



COMPOSER BIOGRAPHY

**WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART**

BORN: January 27, 1756

ERA/STYLE: Classical

DIED: December 5, 1791

HOMETOWN: Salzburg, Austria

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born in Salzburg, Austria, in 1756. He was 4 years old when he began studying keyboard with his father, and received instruction in both the piano and violin. He developed very rapidly and was already composing at the age of 6. Mozart's older sister, Maria Anna, was also a musician, and they often enjoyed playing together. He wrote a number of duets and duos to play with her.

Mozart was 6 when his father took him to Vienna, where he played for the Austrian emperor and was introduced to the public as a child prodigy. He played for the rich, for royalty, and for the public. He dazzled court patrons with his ability to improvise in many styles and sight-read as well as any adult. The next year Wolfgang's father took his family to Paris, where Mozart's first compositions were published. As a teenager, he mastered the piano and completed his first opera, *La finta semplice* (The Simple Pretense). Mozart traveled a great deal and by the time he was 25, he had visited most of the great European cities. In 1782, he married Constanze Weber. He and Constanze had two children.

Mozart was a prolific composer, and wrote over 600 pieces of music. He wrote in almost every major genre, including symphony, opera, solo concerto, chamber music, and the keyboard sonata. While none of these genres were new, the piano concerto was almost single-handedly developed and popularized by Mozart. Among his most famous works are *Eine kleine Nachtmusik* (A Little Night Music, 1787) and the operas *Don Giovanni* (1787) and *Die Zauberflöte* (The Magic Flute, 1791). Mozart also wrote a great deal of religious music, and he composed many dances, serenades, and other forms of light entertainment. He is considered one of the best classical composers who ever lived.