

**BENJAMIN FRANKLIN at 300 ...WOLFGANG MOZART at 250
Their Masonic and Rosicrucian Legacy**

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The month of January 2006 marks two milestone birthdays of two distinguished men. January 17, marks 300 years since the birth of Benjamin Franklin. And, January 27, marks 250 years since the birth of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. The Masonic Record of both men is quite clear. Their connection to the Society of the Rose & Cross is less clear; however, I believe that a connection is evident by virtue of their written thoughts, beliefs, and by their actions.

Benjamin Franklin joined Freemasonry at age 25; Mozart joined at age 28. Although Benjamin Franklin lived to age 84 and was a Freemason for around 60 years, and even a Past Grand Master of Pennsylvania...I believe, from studying his writings & thoughts that he was introduced to Rosicrucianism much later in his life---and he spent a good deal of his contemplative time pondering in our Learning Grades. Based upon that, I believe that if a record of his Rosicrucian Grade were to exist: Ben Franklin would have attained the IV°. By contrast, it seems quite apparent, that although Mozart's Masonic career was comparatively shorter in years ---he had a somewhat deeper understanding of Rosicrucian principles. This understanding and advanced comprehension is reflected in his Music. It is widely known that he composed Masonic Music (The Magic Flute; Masonic Funeral Music; Gesellenreise -- A Fellowcraft's Journey; O Heiliges Band; Zerflieszet Heit; Geliebte Bruder; Ihr Unsre Neuen Leiter; and The Little Masonic Cantata)...but some of his musical themes reflect a Mystical tone that go far beyond Masonry itself, but extend to Rosicrucianism. Therefore, if a record of his Rosicrucian Grade was to exist: Mozart likely would have attained either the VIII° or even the IX°.

We, in Nebraska College M.S.R.I.C.F., are very fortunate that one of our own distinguished Fraters, Chief Adept Dennis Brydl, IX°, has already presented a paper on Mozart and The Magic Flute. I encourage everyone to re-read his fine paper. My purpose in this presentation is to point to other areas and to enlarge upon the Masonic & Rosicrucian meaning.

When thinking of Benjamin Franklin...Why would a printer take a notion to fly a kite to study the electrical effects of lightning?



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When thinking of Wolfgang Mozart...Why would a music composer, accustomed to setting-together melodious tones suddenly take a notion to incorporate a "philosophical tone" by incorporating magic and mysticism into his music?

The answer to both of the above questions is ROSICRUCIAN INFLUENCES.

While it is said that Craft Masonry in Europe focuses more deeply on the significance of the four elements: Earth/Air/Fire/Water...those elements have an added significance in our study as Masonic Rosicrucians.

I found Ben Franklin's detailed description of how he made his kite (in the 1752 experiment) quite intriguing. Listen from a Rosicrucian point-of-view for mention of all 4 elements either directly or indirectly:

"Make a small cross of the two light strips of cedar, the arms so long as to reach the four corners of a large silk handkerchief when extended; tie the corners of the handkerchief to the extremities of the cross, so you have the body of a kite; which being properly accommodated with a tail, loop, and string will rise in the air, like those made of paper, but this being of silk is fitter to bear the wet and wind of a thunder gust without tearing. To the top of the upright stick of the cross is to be fixed a very sharp pointed wire, raising a foot or more above the wood. To the end of the twine, next the key may be fastened. This kite is to be raised when a thunder-gust appears to be coming on, and the person who holds the string must stand within a door or window, or under some cover so that the silk ribbon may not be wet, and care must be taken that the twine does not touch the frame of the door or window. As soon as any of the thunder clouds come over the kite, the pointed wire will draw the electrical fire from them, and the kite, with all the twine, will be electrified, and the loose filaments of the twine, will stand out every way, and be attracted by an approaching finger. And when the rain has wetted the kite and twine, so that it can conduct the electric fire freely, you will find it stream out plentifully from the key on the approach of your knuckle. At this key the phial may be charged: and from electric fire thus obtained, spirits may be kindled, and all the other electric experiments be performed, which are usually done by the help of a rubbed glass globe or tube, and thereby the sameness of the electric matter with that of lightning completely demonstrated."

It is significant that Ben Franklin coined a lot of words still used in reference to electricity today (battery, charging, conductor, discharge, electrify, positive & negative electricity)

**Notice he stood on the ground = earth.
The kite flew in the air.
The kite was wetted by the rain=water.
And lightning will induce electric-fire.**



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Ben Franklin's sayings tell a lot about the man's practical sense:

- + **"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."**
- + **"Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise."**
- + **"A penny saved is a penny earned."**
- + **"Nothing but money is sweeter than honey."**
- + **"There are 3 faithful friends: An old wife, and old dog and ready money."**
- + **"A good spouse and health is a man's best wealth."**
- + **"A brother may not be a friend; but a friend will always be a brother."**
- + **"Freemasons have no principles or practices that are inconsistent with religion and good manners."---written by Franklin to his mother in a letter in 1738 ---See original draft in Franklin's own handwriting in his Commonplace Book in Collection of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania).**

The creative minds of Benjamin Franklin and Wolfgang Mozart crisscrossed when Mozart composed music for Franklin's invention the armonica or glass harmonica (played by touching the edges of the spinning glass with dampened fingers).

In 1734-1735, the State House, Independence Hall, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania had its cornerstone laid by Franklin. Just a few days ago, I purchased an silver US Fifty-Cent Piece, with Franklin pictured on the obverse and the Liberty Bell on the reverse. Franklin was a member of several Masonic Lodges during his lifetime, including the "Lodge of the Nine Sisters" in Paris and he assisted in the Masonic initiation of the French Philosopher, Voltaire, on April 7th, 1778.

Ben Franklin was truly a wise and learned man, but as his studies were mainly with literature, botany, natural history and the branches of science...they indicate the hallmarks of a Philosophus, IV° .

I am convinced that Mozart went much further and blended the best Masonic and Rosicrucian beliefs that true friendship & true Brotherhood are magical in the sense that a transformation takes place whereby an acquaintance is transformed into a friend & that friend is later transformed into a Brother.

In a similar manner, Ben Franklin illustrated the genuineness and wholesome virtues of Masonry and Rosicrucianism by the apt saying mentioned earlier in this paper that "A brother may not be a friend; but a friend will always be a Brother."



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However, Mozart incorporated a deeper spirituality into his themes. In many ways, Mozart's works of classical music have a soothing aspect, which has almost a "healing" touch to the soul. And, healing of the mind, body or soul is exactly what Father Christian Rosenkreutz envisioned when he founded his Society.

Benjamin Franklin told Ezra Stiles on 9 March 1790 his religious beliefs. Franklin said: "Here is my creed. I believe in one God, the creator of the universe. That he governs by his providence. That he ought to be worshipped. That the most acceptable service we render to him is doing good to his other children. That the soul of man is immortal, and will be treated with justice in another life respecting its conduct in this. These I take to be the fundamental points in all sound religion, and I regard them as you do in whatever sect I meet with them."

Having established the fact that Franklin believed in Almighty God, it becomes necessary to point out that Franklin was a "work in progress" with respect to Christianity. In the same discourse with Ezra Stiles, Ben states: "As to Jesus of Nazareth, my opinion of whom you particularly desire, I think his system of morals and his religion, as he left them to us, the best the world ever saw or is likely to see, but I apprehend it has received various corrupting changes, and I have, with most of the present dissenters in England, some doubts as to his divinity; though it is a question I do not dogmatize upon, having never studied it, and I think it needless to busy myself with it now, when I expect soon an opportunity of knowing the truth with less trouble." Some people find fault with those statements, perceiving them as un-Christian. However, I look at his viewpoint that Jesus left us a system of morals the best the world has ever seen...shows that Franklin was a follower of Jesus Christ. It is somewhat apparent that Ben had doubts about a triune God...yet he admits not dwelling on the finer points of that particular issue. And when he says he might find out the truth "soon" --- I wonder if that wasn't a hint that he knew his death would be soon (which it was) and that via death, Franklin would discover those mysteries in Heaven? Holding a faith in Almighty God enabled Franklin to be a Freemason. I submit that his being a follower of Jesus Christ was Franklin's way of expressing the beginning elements of Christian belief. Since I already described him as a "work in progress" within Christianity....it validates my opinion that Franklin was, at best, a IV^o in the Learning Grades of Rosicrucianism. We must recall that not every Rose opens up and blooms in highest glory. A Rose bud, like a beginning student takes time to mature. And, so it was for Ben Franklin. He had great expertise in vast areas of life, yet he struggled in other areas of life.

A person must be mindful of Franklin's mortal weaknesses and his stumbling blocks. He suffered greatly with kidney stones/ bladder stones and took opium in an effort to lessen his pain. Over a period of years, it became his addiction. Undeniably, he was very wise and had an enlightened mind. Had Franklin lived longer, it is likely he would have expanded his philosophy with



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regard to all areas of Christianity. And, as I indicated earlier: Franklin was nearing death and may have viewed the truth about Christian dogma as an "experiment" to be placed in the hands of his Creator. Among Franklin's other mortal weaknesses was the fact that he fathered an illegitimate son, William Franklin.

By contrast, Wolfgang Mozart was happily married to Constanze Weber and fathered six children; although only two survived infancy. Mozart had a close relationship with his father, Leopold Mozart. Soon after Wolfgang became a Master Mason in Vienna, Austria, in early 1785, his father Leopold became a Master Mason later that same year, as did Wolfgang's close friend and fellow musician, Franz Joseph Haydn who completed the trio to be raised a Master Mason in 1785.

I might note that Wolfgang had been initiated as an Entered Apprentice Mason on December 14, 1784 in Lodge zur Wohltatigkeit . He received the degree of Fellow Craft Mason 10 days later, done as a courtesy by Lodge zur wahren Eintracht (True Concord Lodge) at the request of his mother lodge. The date he was raised to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason is surmised to be early in 1785.

Masonry was a common association of many Musicians in Europe. The Grand Lodge of British Columbia cites strong evidence that Ludwig van Beethoven was a Freemason. Mozart traveled extensively to Dresden, Berlin, Munich, Linz, Vienna, and Prague. It is appropriate to note that Rosicrucians thrived near Universities. Most of the places to which Mozart traveled, were near those centers of higher learning.

Several of the sayings of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart reveal a noticeable Rosicrucian influence in his life:

- + "I pay no attention whatever to anybody's praise or blame. I simply follow my own feelings. "
- + "Nevertheless, the passions, whether violent or not, should never be so expressed as to reach the point of causing disgust; and music, even in situations of the greatest horror, should never be painful to the ear but should flatter and charm it, and thereby always remain music."
- + "It is a great consolation for me to remember that the Lord, to whom I had drawn near in humble and child-like faith, has suffered and died for me, and that He will look on me in love and compassion."
- + "Neither a lofty degree of intelligence nor imagination, nor both together go to the making of a genius. Love, love, love, that is the soul of genius."



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+ "I thank my God for granting me the opportunity of learning that death is the key which unlocks the door to our true happiness." (I believe what Mozart is saying here is that our earthly labors will bear fruit in Heaven after death.)

Mozart praised Almighty God for the gift of eternal life for the soul. The Rituals of the Masonic Rosicrucian Society in England (the SRIA) follow this thought closely with a hymn.

The closing Rosicrucian Hymn reads:

*All hail. The wondrous secret know,
Ye Blest on high and man below,
The 'Elixir of Life' above
Is the "Divine Creator's Love."
Then why this struggle here on earth,
When soon we'll hail a second birth,
When Life Eternal will be mine,
The Elixir, The "Love Divine"?
Hosannas now to Heaven we sing,
Our praises to the Almighty ring.
The "Elixir of Life" shall be,
The love that God hath granted me.
Oh Holy, Righteous, Blessed Lord,
By every living thing adored,
Grant us the Elixir ye crave,
For "Love Divine" alone can save.*

Brother Benjamin Franklin died comparatively wealthy, while Brother Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart died poor. Late in his life, Mozart encountered economic difficulties and it was his Masonic friends who helped support him financially.

To mark the Benjamin Franklin tricentennial (300 years since his birth) and the Wolfgang Mozart bicenquinquagenary (250 years since his birth).... I held in my hand that recently purchased Ben Franklin U.S. Half-Dollar coin minted in my birth year of 1963...and I listened to a recording Mozart's Aria 14...Queen of Night's Aria....and I thought about the lives of both men. I am grateful for their contributions to our world. I hope that all our Fraters will remember the Masonic & Rosicrucian Legacies of Franklin & Mozart.



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Sources and Recommended Readings:

- Masonic Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon, Canada...profile: Mozart
http://freemasonry.bcy.ca/biography/mozart_a/mozart_a.html
- Masonic Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon, Canada...profile: Franklin
http://freemasonry.bcy.ca/biography/franklin_b/franklin_b.html
- Masonic Grand Lodge of Indiana: "Mozart, Music and Masonry"
<http://www.indianafreemasons.com/imosanctum/mozartandmasonry.html>
- Encyclopedia Americana
- Mackey's Encyclopedia of Freemasonry
- Nebraska College MSRICF, research paper, Die Zauberflote (The Magic Flute) by Frater Dennis Brydl, IX°...
- Benjamin Franklin's Commonplace Book, Historical Society of Pennsylvania
- Rosicrucian SRIA Ritual (page 53) http://www.geocities.com/alex_sumner/sria.pdf
- www.mfiles.co.uk/composers/Wolfgang-Amadeus-Mozart.htm

(sound source) I would recommend listening (either before or after reading this research paper) to Mozart's, Aria 14 - Queen of Night's Aria;
<http://www.masonmusic.org/mozart.html>

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