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MARIA THERESIA PARADIS IN LONDON

BY HERMANN ULLRICH

By the end of October 1784 Maria Theresia Paradis, the blind pianist, had completed her very successful visit to Paris¹, which had brought her fame, money and letters of recommendation to England. When Leopold Mozart left Salzburg for a Continental tour with his family he had not definitely decided to go on to England² and did not finally make up his mind until the great success of their visit to Paris. In the same way Maria Theresia Paradis had not contemplated a visit to England unless conditions were favourable. If all went well she was quite willing "to undertake the journey from Calais to Dover and to get to know the English, to whom she was so much attached (*ihre Lieblinge, die Engländer*) in their own country".³ Perhaps she was influenced by Mozart's example, as she had so often been in the past. But it may well be also that Court circles in Paris had advised her to cross the Channel. Presumably she had written from Paris to her father in Vienna to discuss the project, since she would have had to get his consent to the extension of a tour which had already lasted sixteen months.⁴ No doubt she was also influenced by the prospect of financial success in London, which had a strong attraction for foreign musicians, though this was not necessarily the principal reason for her decision.

Among the letters of recommendation which were valued by travellers at that time, and particularly by musicians, were not only those which were furnished by the French Court and nobility and the Austrian ambassador in Paris⁵ but also others, equally important in their way, supplied by the Masonic lodges in Vienna. Masonry had been particularly influential in England for many years past, since many members of the nobility and of Society belonged to it. Subscription concerts were given in Freemasons Hall under the

¹ See my article 'Maria Theresia Paradis and Mozart' in *Music & Letters*, xxvii (1946), p. 224; see also 'Maria Theresia Paradis als Musikpädagogin' in *Musikerziehung*, Sept. 1960, and 'Maria Theresia Paradis' grosse Kunstreise—Voraussetzungen und Motive' in *Österreichische Musikzeitschrift*, Oct. 1960. These articles and the present one form part of a monograph (in preparation) on Maria Theresia Paradis.

² Letter to L. Hagenauer, 28 May 1764.

³ Sophie de la Roche, 'Briefe über Mannheim', pp. 72-6.

⁴ The tour had begun in August 1783 (declaration made by Josef Anton Paradis on 20 March 1800, City Archives, Vienna, GZ.3018/1808).

⁵ Count Florimond Claude von Mercy-Argenteau (1727-94), ambassador in Paris from 1766 to 1790.

direction of J. P. Salomon, after his disagreement with the Professional Concerts in 1784.⁶ It was one of the principal duties of Masons to give any assistance in their power to the members of their own lodge or of other lodges. In Vienna there had been a great development of Masonry since the accession of Joseph II, who had lifted the ban imposed by the Empress Maria Theresia. It is, of course, impossible that Mozart should have sent a letter of recommendation, as it was not till the end of 1784 that he became an entered apprentice in the lodge 'Zur Wohltätigkeit', which was subsequently incorporated in the new lodge 'Zur neugekrönten Hoffnung' by the imperial decree of 11 December 1785. But it is by no means improbable that Leopold Koželuch wrote on behalf of his pupil. In 1783 he had joined the lodge 'Zu den drei Adlern', which had been formed after the division of the lodge 'Zu den drei Adlern und zum Palmbaum' and was therefore a Mason of some years' standing. Any recommendation which he might have sent would have been particularly valuable, as he had a considerable reputation as a composer at that time. As it happened, Maria Theresia's father, Josef Anton Paradis, secretary to the Court, was also a Mason. In 1783 he was a member of the lodge 'Zur wahren Eintracht', which also included a number of distinguished literary men who were friends of the family, such as Johann B. Alxinger, Alois Blumauer, Josef F. Ratschky, and the very influential Court councillor Franz S. von Greiner, whose daughter Karoline (later known as an author under the name of Karoline Pichler) was a close friend of Maria Theresia.⁷ Letters of recommendation from members of the lodges were by no means uncommon at this time. It is not certain that Maria Theresia received them from this source, but it is at least possible.⁸

The dates given in contemporary sources for arrivals in Paris and in London are generally inaccurate. However it seems clear from K. F. Cramer⁹ and from the *Brünner Zeitung*¹⁰ that Maria Theresia, her mother Rosalia Maria, and possibly also her travelling companion Johann Riedinger from Mannheim, arrived in London on 3 (or 5) November 1784. This agrees with the date of her departure from

⁶ C. F. Pohl, 'Mozart und Haydn in London', ii, pp. 77-8.

⁷ O. E. Deutsch, 'Mozart und die Wiener Logen' (1932); L. Abafi, 'Geschichte der Freimaurerei in Österreich-Ungarn', iv (Budapest, 1893), p. 317; B. Paumgartner, 'Mozart' (1940), pp. 434-6; E. von Komorzynski, 'Mozart' (1941), pp. 171-8; L. Lewis, 'Geschichte der Freimaurerei in Österreich-Ungarn' (1872), p. 30.

⁸ According to Abafi, *op. cit.*, p. 328, the lodge 'Zur Wohltätigkeit' (which Mozart joined in 1784) supplied letters of recommendation for a brother who was travelling abroad; these letters were sent to the lodges in the cities which he visited, including the lodge 'Zum goldenen Apfel' in Dresden and the lodge 'Zum heiligen Joseph' in Nuremberg.

⁹ *Magazin der Musik* (1786), no. 8, pp. 93 foll.

¹⁰ *Brünner Zeitung* (1785), no. 36, pp. 285 foll.

Paris, which can be assumed not to have been later than 25 October on the evidence of entries in her album made by friends in France.¹¹ The *Journal von und für Deutschland* (1786)¹² gives the date of her arrival as December 1784, which, though obviously wrong, is not very far out.

Thanks to the London newspapers and magazines we are relatively well informed about Maria Theresia's stay in the English capital: certainly we know more about it than we do about other stages of her travels. By Continental standards the London Press of this time had reached a very advanced state of development. Not only the number of periodicals published but also their circulation was far in excess of anything that Paris, not to mention Vienna, had to show. It was Charles Burney who encouraged the Press and the public to take an interest in the blind pianist. By smoothing the way for her he fulfilled the function of the present-day publicity manager. Without his help she would have found it much harder to get a footing in London. By February 1785 she was living at 1 Panton Square, off the Haymarket, where she sold tickets for her concerts, in accordance with the custom of the time, though these were also available at other places.¹³ We do not know where she lived before this, whether it was in a hotel or in a private house.

In November the concert season—the Professional Concerts in Hanover Square Rooms and the rival Pantheon Concerts under J. P. Salomon—had not yet begun. The Professional Concerts opened on 26 January 1785, the Pantheon Concerts on the following day.¹⁴ These orchestral concerts always included one or more popular soloists, and it was indispensable for an unknown musician from abroad to make his first appearance at them. Recitals in the modern sense of the word were rare at this time: it was not until the nineteenth century that they began to become normal. Before Maria Theresia could think of appearing on the concert platform she had to present her letters of recommendation to the Court, the houses of the nobility and the embassies, in other words to make the right contacts in Society. It is clear from the advance notices published by Burney in January, February and March 1785 that she

¹¹ Maria Theresia's album in the Städtische Bibliothek, Vienna, p. 208.

¹² No. 8, pp. 93 foll.

¹³ e.g. for her benefit concert on 8 March 1785 the *Morning Chronicle* and *Daily Advertiser* of 3 March announces that tickets are available from Longman and Broderip's Music shop in Cheapside, Mr. Fountain's Antigallican Coffehouse, Threadneedle Street, and Mr. Moore, Stationer, Vear Street, No. 6, Oxford Road. Dr. C. B. Oldman informs me that there is an engraved ticket of admission in the Banks Collection of concert tickets in the British Museum.

¹⁴ Information from Dr. C. B. Oldman.

had brought a good many such letters with her: this publicity was based primarily on information supplied by Maria Theresia herself or by her mother.¹⁵

The first of Burney's articles appeared in the *London Magazine* for January 1785, pp. 30 foll.¹⁶ It was followed by others which were either identical or printed with minor alterations, in the *Lady's Magazine* (February 1785, pp. 75-7), the *Universal Magazine* (February 1785, pp. 94-6), *St. James's Chronicle* (19 February 1785) and the *Gentleman's Magazine* (March 1785, pp. 175-6 and 215). A much fuller account was published in the *Whitehall Evening Post* (No. 5897, 1-3 March 1785), shortly before Maria Theresia's last public appearance in Almack's Rooms on 8 March. The original article even found its way to Germany, where it was published with comments by the *Journal von und für Deutschland*¹⁷; the *Universal Magazine* is cited as the source, but it is clear that the account in the *Whitehall Evening Post* was also used. Burney not only supplied this biographical material to the English Press but also translated Konrad Pfeffel's poem 'Auf die Blindheit des Fräulein von Paradis' (written in Colmar in 1783), which Maria Theresia's mother had supplied. The translation appeared, with the article, on the front page of the *London Magazine*, which, it is interesting to note, was edited by Burney's son Charles, well-known as a Greek scholar: it was also published in 'Poets' Corner' in *St. James's Chronicle* (1 March 1785).

From Burney's articles we learn the destination of Maria Theresia's letters of recommendation: they were presented to the Queen, the Prince of Wales, the Austrian ambassador (Count Kageneck) and other influential patrons, and to the leading English musicians of the capital. Support also came from a number of important German musicians living in London: [Wilhelm] Cramer, [Christian F.] Abel and [Johann P.] Salomon are the only ones mentioned by name, but to these we must certainly add the oboist Johann Christian Fischer and the flautist Johann Georg Graeff, whom we shall meet later. In accordance with custom Maria Theresia was invited first of all to the Court to show what she could do: she played at Windsor and later in London at St. James's Palace. George

¹⁵ Burney may have met Maria Theresia when he was in Vienna in 1772, though he does not mention her in 'The Present State of Music in Germany' (1773). But he certainly took a great interest in her career and is known to have done intensive research on her biography, as I learn from Mr. Roger Lonsdale, who has worked on Dr. James M. Osborn's collection at Yale, which includes Burney's correspondence with Christian Ignatius Latrobe.

¹⁶ For the newspaper references (from the Burney Newspaper Collection in the British Museum) I am indebted to Miss Vera J. Ledger, for magazine references to Dr. Oldman and Mr. Lonsdale.

¹⁷ Jhg. II (1786), no. 8, pp. 93 foll.

III was a Handel enthusiast, and at his request she played Handel's fugues, which she was obliged to get up specially for the occasion.¹⁸ There is unfortunately no reference in the archives of Windsor Castle to her performance there.¹⁹ On the other hand the contemporary German papers have an account of her visit to Carlton House, the residence of the Prince of Wales (later George IV), when his Royal Highness played the cello to her accompaniment. We learn also of a concert at the palace of the Saxon ambassador (Count Brühl), at which the Austrian ambassador and the Prime Minister (William Pitt) were present. The newspaper reports particularly stress the profound impression made on Pitt by this performance and also praise the affability of the Prince of Wales in inviting Frau Paradis to sit beside him on a sofa.²⁰ These Society functions naturally took up a good deal of time. They were followed by the Christmas holiday, and January 1785 was taken up with preparations and rehearsals for the public concerts. Hence it was not until February that Maria Theresia was able to make her first public appearance.

This took place at the second subscription concert of the Professional Concerts, under the direction of C. F. Abel, on 16 February 1785. Those taking part included Wilhelm Cramer (violin)²¹, Benjamin Blake (viola)²², James Cervetto (cello)²³ and Johann Christian Fischer (oboe)²⁴, together with 'Signor Franchi' and the celebrated *castrato* Giustino Fernando Tenducci.²⁵ Maria Theresia played a concerto, the composer of which is not mentioned in the advertisement in the *Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser* (14

¹⁸ G. Schilling, 'Universal Lexikon der Tonkunst' (1835-40), v, p. 372; C. von Wurzbach, 'Biographisches Lexikon des Kaiserthums Österreich (1856-91), xxi, p. 286; *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* (Vienna, 1817), no. 34, pp. 288-90.

¹⁹ Information from Dr. C. B. Oldman.

²⁰ E. L. Gerber, 'Historisch-biographisches Lexikon der Tonkünstler' (1790-2), ii, p. 76; Wurzbach, *loc. cit.*; 'Österreichische National-Encyclopädie' (1835-7), iv, pp. 153-5; *Journal von und für Deutschland*, *loc. cit.*; *Brünner Zeitung* (1785), no. 36, pp. 285 foll.

²¹ Cramer (1745-99), father of J. B. Cramer, was a pupil of Johann Stamitz and Cannabich. After serving in the Mannheim orchestra he settled in London and became leader of the orchestra at the Opera and the Pantheon, Ancient and Professional Concerts.

²² Blake (1761-1827) was a pupil of Antonio Thamell and Cramer. He played in the orchestra of the Italian opera, at the Prince of Wales's private concerts and in the King's band. Notable as a teacher, he was also one of the first English composers to write music for the viola.

²³ Cervetto (1747-1837), the son of Giacobbo Basevi Cervetto, was born in London and studied with his father and Abel. As a soloist he was noted for the beauty of his tone. He wrote several works for his instrument.

²⁴ Fischer (1733-1800) had a great reputation as a soloist. Before coming to London he was a member of the Court orchestra at Dresden. Mozart met him in The Hague in 1765 and later (in 1774) wrote a set of piano variations (K.179) on a minuet of Fischer's.

²⁵ Tenducci (1736-1800) was one of the outstanding singers of the time. Mozart, who met him in London in 1763-4 and again in Paris in 1778, wrote for him a *scena* for soprano and fourteen *obbligato* instruments (K.315b); see C. B. Oldman, 'Mozart's Scena for Tenducci' in *Music & Letters*, January 1961, pp. 44-52. 'Signor Franchi' has not been identified.

February 1785)—perhaps it was one of her favourite works by Koželuch. The other works in the programme were, in the first half, a new overture by Haydn, a trio for violin, viola and cello by an unnamed composer, and a new *concertante* for violin, cello and oboe; in the second half, a violin concerto by Geminiani, a cello concerto (composer not mentioned), and a new symphony by Abel, together with arias sung by Franchi and Tenducci.

On 3 March 1785 Maria Theresia played again, this time at the sixth subscription concert of Salomon's Pantheon Concerts. The details of the programme and the names of the soloists are known from several advertisements.²⁶ The first part began with an overture by J. C. Bach, followed by the fifth of Handel's *concerti grossi* and a cello concerto, played by John Crosdill.²⁷ Songs were contributed by Mlle. Chanu and Mme. Gertrud Elisabeth Mara.²⁸ In the second half there was an overture by Haydn, an oboe concerto played by Fischer, and a song by Mlle. Chanu, after which came a "concerto Piano-Forte" played by Maria Theresia, a song by Mme. Mara and a "full piece", i.e. a symphony. Maria Theresia was advertised as a "young lady from Vienna who has been blind from her infancy", and in spite of the programme was announced to play "a concerto on the harpsichord". The advertisement is clearly correct, since the critic of the *Morning Chronicle* for 8 March (No. 4934), in a notice which is friendly but not exactly enthusiastic—"for a blind performer and one so young, [she] produced effects better than could have been expected"—expressed the view that it was a pity her instrument was not a piano.²⁹ He also mentions the name of the composer—Leopold Koželuch. In the *Morning Herald and Daily Advertiser* for 2 March (No. 1357) we find also De Camp mentioned as an instrumentalist and Signor Bartolini as a singer, but these names do not occur in the issue for the following day (No. 1358) nor in the *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser* for 3 March (No. 17,543). It would appear that Mlle. Chanu deputized for Bartolini.

Maria Theresia's last appearance was at a benefit concert in

²⁶ *Morning Chronicle*, 3 March, no. 4930; *Morning Herald*, 2 March, no. 1357; *Grand Advertiser*, 3 March, no. 2606; *Morning Herald*, 3 March, 1358.

²⁷ Crosdill (1751-1825), who began his career as a choirboy at Westminster Abbey under John Robinson and Benjamin Cooke, was for many years principal cellist at the Three Choirs Festival in addition to numerous appointments in London, including that of cello teacher to the Prince of Wales. According to Reichardt his tone was rather hard and inferior to Cervetto's.

²⁸ Mme. Mara (1749-1833), née Schmeling, was at first a child prodigy on the violin, but after studying singing with Domenico Pietro Paradisi in London she appeared as a soprano and had a great success as an opera singer in Dresden and Berlin. She returned to London in 1784 and spent most of her time there until 1802. Her voice is said to have been remarkable both for its beauty and for its range.

²⁹ Information from Mr. Roger Lonsdale.

Willis's (formerly Almack's) Rooms in King's Street, St. James. It was originally intended to take place on 4 March but for some reason was postponed to 8 March. This time the preliminary announcements were unusually numerous³⁰, since the pianist was to receive the whole proceeds of the concert. The most important are those in the *Morning Chronicle* for 7 March (No. 4933) and the *Public Advertiser* of the same date (No. 15,844), both of which agree on the programme and the performers. Those taking part in this 'Grand Concert of Vocal and Instrumental Music' were Mlle. Chanu, Tenducci, the cellist Johann Mara (husband of the singer), Fischer and Graeff³¹, who was appearing for the first time in London. The conductor was Salomon. Maria Theresia played "a favourite *concertante*" for piano and oboe *obbligato* by "the famous Hoffmann of Vienna"³² and also accompanied Tenducci, who sang, "by desire", J. C. Bach's aria 'Io ti lascio'.³³ The German and Austrian papers³⁴ do not fail to mention that the concert was attended by the leading members of Society, including the Duc de Chartres, who was in London at the time, but tell us nothing about Maria Theresia's performance.

This was the sum of Maria Theresia's activity in London: no further concerts are mentioned in the Burney Newspaper Collection. Three public concerts in a visit to a capital city which lasted nearly five months do not amount to much. One cannot help suspecting that the pianist had meant to stay longer but had to leave prematurely. The official explanation, accepted uncritically by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century dictionaries and other sources, that she could not stand the English climate finds some support in the fact that her mother died of a disease of the lungs³⁵ and Maria herself, if one may trust the register of deaths (which is certainly not reliable) succumbed to an inflammation of the lungs in 1824. We may recall that a severe cold compelled Leopold Mozart to take to his bed in 1764. On the other hand it is by no means unlikely that Maria Theresia interrupted her stay because the receipts from her concerts were inadequate, or even because of the cool reception which she had from the public. Burney's Press campaign and the patronage of Court and Society created an initial popularity for her, but this

³⁰ Too numerous, in fact, to be detailed here.

³¹ Graeff, of German origin, was also known as a composer. The advertisement in the *Morning Chronicle* makes it clear that this was his first public appearance in London (information from Dr. C. B. Oldman).

³² i.e. Leopold Hoffmann (1730-93), *Kapellmeister* at St. Stephen's, Vienna, from 1772.

³³ On this see C. B. Oldman, *op. cit.* (n. 25).

³⁴ *Brünner Zeitung* (1785), no. 36; *Cramer's Magazin der Musik* (1786), ii/2, p. 778.

³⁵ Register of the parish of St. Stephen's, Baden bei Wien, 25 March 1794; obituary notice of Maria Theresia Paradis in the *Wiener Zeitung* for 6 February 1824, p. 131.

may very well have worn off earlier than was expected. Much the same happened to Mozart and his sister in London. It is also significant to note that the year 1785 was not a successful one either for the Professional Concerts or the Pantheon Concerts: the receipts hardly covered the expenses.³⁶ It may very well be, therefore, that the proceeds of the benefit concert fell short of expectation. Nor does Maria Theresa's reception by the public seem to have been a complete success, in spite of the official notices, which have nothing but praise for her performance. An anonymous writer in the *Public Advertiser* for 9 March 1785 (No. 15,846)³⁷ is severely critical:

Miss Paradis, with various abatements, how many prodigies of the musical world have appeared—allowing this and that deficiency, how wonderful. So it has been with every infantine exertion of late—the Mozart, the Thomasino, little Parke etc. But what is all this to positive excellence? To Charles Burney, Miss Guest, and yet more to Clemente [*sic*]?—Very well it may be for a poor blind girl—But—why is the auditor at an half-guinea concert to be fobb'd off with butts.³⁸

Maria Theresa was not only an accomplished performer on the keyboard (her repertory included concertos by C. P. E. Bach, Koželuch, Hoffmann, Wagenseil and G. F. Richter) but also a trained singer. Though she did not appear in this capacity at her three public concerts, she showed her skill in a performance of the cantata on her blindness written by Pfeffel, which she sang "in a truly pathetic and easy manner".³⁹ The poem was set to music by Koželuch, who published it in Vienna in November 1785; but Maria Theresa herself also wrote a setting under the title 'Ich war ein kleines Würmchen', which was published, together with a setting of Sophie de la Roche's poem 'Meiner schönen, trauten Linde', as a supplement to the 'Wienerischer Musenalmanach' for 1785. Presumably this was composed some time during 1784. It was published as a supplement to Göcking's *Journal von und für Deutschland*⁴⁰, with an ironical note by the editor throwing doubt on Burney's knowledge of German.⁴¹ It is possible that Maria Theresa sang her own setting in

³⁶ C. F. Pohl, 'Mozart und Haydn in London', pp. 17-18.

³⁷ Text supplied by Dr. C. B. Oldman.

³⁸ 'Thomasino' is Mozart's friend Thomas Linley the younger (1756-78), who appeared as a child prodigy on the violin at the age of eight. 'Little Parke' is Maria Hester Parke (1775-1822), who sang at the Three Choirs Festival at Gloucester at the age of fifteen. 'Charles Burney' is presumably Burney's nephew and son-in-law, Charles Rousseau Burney (1747-1819), described in 'A B C Dario Musico' (1780) as "a performer on the harpsichord of most capital and original execution". 'Miss Guest' must be Jane Guest, who taught the Princess of Wales.

³⁹ *Journal von und für Deutschland*, *loc. cit.*

⁴⁰ *loc. cit.*

⁴¹ Burney sent a copy of Pfeffel's poem to Latrobe on 29 December 1784, asking for a

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London, but this is unlikely since Burney's privately printed translation of the text specifically describes the poem as "set to music by her music-master, M. Leopold Kozeluch, of Vienna, 11th November, 1784". According to Fanny Burney a copy was presented to the Queen, who "humanely cheered and revived the blind minstrel with essential tokens of royal liberality".⁴² Needless to say Maria Theresia sang the cantata in German, though she understood English and spoke it.⁴³ Burney's translation does not fit either her setting or Kozeluch's: it was intended for the use of listeners who did not know German.⁴⁴

Maria Theresia left London at the end of March 1785. The date is known from German and Austrian sources⁴⁵ and is confirmed by the fact that her concert tour in Belgium began in Brussels on 7 April. Since she left no memoirs and there is no record of her impressions of any part of her travels, we have no means of knowing whether she had as pleasant a recollection of London as Mozart had. Like him she never saw England again.

literal prose translation, "as my German is very weak" (information from Mr. Roger Lonsdale).

⁴² Percy A. Scholes, 'The Great Dr. Burney' (1948), ii, p. 336.

⁴³ Hester Lynch Piozzi, 'Observations and Reflections made in the Course of a Journey through France, Italy and Germany' (1789), ii, pp. 313-4.

⁴⁴ Letter from Burney to Latrobe, 9 February 1785 (see n. 41).

⁴⁵ *Brünner Zeitung* (1785), no. 36, p. 285; *Wiener Zeitung* (1785), no. 94, p. 2708; *Magazin der Musik* (1786), ii/2, pp. 778 foll.