

## Erich Leinsdorf

Born: February 4, 1912 - Vienna, Austria

Died: September 11, 1993 - Zürich, Switzerland

The eminent Austrian-born American conductor, Erich Leinsdorf (real name: Landauer), was studying music at a local school by the age of 5. He studied conducting at the Mozarteum in Salzburg, and later at the University of Vienna and the Vienna Academy of Music.

From 1934 to 1937, Erich Leinsdorf worked as an assistant to Bruno Walter and Arturo Toscanini at the Salzburg Festival. He conducted at the Metropolitan Opera in New York City from 1938, being particularly noted for his Wagner; after the sudden death of Artur Bodanzky in 1939, Leinsdorf was named the Met's "head of German repertoire". In 1942 Leinsdorf became a naturalized American citizen. From 1943 he had a brief three-year post as Music Director of the Cleveland Orchestra, but was absent for much of this tenure because he was drafted into the United States Armed Forces for World War II; the orchestra did not renew his contract. Many years later, in the transition in Cleveland Orchestra from Lorin Maazel to Christoph von Dohnányi between 1982 and 1984, Leinsdorf returned to lead several concerts; he described his role as "the bridge between the regimes".

Erich Leinsdorf with the Boston Symphony Orchestra appeared regularly on local broadcasts from WGBH-TV. On August 17, 1967, Leinsdorf conducted the Boston Symphony Orchestra in a two-hour primetime special telecast in color on NBC, a reflection of the days when a commercial network would periodically broadcast a full-length classical concert.

## *Mozart Symphonies 1, 2, 3, 18, 21*

*Erich Leinsdorf*

*The London Philharmonic Orchestra*



Mozart most commonly called himself Wolfgang Amadé or Wolfgang Gottlieb. His father, Leopold, came from a family of good standing (from which he was estranged), which included architects and bookbinders. Leopold was the author of a famous violin-playing manual, which was published in the very year of Mozart's birth. His mother, Anna Maria Pertl, was born of a middle-class family active in local administration. Mozart and his sister Maria Anna ("Nannerl") were the only two of their seven children to survive.

The boy's early talent for music was remarkable. At three he was picking out chords on the harpsichord, at four playing short pieces, at five composing. There are anecdotes about his precise memory of pitch, about his scribbling a concerto at the age of five, and about his gentleness and sensitivity (he was afraid of the trumpet). Just before he was six, his father took him and Nannerl, also highly talented, to Munich to play at the Bavarian court, and a few months later they went to Vienna and were heard at the imperial court and in noble houses.

"The miracle which God let be born in Salzburg" was Leopold's description of his son, and he was keenly conscious of his duty to God, as he saw it, to draw the miracle to the notice of the world (and incidentally to profit from doing so). In mid-1763 he obtained a leave of absence from his position as deputy Kapellmeister at the prince-archbishop's court at Salzburg, and the family set out on a prolonged tour. They went to what were all the main musical centres of western Europe—Munich, Augsburg, Stuttgart, Mannheim, Mainz, Frankfurt, Brussels, and Paris (where they remained for the winter), then London (where they spent 15 months), returning through The Hague, Amsterdam, Paris, Lyon, and Switzerland, and arriving back in Salzburg in November 1766. In most of these cities Mozart, and often his sister, played and improvised, sometimes at court, sometimes in public or in a church. Leopold's surviving letters to friends in Salzburg tell of the universal

admiration that his son's achievements aroused. In Paris they met several German composers, and Mozart's first music was published (sonatas for keyboard and violin, dedicated to a royal princess); in London they met, among others, Johann Christian Bach, Johann Sebastian Bach's youngest son and a leading figure in the city's musical life, and under his influence Mozart composed his first symphonies—three survive (K 16, K 19, and K 19a—K signifying the work's place in the catalog of Ludwig von Köchel). Two more followed during a stay in The Hague on the return journey (K 22 and K 45a).

After little more than nine months in Salzburg the Mozarts set out for Vienna in September 1767, where (apart from a 10-week break during a smallpox epidemic) they spent 15 months. Mozart wrote a one-act German singspiel, *Bastien und Bastienne*, which was given privately. Greater hopes were attached to his prospect of having an Italian opera buffa, *La finta semplice* ("The Feigned Simpleton"), done at the court theatre—hopes that were, however, frustrated, much to Leopold's indignation. But a substantial, festal mass setting (probably K 139/47a) was successfully given before the court at the dedication of the Orphanage Church. *La finta semplice* was given the following year, 1769, in the archbishop's palace in Salzburg. In October Mozart was appointed an honorary Konzertmeister at the Salzburg court.

Still only 13, Mozart had by now acquired considerable fluency in the musical language of his time, and he was especially adept at imitating the musical equivalent of local dialects. The early Paris and London sonatas, the autographs of which include Leopold's helping hand, show a childlike pleasure in patterns of notes and textures. But the London and The Hague symphonies attest to his quick and inventive response to the music he had encountered, as, with their enrichment of texture and fuller development, do those he produced in Vienna (such as K 43 and, especially, K 48). And his first Italian opera shows a ready grasp of the buffo style.

# Mozart Symphonies 1, 2, 3, 18 and 21

*Erich Leinsdorf The London Philharmonic Orchestra*

**Symphony No. 1 (7:23)**

Molto Allegro

Andante

Presto

**Symphony No. 2 (11:17)**

Allegro

Andante

Minuets I And II

Presto

**Symphony No. 3 (8:50)**

Molto Allegro

Andante

Presto

**Symphony No. 18 (14:07)**

Allegro

Andantino grazioso

Menuetto

Allegro molto

**Symphony No. 21 (13:59)**

Allegro

Andante

Menuetto - Trio

Allegro

Recorded by Westminster Records 1959

Transferred from a 15ips tape



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