We publish here, for the first time since 1820, a solo song by the composer-son of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Franz Xaver Mozart was born two hundred years ago on July 29, 1791, six months before the untimely death of his father on Dec. 5, 1791. (For purposes of more closely following the German, we print here a literal English version.)

Besides marking the “Mozart Year,” another good reason to print this song is to testify to the powerful extension of Classical German culture throughout Central Europe. In particular, it is a fitting way to celebrate the independence of Ukraine, where the younger Mozart spent some 28 years of his musical career.

Franz Xaver Mozart, the sixth child of Wolfgang Amadeus and Constanze Mozart, and the younger of their two surviving sons, started to study piano in 1796. Among his teachers were Beethoven’s pupil Hummel and Antonio Salieri. His first compositions, including a piano quartet, appeared in 1802. In 1807 he went to Lemberg, now Lvov, in western Ukraine, where he worked first as a tutor, then as a music teacher, and became a freelance musician in 1813. It was during his extended concert tour throughout Western Europe in 1819-21, that he published “An Emma” in Hamburg. Afterward, he stayed in Lemberg (Lvov) until 1838, when he settled in Vienna. He died in 1844.

The more famous setting of this poem was composed by Franz Schubert in 1814, but not published until the 1820’s. It is unlikely that either composer knew the other’s version. The similarities are striking: Both used dupe meter, and the key of F—Schubert chose F major with a brief modulation into F minor and its relative major, A; F.X. Mozart chose F minor, modulating into F major to end in the same key as Schubert. Both composers began the song with a repeated low F in a dotted rhythm for the words, Weit in. Yet the versions are very different.

Schubert repeated the sad declaration that ends the second stanza (“Thou livest not of my love”) and ended, as Schiller did, with the query, “does it die like an earthly thing?” The voice’s last note hovers on the third, and the piano completes the piece wordlessly with the tonic, F, expressed as a long pedal-point in the bass, as if to imply that the answer is only in the depths of the soul. The song was printed as part of Op. 58 with “Hektors Abschied” and “Des Mädchens Klage,” settings of two other Schiller poems.

Franz Xaver Mozart’s version, while not as brilliant as Schubert’s, has a rich, haunting quality. It is quite “operatic,” modulating through rapid key changes and mood changes (like the remarkable enharmonic shift to F on the word Pracht—splendor), to declaim the final words of the poem, “does it die like an earthly thing?” with a rising fifth—the inflection of a question. But Mozart adds a coda in a new key (F major), a new meter (triple), and a new tempo (allegretto moderato). The coda brings back the words of the second stanza, to end with the hope, “thou wouldst be alive in my heart.” The tenor soloist closes on the F of the top of the middle register, after a bravura cadenza up to a high B.

—Nora Hamerman

An Emma

Weit in nebelgrauer Ferne
Liegst mir das vergangne Glück,
Nur an einem schönen Sterne
Weilt mit Liebe noch der Blick.
Aber, wie des Sternes Pracht,
Ist es nur ein Schein der Nacht.

Deckte dir der lange Schlummer,
Dir der Tod die Augen zu,
Dich besäße doch mein Kummer,
Meinem Herzen lebstest du.
Aber ach! du lebst im Licht,
Meiner Liebe lebst du nicht.

Kann der Liebe süß Verlangen,
Emma, kann’s vergänglich sein?
Was dahin ist und vergangen,
Emma, kann’s die Liebe sein?
Ihre Flamme Himmelsglut,
Stürbt sie wie ein irdisch Gut?

To Emma

Far in the misty-grey distance
Lies my past happiness;
Only on a beautiful star
Does my eye lovingly dwell;
But, just like the star’s splendor
It is but an apparition of the night.

If the long slumber of death
Ever covered thine eyes,
My cares would yet possess thee,
Thou wouldst be alive to my heart.
But oh! thou livest in the light,
Thou livest not of my love.

Can love’s sweet yearning, Emma,
Can it ever die?
What is gone and dead, Emma,
Can it really be love?
Its flame’s divine glow,
Does it die like an earthly thing?
An Emma
Friedrich Schiller

Franz Xaver Mozart
c. 1820

Andante con moto

Singstimme

Pianoforte

Glück, nur an einem schönen Sterne weilt mit Liebe

noch mein Blick, aber wie... des Sternes Pracht, ist es nur ein

Schein der Nacht, Deckte dir der lange Schlummer, dir der

Tod die Augen zu, dich bekäße doch mein Kummer, meinem Herzen lebst du... Aber
ach! du lebst im Licht, meiner Liebe lebst du nicht. Kann der Liebe süß verlangen, Emma,

kann's vergänglich sein? Was dahin ist und vergangen, Emma, kann's die Liebe sein? Ih'rer Flamme Himmlen,

glut, stirbt sie, stirbt sie, wie ein ärdisch Gu? Deckte

dir der lange Schlummer, dir der Tod die Augen zu, dich be säße doch mein

Kummer, meinem Herzen lebst du, meinem

Herzen lebst du, lebstest du, lebstest du.