

LOVING MOZART: A PAST LIFE MEMORY OF THE COMPOSER'S FINAL YEARS by Mary Montano. Cantus Verus Books, 1995. \$12.95 (paperback).

In reviewing this book I have worn three different 'hats' in an attempt to explore the issues it raises: musicologist, psychical researcher, and enjoyer of a good read—whatever the subject-matter!

As a musical textbook it is the least successful, and even the title is somewhat misleading, since the substance of the text is from Mozart's pupil Sussmayr's point of view. A number of serious errors are made which cast doubt on the validity of the whole. For instance, Mozart's apartment in the Rauhensteingasse, Vienna, is said to have consisted of three rooms without a kitchen, whereas it is known through contemporary sources that four rooms plus a vestibule/kitchen were rented by him. Mozart's passion for billiards (one of the rooms contained his billiard-table) is entirely omitted from the text. Mozart was not moved to the Webers' household in December 1791 and he died in his own apartment at a different time from that stated. Ms Montana's virulent attack upon Constanza Mozart (his wife) is not borne out in existing letters from Mozart or contemporary sources concerning their relationship. Dragging up the 'Mozart was poisoned' theory does not stand up to cross-examination. These mistakes are just the tip of the iceberg.

The book provides more interest as a study in past-life regression. The author claims to be the same soul as Sussmayr and that the American pianist William Kapell (1922-1953) was an incarnation of Mozart. The idea of an everlasting soul seems to be a necessity to mankind—surely there is more to life than threescore years and ten followed by oblivion, we ask! Perhaps the 'reincarnationists' are correct and souls *do* return in different guises in future lives. Ian Stevenson (among others) has provided evidence to support this hypothesis, but as to proof . . . one suspects that the disbeliever will go on disbelieving until he is reincarnated himself.

The format of the book needs a little getting used to: it is arranged like a diary that jumps backwards and forwards in time, place and person—i.e. one follows the fortunes of Sussmayr and Mozart in eighteenth-century Vienna; of the author (referred to throughout as Lina) in late-twentieth-century Albuquerque and of William Kapell in mid-twentieth-century Australia. However, once it is realized that Sussmayr and Lina, and Mozart and Kapell, are the same souls, this no longer poses too great a problem.

Having voiced my reservations about *Loving Mozart* I must admit that I found it a thoroughly enjoyable and moving book to read. The author succeeds in painting a believable picture of the life and times of Mozart and Sussmayr, even if the details are not correct in places. It seeks to convince one of the everlasting nature of love beyond the grave and as such it provides thought-provoking material. Recommended.

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