

Introduction

Peter Lichtenthal was born on 10 May 1780 in Pressburg (today Bratislava), the then capital city of Hungary. Already at an early age he received lessons in keyboard and violin as well as in thorough-bass playing. After studying medicine in Vienna and working for two years as a physician, he went to Italy in 1810, ultimately settling in Milan. There – in addition to his work as a doctor – he was very active as an author, as a composer of over fifty works, and as an arranger of works by others, above all those of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, which he felt to be better adapted to Italian tastes in this manner. He wrote several essays on musical subjects and also on the relationship between music and medicine, for example, *Harmony for Women, or Concise instructions for learning the rules of thorough-bass in an easily comprehensible manner*. He also served as a correspondent for the renowned *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, which was published in Leipzig and for which he wrote reports for over thirty-five years from all “major cities of this marvelous land.” Lichtenthal’s most important publication was undoubtedly the first Italian-language music encyclopedia, which appeared in Milan in 1826 under the title *Dizionario e bibliografia della musica*.

Lichtenthal was personally acquainted with the musical greats of his day, including Beethoven, Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, and Paganini. For many years he was also friends with Mozart’s two sons, Karl and Wolfgang Amadeus (junior). Peter Lichtenthal died on 18 August 1853 in Milan.

Around 1800, after a century very abundant in instrumental music, Italy was now influenced above all by opera, whereby the audiences preferred light and pleasing music. Instrumental music from beyond the Alps – in particular the symphonic and chamber music developments of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, etc. – was hardly known. Instrumental music was performed primarily in private circles, academies, of “amateurs” for their own amusement.

For Lichtenthal, however, the music of Mozart – whom he considered to be a true genius – was always the measure of all things. He had a strong aversion against Italian opera directors, “these individuals of whom almost not one has the slightest idea about music.” Rossini told him: “Believe me, it is a vain endeavor to write demanding music in Italy: the audience falls asleep during it.” In order to also make the larger-scale German pieces available to circles of aficionados, Lichtenthal arranged numerous works by Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Haydn, and Meyerbeer for smaller chamber music formations. These included versions of symphonies for piano duet, excerpts from operas for chamber ensemble or piano, arrangements of piano concertos or piano sonatas for performance on piano and various instruments, and, last but not least, Mozart’s Requiem K. 626 arranged for string quartet, which is presented here in print for the first time.

Lichtenthal probably worked from the first edition, which had been completed by Franz Xaver Süssmayr and published in 1800 by Breitkopf & Härtel, Leipzig, whose articulations and dynamics he adopted for the most part. The disposition of the movements, of course, remained unaltered. Several measures have been deleted (two measures from the introduction of and an orchestral measure in the Hostias, three introductory measures in the Benedictus, and three orchestral measures in the Agnus Dei). For his reduction, Lichtenthal employed the leading vocal parts of each respective passage, sometimes also the choral parts, and for longer sections sometimes only the instrumental parts, or a mixture thereof. The fundamental musical statement could thus always be preserved, making this work an unusual and valuable addition to the string quartet repertoire.

Lichtenthal’s arrangement has survived only in manuscript form; a score and set of parts in his hand have come down to us. The parts, which were very carefully written and almost free of mistakes, are housed together with many other Lichtenthal manuscripts in the library of the Conservatorio di musica Giuseppe Verdi in Milan.¹ It is not known why this interesting work – in contrast to other compositions and arrangements by Lichtenthal – was not published at that time.

It should be stressed once again that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the reduction of larger works for chamber music formations was a very widespread method of popularizing compositions via the middle-class music room. Even with a work as widely known today as Mozart’s Requiem, this concentrated view through the prism of the string quartet provides us with a new, or at least a different manner of approaching the piece.

Vienna, March 2006
Marc Strümper

¹ I-Mc NosedaNosedá Z.18.15 (score) and I-Mc Nosedá N.14.20 (parts)

Our Edition

Our practical edition is based on the manuscript set of parts by Lichtenthal. It however seemed advisable to deviate from the source in several places, for example, in case of scribal errors, inconsistencies between parallel passages, and deviations from current musical notation. We have attempted to keep these alterations to a minimum. All alterations and additions are indicated; in case of doubt they have been checked against the first edition and the New Mozart Edition (NMA). In particular:

Altered tones are indicated in the score by footnotes. To provide at least a taste of early-nineteenth-century musical experience, we have taken over in our edition *all* the accidentals from the manuscript, including those that are superfluous according to modern usage. On the other hand, accidentals that are lacking in the manuscript, but are necessary according to today's usage, have been added. In this context we make a distinction between accidentals about which, on the basis of the conventions of the time, there can be no doubt – these are amended without comment – and those that really deviate from the original – these are placed in parentheses.

Ties and slurs that have been added, or (in a few instances) modified, are printed as dashed lines. Added dynamic markings, tempo indications, and staccato marks are in square brackets. The choice of clefs corresponds to that in the manuscript. In general, we have also adopted the original beaming; where Lichtenthal employed an abbreviation for eighth and sixteenth notes, the beams have been notated in the most appropriate manner.

Our edition is being issued in two parts in order to do justice to all requirements: Besides this score (catalogue number G088), a set of parts is also available (catalogue number G089).

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Heidelberg, March 2006
Günter von Zadow
Translation by Howard Weiner



Manuskript: Beginn der Viola-Stimme
Manuscript: Beginning of the viola part