



1791: Mozart's Last Year

By H. C. Robbins Landon, M. C. Landon

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The last month of the year 1791 witnessed what Robbins Landon calls "the greatest tragedy in the history of music" - the premature death of the 35-year-old Mozart. The event was surrounded by enigma and intrigue, allegations of poisoning and sexual scandal. Drawing on his knowledge of the sources, Professor Landon seeks to cut through the fantasy to present the facts and to reconstruct the story of the last year of Mozart's life. The composition of such works as the "Requiem", "The Magic Flute" and "La Clemenza di Tito" is discussed in detail, and light is thrown on Mozart's relations with the freemasons, with Salieri, Sussmayr and others.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

When Haydn left on a concert tour to London in December 1790, Mozart said farewell forever, and most people assumed it was Haydn's health that he was worried about. As we know now, the elder composer was to live for almost two decades more; Mozart, a single year. It was to be a year in which he wrote *The Magic Flute*, *La Clemenza di Tito*, and the Clarinet Concerto, as well as most of the Requiem; it was also a year of mounting disappointment in his career as part of the Viennese musical establishment, and a year of growing debt. Robbins Landon is keen to debunk the myths: Mozart was not poisoned, but died of progressive kidney failure, and Salieri was innocent of his death, though not of promoting his own career at Mozart's expense. Landon defends Mozart's wife, Constanze, against the libels of biographers, though at times his portrait of comfortable bourgeois monogamy sounds like special pleading and overlaps with hints of conscientious bohemian racketiness. This is a wonderful portrait of a great artist and the city where he lived; in passing, Landon tells us everything we need to know about musical life, Masonry, and the truth about that pauper's grave. --Roz Kaveney

From Publishers Weekly

"Amadeus, the play and film, popularized the many legends about Mozart's 'decline and fall.' In this factual account of the composer's last year, musicologist Landon gathers authentic contemporary documents to 'bring us nearer to Mozart and his wife, Constanze, than does fiction, even at its most inspired,'" reported PW. Illustrated.

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Users Review

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