was again banned for a long time until the end of World War I. Strangely enough, in the other half of the Austro-Hungarian empire, Hungary, Masonry was recognized since 1867 but banned after World War I.

Mozart joined the Craft on December 14, 1783 passed to the degree of Fellowcraft on January 7, 1785; but it is not definitely known when he was raised to the Sublime Degree. We know, however, that a few months after Bro. Mozart was raised, his own father, Leopold Mozart, entered the fraternity. Also, the composer, Haydn, a friend of his, became a Mason presumably due to the influence of Bro. Wolfgang Mozart. Bro. Mozart started to compose Masonic music in 1785 and produced some more until his death in 1791. In fact, his best known work, "The Magic Flute" was composed in 1791 and was first publicly played under his baton shortly before he died. "The Magic Flute" is entirely Masonic in theme. His first Masonic composition was "Gesellenreise" or "The Voyage of a fellowcraft", which he composed when his father, Leopold, was passed to that degree. For the installation of a friend to the Oriental Chair, Bro. Mozart composed "Zur Neugekrunten Hoffnung", "To the Newly Crowned

Hope" in 1785. That same year, music for the opening of the Lodge of Master Masons and "Die Maurerfreude", "The Joy of a Mason," were also composed. In 1786 the famous Masonic funeral march was composed and played when Count Ezsterhazy and the Duke of Mecklenburg were buried. It is known that he composed his famous chorale: "Oh, Sacred Band of Friendship" in 1772 when he was only sixteen years old. Being a prodigy and a traveller in various countries, it is possible that Mozart had already heard of the Craft as a band of friends and composed thematic music from what he heard and not yet experienced. Since nearly all of Bro. Mozart's Masonic compositions were chorales, it is easy to presume that Masonic Lodges in his time who made use of his music sang the chorales in their meetings and even in public for the delight of even those not in the Craft.

A few words about "The Magic Flute". It is an opera which tells of the great struggle between the High Priest and his followers (representing light and justice) and the Queen of Night and her followers (representing darkness and evil). The hero in the opera is a young man who fell in love and married the daughter of the Queen of Night who later became a friend of light, which is to signify that in the end the forces of good triumph over the forces of evil. It might also be said that, written at a time when Masonry was persecuted in his own country,

Bro. Mozart hoped that Masonry in time would be allowed to operate instead of being persecuted.

A few words about Masonic composers and poets who lived about the time of Mozart. Ludwig van Beethoven, a brother, composed "The Ninth Symphony" and included in it a hymn to Joy, which was based on the poem of Bro. Friedrich von Schiller, "Zur Freude", "Ode to Joy". Bro. Joseph Haydn composed many operas and chorales, though not one of them can be considered Masonic in theme. Bro. Franz Listzt, who later became a monk, also composed music. Strangely, though a Catholic priest, he never renounced Masonry.

Hugo Riemann, a German musicologist, was a Mason. Lertzing, a German composer, was also a Mason. Puccini, the Italian composer, whose "La Bohème" and other works are quite well-known in the Philippines, was a Mason. Jan Sibelius, a Finn, and famous for his "Finlandia", is a Mason and for many years was the Grand Organist of the Grand Lodge of Finland.

I would not want to close this article without mentioning that in London, there was a Lodge whose membership was limited only to composers of music. Were it possible that some day in the Philippines there will be formed a Lodge composed chiefly of musicians and/or poets. We have talents in this land and it would be to our just pride to have such a Lodge.

## Tenth District Convention

The Tenth Masonic District comprising of the Bicol Lodges under the administration of VWB Bayani Fontanilla held its tenth annual convention in Daet, Camarines Norte on Sept. 9 & 10, 1960 with Camarines Norte Lodge No. 103 as the host lodge. The Grand Lodge officers present were: RWB Juan S. Alano, Deputy Grand Master; RWB William H. Quasha, Grand Senior Warden; MWB Esteban Munarriz, PGM, Grand Secretary, and others.

The convention was graced with the attendance of three provincial governors, all brethren of the Craft — Bro. Apolonio G. Maleniza of Camarines Sur, Juan Frivaldo of Sorsogon, and Jorge Almojuela of Catanduanes. The convention was adjudged the best attended regional convention and also proved fruitful to all those attended.

Among the topics discussed were: Improvement of Brethren and their Attendance; Masonic Charity and Fraternal Relief; Making Masonic Influence Felt; Unwritten Laws of Freemasonry. Other speakers of the Convention were: Governor Dominador S. Asis of Camarines Norte; Mayor Marcial R. Pimentel of Daet; and Congressman Pedro A. Venida of Camarines Norte.

## THE BLEEDING HART

The November, 1959, *Columbia*, official K. of C. magazine, contains another "protest" by Luke E. Hart, Supreme knight, against the laying of the cornerstone of the East Front of the National Capital with Masonic ceremonies last July.

Mr. Hart's objections are based on the aged-old misconception that Freemasonry is a "distinctly Protestant body". That its membership contains so many men whose religious affiliations are with Protestant churches is not Freemasonry's doing. The Popes of Rome have created that condition by prohibiting docile Catholics from joining the Fraternity, which welcomes into its ranks good men of any sect or religion, including Catholics. Freemasonry is not a religion, nor like the Knights of Columbus, a fraternal order which represents or espouses one particular sect.

As long as Mr. Hart's church insists that other religious sects and denominations are not entitled to the same status and privileges which that church claims for itself, (as so painfully demonstrated in Spain and other predominantly Catholic countries) Mr. Hart's appeals to the "Charter of our liberties" seem rather illogical. The majority of the men who wrote these charters were Freemasons, as was the author of the impassioned lines which Mr. Hart quoted in the preamble of the Resolution of disapproval which he authored.

— The preceding quotation, from *The Freemason*, Canada's National Masonic Magazine, August-September, 1960, pp. 5 & 6.



Pictured above is Bro. Nick Morabe, President of the Travellers' Club of San Calif., on his recent visit to the Philippines. He is shown handing to one of the distressed worthy brother in Cavite a portion of the P1,000.00 which the club raised for the fire victims in Cavite City.



## COMING DISTRICT GRAND LODGE CONVENTIONS

The month of November and December has in store at least two District Grand Lodge Conventions slated for —

November 30, 1960 — Cavite District, at Cavite City, with Bagong Buhay Lodge No. 17 as the host lodge

December 30, 1960 — Ninth District consisting of Rizal Province and Quezon City lodges, Quezon City, with Rafael Palma Lodge No. 147, as host lodge.