

# The New Criterion

## Features

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### Mozart's Linnaeus

by [James Penrose](#)

On Ludwig Alois Friedrich von Köchel, compiler of the *Köchelverzeichnis*.

In 1801, some ten years after Mozart's death, *The Magic Flute* was performed in Paris as *Les Mystères d'Isis* (The Mysteries of Isis). It bore little resemblance to the *Flute* we know today: it was spiced up with arrangements of arias and ensemble pieces from *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, and, for good measure, bits of a Haydn symphony. Far from being shunned by a critical and discerning public, *Les Mystères* was wildly successful, so much so that a quarter century passed before Parisian audiences got to hear the real thing.

Across the Channel, *The Abduction from the Seraglio* and other Mozart operas fared little better in high-spirited mutilations by conductor-impresarios like Sir Henry Bishop. Despite outraged shrieks from the likes of Berlioz, musical vivisection was popular during much of the early nineteenth century; Mozart, revered as he was, was no e ...

**James Penrose** writes about music for *The New Criterion*.

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