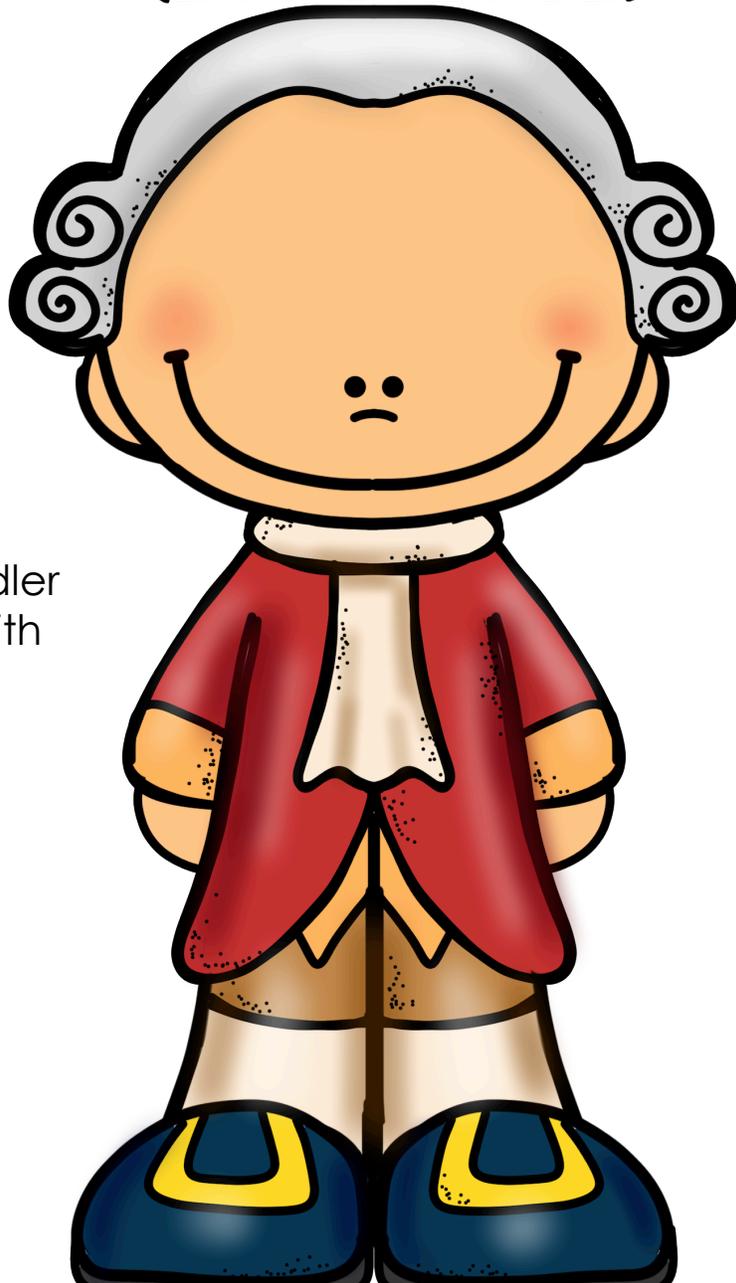


Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

(1756-1791)



By Lynne Chandler
and Britelle Smith

When Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was only four years old he started taking music lessons. By age five he was composing his own music. When he was six he played for the empress of Austria at her court in Vienna.



Wolfgang was born in Salzburg, Austria on January 27, 1756. His parents named Wolfgang after a saint who had once lived near Salzburg. Wolfgang's middle name "Amadeus," means love of God.



Wolfgang's father was a violin teacher and a composer. He worked as a musician for the Archbishop of Salzburg. The Mozarts' home was always filled with music.

Maria Anna was Wolfgang's older sister. She was four years old when he was born. Her nickname was "Nannerl" She learned to play music when she was very young too.



One day Nannerl was taking music lessons from her father. After her lesson, three-year-old Wolfgang climbed up on the bench of the clavier. The clavier is like an early piano. Little Wolfgang played one of the pieces that his sister had played at her lesson.



“Good for you, Wolfgang, good for you!” his sister and father cried out in amazement.

Wolfgang quickly learned to imitate anything his sister played on the clavier. He even began to make up his own pieces of music.

When Wolfgang was six years old his father decided that he would take his children on a trip. He took them to perform their music in two very important cities. The first big city they visited was Munich. Munich was the capital city of Bavaria. Wolfgang was asked to play before the ruler of Bavaria.



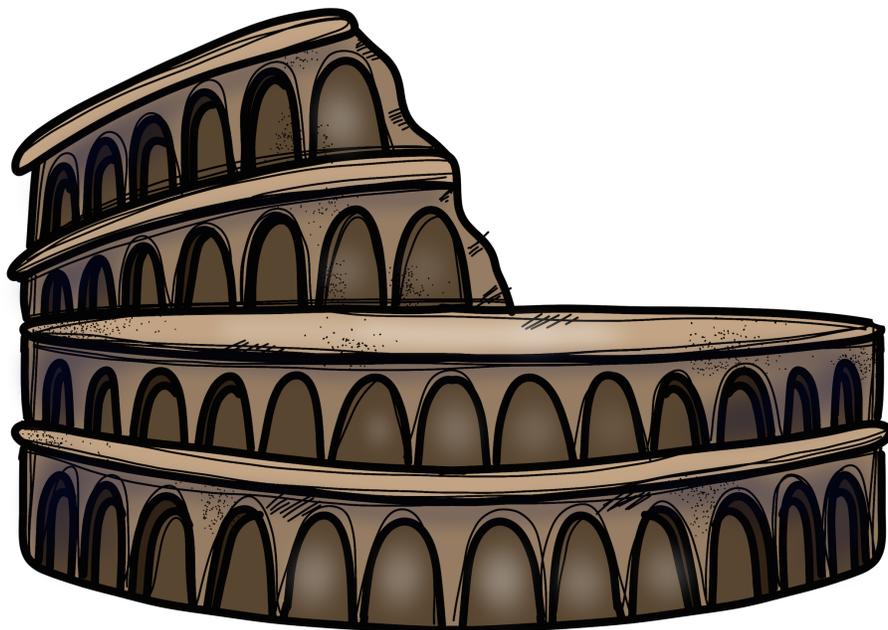


The other famous city they went to was Vienna. Vienna was the capital of Austria. Everyone was amazed at Wolfgang's talent. He could play any musical pieces given to him. This was a very special gift God had given Wolfgang.



From age six to sixteen Wolfgang traveled throughout Europe with his family. He was an excellent performer on the piano, the organ, and the violin. Young Wolfgang was also a brilliant composer.

When Wolfgang was thirteen years old his father took him to Italy. While they were in Italy he began to write operas. Operas are like a play put to music. One day Wolfgang visited the great city of Rome.



He went to listen to a choir performing in the Vatican. The Vatican is where the pope lives.

The Vatican

choir was

performing a

very special

piece of music



called *Miserere*. This piece was sung every year

just before Easter. Because this music was so

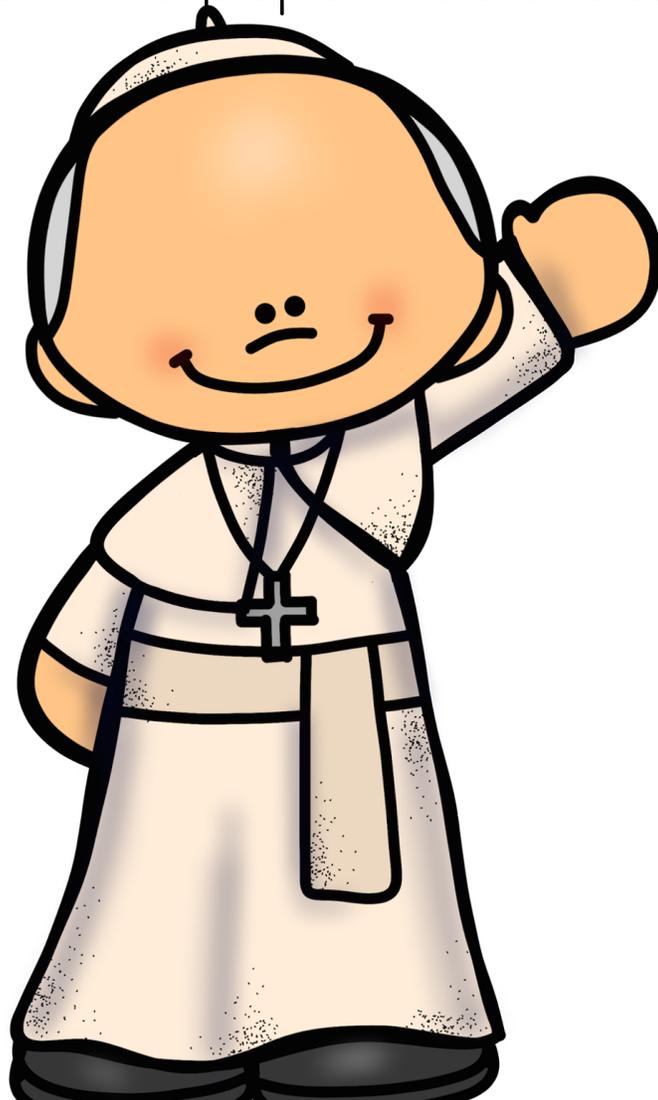
special it was not allowed to be performed

anywhere else. Only the Vatican had the words

and music to *Miserere*. Anyone who tried to

copy it would be punished.

After the performance Wolfgang went back to the room where he was staying. From memory he wrote down every note of the *Miserere* he had just heard. When the pope learned what had happened he asked young Wolfgang to come see him. Everyone who knew about it was wondering what the pope would do.



To everyone's surprise the pope did not punish Wolfgang. Instead he presented him with a great honor. He gave him a special cross from the Vatican. It was called the Cross of the Order of the Golden Spur.



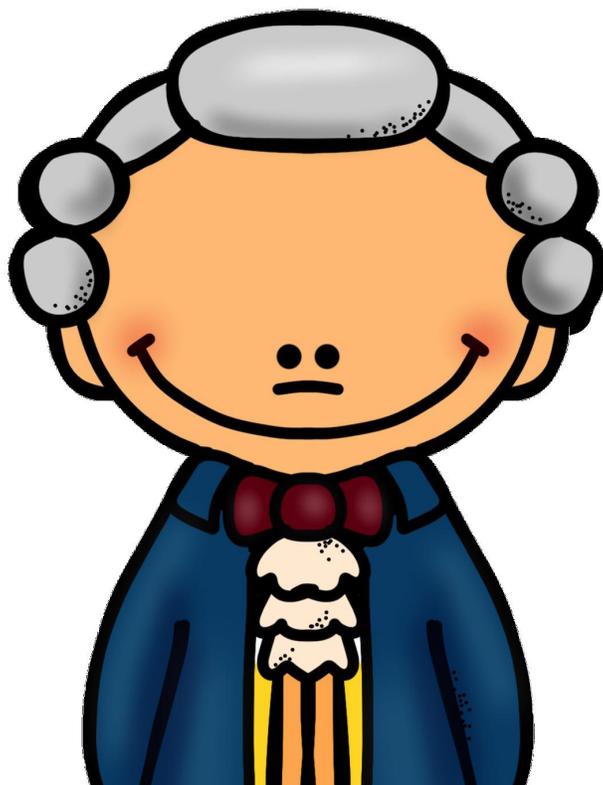
After Wolfgang left Italy he went back to work in Salzburg for the archbishop. But he soon left to go to live in Vienna. Wolfgang was happy to be in Vienna. The new emperor, Joseph II, loved music.



Wolfgang made his living by performing his music and giving music lessons. He also sold some of the music he composed.



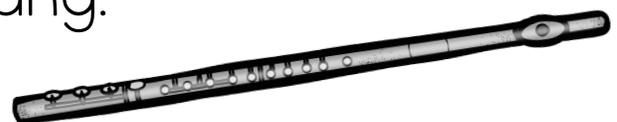
While Wolfgang was in Vienna he fell in love and got married. His wife's name was Constance. He also became friends there with Joseph Haydn. He was a very famous musician. One day Joseph was talking to Wolfgang's father. He said to him, "I tell you, before God, and as an honest man, that your son is the greatest composer I know." Wolfgang's father knew this was a great compliment coming from Joseph Haydn.



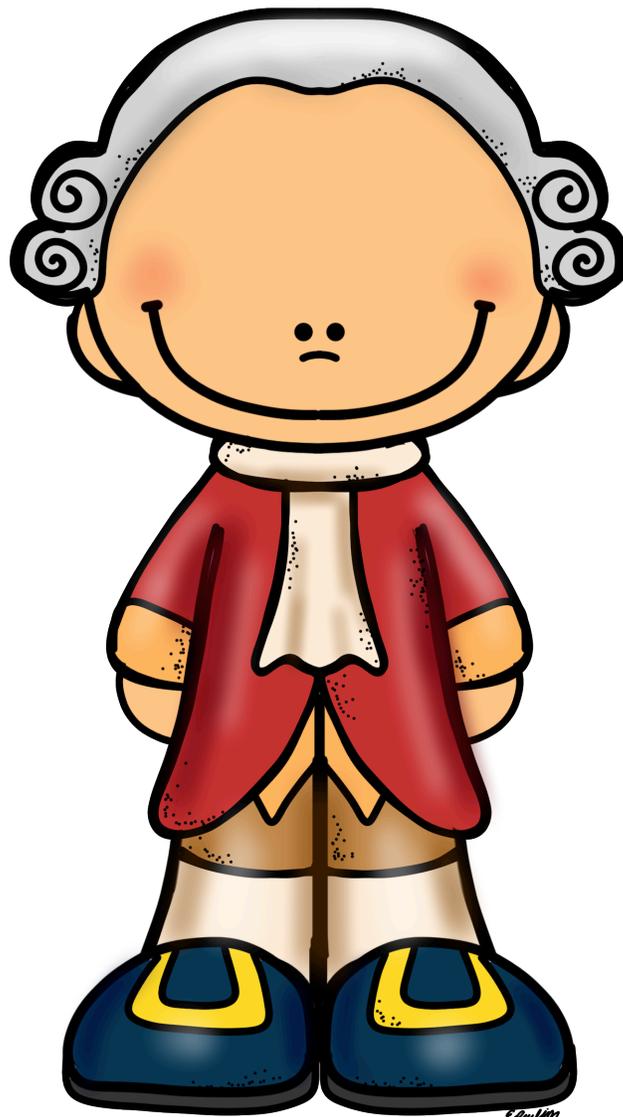
Despite some of the hard times Wolfgang went through in his life, his music was usually very cheerful. One famous opera he wrote is called *The Marriage of Figaro*. He was asked to compose an opera out of a well-known story about a barber. In this funny story the hero is a barber named Figaro.



Don Giovanni and *The Magic Flute* are two other famous operas by Wolfgang.



In 1787 Wolfgang's father and his daughter died. Even during this difficult time he continued to write beautiful music. He wrote his famous *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*. The title means "a little night music" in German. This music was written for an orchestra to play outdoors.



People especially loved Wolfgang's music because of the deep feelings they felt when they listened to it. Wolfgang wrote his music from his heart. His music expressed his deepest feelings. Wolfgang also wrote a lot of music for the church. He especially loved to put the poetic words of the Psalms to music.



One day in July 1791, a man came to visit Wolfgang. He would not tell him who he was. He had an important message for Wolfgang. A nobleman wanted Wolfgang to write some special music. He said he would pay Wolfgang very well. He wanted the music to be performed in the cathedral.





This work Wolfgang started to write is called *Requiem*. Requiem's are usually played for church funerals or during Holy Week just before Easter. Wolfgang's *Requiem* is very moving.

Before Wolfgang could finish his *Requiem* he got very sick. A month later he died on December 5, 1791. He was only 35 years old. There was no money for a funeral. Not even a stone marked the place where he was buried. But many years later, the people of Vienna built a monument in memory of Wolfgang and his music.





After his death Wolfgang became very well known all around the world. He left behind a wonderful gift of music that is still enjoyed today.