



The Mozart Forgeries

Daniel N Leeson

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Mozart's music, forged manuscripts, and a murder! Could any music aficionado who enjoys a unique, fascinating, and well-told tale ask for more?—Conductor George Cleve, Music Director, San Francisco's Midsummer Mozart Music Festival. The idea of creating a counterfeit of a genuine Mozart manuscript is outrageous, but to attempt the forging of two such compositions for the purpose of a technical/musical swindle is an order of magnitude more aggressive. Yet that is exactly what Forger, a counterfeiting genius, and Librarian, an eighteenth century document specialist, decide to do, their motivation being a \$20,000,000 price tag. They are faced with incredible impediments not the least of which is the authentication of both documents by some of the world's leading Mozart scholars. From any perspective, the effort appears preposterous. Their choice of compositions are the lost manuscripts of Mozart's clarinet concerto and his quintet for clarinet and strings. Each stage of the effort is, by itself, an awesome undertaking, what with handwriting, paper, ink, watermarks, pens, and a great deal of imprecise history surrounding both works—the originals of which disappeared around 1800. Together, they combine to create a task so technically difficult that the probability of success is only slightly less than winning the Irish sweepstakes without buying a ticket. The author, one of America's leading Mozart authorities, is a prize-winning technical writer who also dabbles in fiction. His imaginative and skillful handling of the story's details walks the reader—sometimes not very gently—through each stage of the awesome effort. This entirely fictitious story is his contribution to the events of 2006, which are intended to commemorate the quarter millennium of Mozart's birth.

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