

# WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Austrian Composer (1756-1791)



Mozart was born in Salzburg, Austria - the home of castles, wiener schnitzel, and Mozartkugel - a chocolate candy created in 1890 to honor Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

Wolfgang was no ordinary kid. By the time he was four years old, he was composing short pieces that his father wrote down for him. By the time he was six, he and his sister Maria were touring Europe with their father to play music for kings and queens.

At the age of eight Wolfgang published his first two sonatas for the harpsichord. His skills as a composer continued to develop, and by the age of 13 he had composed his first opera. By the time Mozart was in his mid-twenties he had established himself as one of the most accomplished keyboard players in Vienna, and he was recognized as a talented composer.

Mozart loved to compose music. He composed music at the dinner table. He composed music about a cat - probably because he liked acting like a cat. He even composed music while his wife was having a baby. Because he was always composing, the music he wrote would take eight days to play if you played one piece after the next, without ever stopping.

One night a mysterious stranger knocked on the door of Mozart's home. Mozart opened the door and found a man standing in the shadowy hall that he had never seen before. The stranger asked Mozart to compose a requiem Mass, and offered to pay him. The visit from the mysterious man terrified Mozart, so he agreed to write the requiem.

Mozart's health wasn't good when he accepted the commission and it got worse as he worked on the requiem. He told his wife, Constanze, that he believed he was writing it for his own funeral.

On December 5, 1791, Mozart died at 35 years of age, leaving behind a collection of more than 600 compositions, including works for the symphony, the piano, and the opera. His most popular works include his opera, *The Magic Flute*, his chamber ensemble, *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*, and his work for piano, *Ah vous dirais-je, Maman*, based on the melody "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star." These pieces and others are considered to be the finest works in the Classical style.

