

BENNETT: Mozart made accessible for children

By Ronald Bennett Special to the Odessa American | Posted: Wednesday, February 10, 2016 5:00 am

Saturday afternoon found me in a sea of eager children waiting to see “Mozart’s Magnificent Voyage” at the Wagner-Noel Performing Arts Center.

This production by the Classical Kids LIVE! company sponsored by our own Midland-Odessa Symphony & Chorale (MOSC) brings the composer (who celebrated his 260th birthday last month) to the attention of the young audience.

As a teacher of young children, I am always looking for ways to make the music that is so necessary to their musical education become more vividly accessible.

In this production, the adult Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart explains to his 8-year-old son Karl about his life as a famous child prodigy. What he missed was having a home. Wolfgang’s father Leopold was currying favor with the noblemen who at that time were often the only ones who could afford the luxury of supporting a musician, even a precocious prodigy. Therefore they were always on the move. The roads were bumpy and tiring.

The background music consisted of well-played Mozart piano sonatas.

The announcer had told the audience that they would perform for them but that they, too, were part of the program.

Mozart started to sing the first part of “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star” and let the audience end it.

At this point the pianist began playing the set of variations Mozart had written.

As each mood changed the actors moved differently on the stage.



Ronald Bennett new mug

Bennett is an Odessa music teacher, composer and fine arts critic for the Odessa American.

The remainder of the program introduced the plot and characters of Mozart's final opera "The Magic Flute."

I found it most enlightening and refreshing.

I had encouraged my students to attend and some of them did. I will let them help explain the 18th century to the rest of my students.

The production was accompanied by 30 members of the MOSC that approximated the size of the symphony in Mozart's time.

The MOSC is to be congratulated on making this interesting performance available to the area.

Yes, Mozart lives.