

EPILOGUE

„The Mozart player must shoulder a burden of perfection that goes beyond his powers.“ (Alfred Brendel⁶⁷⁴). It is the same for the researcher, and the editors of the *New Mozart Edition* could tell us a thing or two about that. One cannot be grateful enough for their devoted work over decades; it was the basis of my own investigations. May they forgive me for feeling obliged to point to some unavoidable errors. Even after the unalterable printed edition it will be possible gradually to correct the *errata* and to add missing indications to the *digitized edition* that so commendably keeps every page of the scores and their Critical Reports simultaneously present *online* free of charge. Greater attention to time signatures and tempo words would do a great service to the practice which in still too many cases must mistake indications by other hands for authentic.


Likewise I must ask for leniency for my own mistakes. Among the 1,576 movements with an autograph „tempo“ indication which I submit here sorted into 434 modules, there are surely not a few which I have classified wrongly; readers may have already marked them in red. The lists should nevertheless offer good possibilities for comparison. My starting point in a field very little worked on for 200 years had been the puzzle of the 2,727 movements or parts of movements which - whether so indicated or not - have a new tempo. My file of data that collected all relevant information for each such place into more than 100,000 fields has proved to be a very useful tool. In five decades of research on this subject with constant testing of the results in my work as an opera and concert conductor with soloists, orchestras and choruses, and with new insights from the literature as well as a final check *online* of all current Critical Reports in the NME in May 2009, I have changed some of my assessments concerning the frequency of certain tempo indications. Thus in this book their listing (anyway of minor importance) sometimes differs from that in my earlier essays. A team would be necessary to consolidate the work I have started, since it has certainly become evident that this can only be the beginning. 557 'tempo' indications by foreign hands - anonymous or those of the editors of the NMA - await a researched comparison with the autograph material submitted here.

In the huge field of literature about Mozart as well as in relevant specialist conferences, with rare exceptions the subject of Mozart's tempi which is so extraordinarily important for the practice has been carefully avoided.⁶⁷⁵ *Compound metres*, „large“ 4/4, „heavy“ 3/4, *recitative metre* and *virtual changes of metre* have been left largely undiscussed. The extensive specialist literature about the *minuet* has been content with the simplest, even wrong, answers to the question of its tempos. There is almost no research about the *manners of playing*, so essential for the „(logically) correct“ execution, in their relationship to the other parameters of the performance; the interpreter is still at the mercy of his or her own feeling, experiments and „intuition“ influenced by an overwhelming plenitude of already existing interpretations. Manners of playing can of course in no way be systematized; it would certainly be interesting, however, to find out what style of performance for a composition Mozart had in mind when he chose so carefully (as described) among the thousands of possible modules of *metre+class of note values+tempo word* the most suitable for the indication.

Knowledge of their characteristic features should be the precondition for finding in Mozart's tempo-system the „right“ *mouvement* in the broadest sense of the word for the *actual score*, the *actual ensemble* and one's own *temperament* on this day, in this room, theatre, church or concert hall for this audience.

„The unending study of cross-relations between all types of composition will eventually bear fruit in performances of authenticity, without any dry rot or pedantic historicism.“⁶⁷⁶

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 The author will answer possible questions with pleasure on his homepage, www.mozarttempi.de, in the *impressum* of which his contact details can be found.

⁶⁷⁴ Alfred Brendel, „A Mozart Player Gives Himself Advice“ (1985) in: „*Music, Sense and Nonsense*“ (2015), p. 7.

⁶⁷⁵ There is no headword „Tempo“ (much less a chapter) in the more than 500 pages of the standard work „*Performance Practice. Music after 1600*“ (Howard Mayer Brown and Stanley Sadie, London 1989). In the six-day conference „*Performing Mozart's Music*“ (New York, 1991) this most important matter for the performance was as little a topic as in the Mozart congresses of the other anniversary year, 2006. See, however, *Performance Practices in Classic Piano Music* (Sandra P. Rosenblum, Indiana, 1988), especially *Interaction of Metre, Note Values and Tempo Headings* in Chapter 9: *Choice of Tempo*.

⁶⁷⁶ Erich Leinsdorf, *The Composer's Advocate*, 1981, p. 126.