

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart



born

January 27, 1756
Salzburg, Austria

died

December 5, 1791
Vienna, Austria

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**Melody is the very
essence of music.**

**When I think of a
good melody, I think
of a fine race horse.**

**—Wolfgang Amadeus
Mozart**

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Volf'-gahng Ah-mah-day'-oos Moh'-tsart. In German,
a “w” is pronounced like an English “v.”

A composer of the Classical era.

Encouraged by his father, Leopold, Wolfgang Mozart began playing the **clavier** at the age of 4. By age 5 he began composing, and by 10 he had written his first **symphony**. He could play any music put in front of him on the clavier, organ or violin. He wrote his first **opera** at 14.

Wolfgang was a child musical **prodigy**. His father, a violinist, guided Wolfgang's career as a touring concert artist throughout Europe. In addition to presenting his son's talent to huge audiences, Leopold wanted Wolfgang to become familiar with the various styles of music popular throughout Europe.

When they weren't touring, Wolfgang and his father were employed by the Archbishop of Salzburg—Leopold as an orchestra conductor and Wolfgang as a violinist. The archbishop recognized Wolfgang's talent and allowed father and son to take extended leaves of absence for concert tours. When the archbishop died, his successor ended the concert tours and eventually fired Wolfgang. Leopold remained as orchestra conductor.

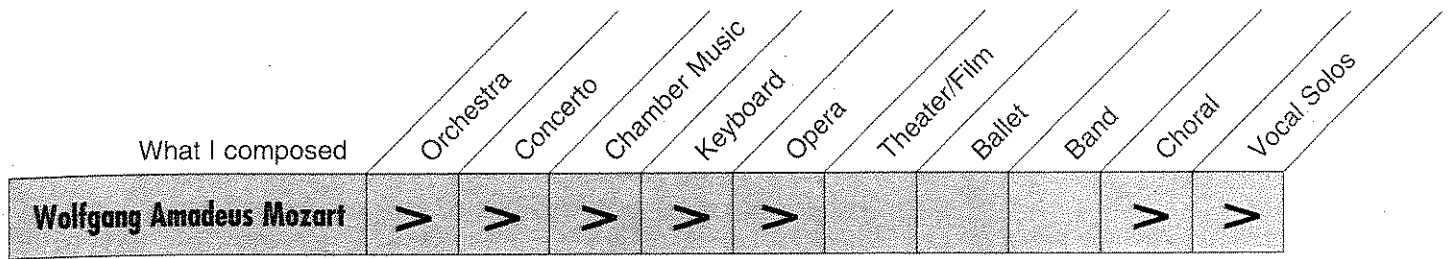
In 1781 (age 25), Mozart moved to Vienna, Austria, and became a full-time composer and music teacher. Although several of his compositions had been published, he soon realized that he earned less money as a composer than as a performer. He married in 1782, but his new wife, Constanze, found it difficult to deal with his inability to make money as a composer. She encouraged him to seek a position as a **court musician**.

In 1787, he took a job as the private musician to the emperor of Austria. This gave him a small but steady income. As a court musician, Mozart was required to compose music for many occasions, both for public performances and for private gatherings hosted by the emperor. He continued in this position, composing music for the emperor as well as other musical groups in Vienna, until his death, just four years later at the age of 35. Eventually all the hard work of continuous composing and trying to make money caused his health to fail. He died a very poor, overworked musical genius.

Mozart wrote hundreds of musical works, including symphonies, operas, **concertos**, **oratorios**, and solo works for clavier. Most of these works were performed in Vienna with great success. Throughout his life, Mozart never had any difficulty in getting his music performed or published, and it was very much admired and appreciated by audiences in Vienna and throughout Europe.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was a short man with piercing eyes and long hair which he groomed carefully. He was outgoing, always friendly, and enjoyed the company of others. He is considered one of the greatest composers of the eighteenth century. He worked tirelessly as a composer and wrote a huge number of works during his short life.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart



Mozart Factoids:

- One of Mozart's friends was Johann Christian Bach, son of **Johann Sebastian Bach**.
- For his entire life, even when he was a child, Mozart was considered a musical genius.
- He wrote several pieces for the glass harmonica, an instrument invented by Benjamin Franklin which became very popular in Europe. It consisted of rotating glass bowls which the performer plays by touching the rims of the bowls as they rotate.
- Mozart was very much influenced by the music of **Franz Joseph Haydn**.

1756: Birth of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

1763: The Peace of Paris treaty yields much of Canada to Great Britain.

1764: London, England, introduces the practice of numbering houses.

1765: British Parliament passes the Stamp Act for taxing American colonies.

1770: **George Frideric Handel's** *Messiah* first performed in New York.

1783: American Revolutionary War ends.

1787: The Constitution of the U.S. signed in Philadelphia.

1789: Beginning of the French Revolution.

1791: Death of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart; **Franz Joseph Haydn** composes *Surprise* Symphony (Listening Example 5).

What in the world is happening?

Review!

Maybe I took this composing thing too seriously.



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Name _____

Place the letter of the correct answer in the space provided.
For True/False questions, print True or False in the space provided.

1. A clavier is _____.
A. a keyboard instrument C. a brass instrument
B. a woodwind instrument D. a percussion instrument

2. True or False: Mozart did not complete his first composition until the age of 40.

3. Mozart composed _____.
A. operas C. oratorios
B. symphonies D. all of the above

4. A prodigy is _____. A. a greatly talented child
A court musician is _____. B. a musician hired by a member of royalty

5. True or False: Mozart's music was widely performed and appreciated during his lifetime. _____

6. The Listening Example, Overture to *The Marriage of Figaro*, is from _____.
A. an oratorio C. a ballet
B. an opera D. a clavier

7. Mozart was influenced by the music of _____.
A. Antonio Vivaldi C. Hildegard
B. Franz Joseph Haydn D. George Frideric Handel

8. True or False: At one point in his life, Mozart was a court musician.

9. True or False: Mozart composed the libretto for *The Marriage of Figaro*.

10. In the listening example, Overture to *The Marriage of Figaro*,
the melody is first played by _____, A. the woodwinds
and then the melody is played by _____. B. the strings

Bonus:

What instrument was invented by Benjamin Franklin?
