



Mozart

Marcia Davenport

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Realistic, moving, engrossing and positively brilliant, this first American biography of the 18th century composer re-created Mozart--the man and his music--against the back ground of the he lived in

Mozart Details

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Author : Marcia Davenport

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From Reader Review Mozart for online ebook

Terrol Williams says

While I really enjoyed this book, I have a sneaking suspicion that it played fast and loose with Mozart's life. The writer, in an effort, I suppose, to make it more true-to-life and perhaps more enjoyable reading, wrote this in kind of a novel-ish way, embellishing all kinds of situations with characters' grimaces, groans, exclamations, pacing back and forth, etc. These could hardly have been part of the historical record, so I spent too much time wondering, "Where did she get that? Can that be true?" and similar questions. I think this isn't really my kind of history, maybe. I like to know that my histories are reliable.

That said, Davenport does certainly create a fully realized Mozart, and as this is my first biography of the master, I did learn quite a bit about the life and works of one of my favorite composers. Right after I finished the book I listened again to his Requiem and was exalted. Maybe that alone made it worth reading.

Kathryn says

Like others, I enjoyed this biography, though I see that she perpetuated, perhaps codified, many of the myths of Mozart that are now disputed. Nevertheless, Marcia Davenport gives a clear and lively portrait of Mozart's comings and goings-- it's a good place to start to understand the life of such a remarkable genius.

Rather than the blow by blow of where he went and what he did, however, I wish Marcia Davenport had used the many letters Mozart and his family wrote to try to analyze Mozart's creative process. Perhaps that wasn't the book she wanted to write, but the book she has written is quite readable. Now I'll go try another version, to see what more I can glean.

Sharon Barrow Wilfong says

Davenport wrote this biography in 1931 when the style was to dramatize rather than simply supply information. I understand the thinking behind this method of biography. It is an attempt to make the subject real to the reader. So we have descriptions of Mozart smirking here, stamping his foot impatiently there, as well as several imagined conversations that might have taken place with his friends and family.

Like the movie, Amadeus, which I enjoyed, it creates a life like image of a historical figure so we can see him for ourselves. The problem is, is that the image is largely a figment of the writer's imagination and consequently a false one. I'd much rather the biographer write what actually happened. I have read Mozart's letters so I have already experienced his "voice."

That aversion aside, Davenport does supply us with information that gives us a greater familiarity with arguably the greatest composer who ever lived. Her book gave me insight into his life and surroundings that I did not previously possess.

For the rest of the review cut and paste the link to my blog post:

Jordan Ricks says

More a docudrama than true biography, but enjoyable... for a tragedy!

Greg says

In her foreword, Marcia Davenport tells us: "I can only say that I offer neither a romance nor a text-book. I have tried to tell the truth." Did Mozart actually think, when meeting the infamous Casanova, "...was it possible? Could...those blazing eyes belong to anyone else? Never, impossible!" Well, why not? It's hard to believe that within his own lifetime, Mozart found little fame and even less fortune. He took a beating from the world, and it seems that ultimately, sadly, he just gave up. But this is a beautiful read and one of my favorite biographies.

Pamela Hawley says

Excellent, alive, vibrant, informative. She extrapolates on Mozart's characters and reactions and situations a bit. Very engaging.

J.A. Willoughby says

I used this original hardcover edition flea market acquisition as my research for my own book, Mozart/A Variation on a Life. It's an amazingly well researched book, with Ms. Davenport having access to actual correspondence between Mozart and the members of his family. It is a truly heartbreakingly sad story as well with many horrible details about his life that I was unaware of.

Belinda Schön says

Fergus says

Just had to give this little book four stars, it is so delightfully charming. Was the Maestro's life REALLY like this?

We'll never know, but Davenport's book is captivating.

Like biting into a French mille feuilles pastry!

Yummy.

Ellen Fetu says

Wow. What an incredible book. I could begin rereading immediately! that she wrote this in 1932 and was a person familiar with Europe, the languages, the places of Mozart's life, makes it even better. This book should be required reading for every student of Music. It is all-encompassing and leaves the reader with such a picture of this genius' life, and his music, even if there are certainly minor liberties taken with dialogue. The "painting" of real life, that of nobility and peasant, in 18th c Austria/Germany is exquisite. The depth with which she describes the development of Mozart's musical talent and production is incredible. The background on the operas is beyond enlightening. I try not to "like" or "dislike" characters, especially when they were alive at one time, as in human...but take them as they were. There are so many lessons to glean from his life story...it will take awhile to process it all. I listened to his music while reading...magical.

Breena says

Highly entertaining and informative. I always enjoy a good historical read to put composers lives in perspective.

Good enough that I listened to it a second time through! I would not have enjoyed living in that time period! He left his mother by herself in a strange city all alone...no thank you. Dark, dank, dirty. bleh Travel arrangements and communication are so slow! I would hate having to rely on the generosity of someone else to determine how much I would get paid for a job after its done. That's terrible! How can you support a family like that?

Julie says

I thought it would be interesting to learn about good ole Mozart. This is a well written biography-- Mozart had an interesting life. I really did not like his father when all was said and done. If he were to live in today's world, his father would be a classic "Hollywood" parent. Mozart had a brilliant mind but was exploited in every way by those who wanted to gain from his talent. His father was so controlling and very manipulative. Davenport uses letters sent between the two to illustrate this. Mozart was eccentric to the core-- but he had a sad life. It just makes me think that sometimes, maybe the trade-off between having a "normal" life and lots of talent is just not worth it!!

Amanda says

this book is in my top ten of all time.

however it was NOT published in 1995 - but in 1932. don't know where that other info comes from.
it's challenging at times- marcia davenport often deviates into a foreign tongue without explanation, for

instance. but never before have i felt like i was walking, if not in the shoes of, right behind the character in question. at least, not this vividly. i could see the buildings and sights ms. davenport describes as mozart and his father walk down the road - in part because she had been to every site and seen for herself firsthand what mozart had seen.

this book is the only thing that has had me question whether there is a higher authority - although, admittedly, never for very long. but mozart's gift is certainly something to ponder.

Isabelle says

I'm not sure that this is actually the specific biography that I read, but the description of the book leads me to believe that it could be. I no longer have the book. I read a biography of Mozart after being infatuated with the movie Amadeus, curious how much of the movie was true to his real life.

James Biser says

This book is a very good biography. I like it because it does not romanticize the rumors or imagined stories told about Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Instead, it reports facts about his life and tells a more "black and white" story about how he grew and lived his life. I do not mean to say it ignores facts about infidelity or problems with his sanity, it just reports his life and actions.

This is a great biography.
