

## **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: Biography, Compositions, and Accomplishments**

Playing music by age 3, composing by age 5, writing an opera at age 14, and dead at 35, Mozart packed a lot of accomplishments into his short life. Learn more about one of the most influential composers of all time.

### **Life of Mozart**

Perhaps no one has ever exemplified the idea of a child prodigy like Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Born in 1756, he was already playing family instruments at age three. A year later, he began piano lessons, and by age five, he had written his first composition. By the time he was ten, he had played for many of the great kings of Europe. Everything he did during his early years was nothing short of outstanding.

However, it was not until his teenage years that Mozart began to separate from a childhood prodigy to a serious composer. At 14 he wrote his first opera, *Mitridate, re di Ponto* about a classical king who rebelled from Rome. Despite concerns about Mozart's age, it opened as a major success in Milan.

### **Post-Childhood Career**

While still a teenager, Mozart became the court musician for the ruler of Salzburg, Prince-Archbishop Hieronymus Colloredo. This allowed him not only greater financial flexibility but also a position from which to be able to compose more music. He held the position until he was 25, when he moved to Vienna.

Vienna was the musical center of the Western world at that point, and Mozart soon became even more popular. Alongside his compositions, Mozart was equally renowned as a pianist and associated with the highest levels of Viennese society. During his time in Vienna, Mozart met his future wife, Constanze, and while the relationship did last the rest of Mozart's life, it was fraught with difficulty. Mozart would end up having a much more stable relationship with Joseph Haydn, another prominent composer who soon joined Mozart in performances.

By the time Mozart turned 30 in 1786, he had grown tired of performing and retired from public concerts. However, Mozart composed some of his greatest works during this period before finally succumbing to a fever at age 35. He squandered his money and was buried in a pauper's grave in Vienna.

### **Compositions**

Mozart's style was quite unlike anything that had been seen up until his life. He was not afraid to borrow from the best of the Baroque period but was decidedly a Classical composer. More than anything, Mozart created melodies that stayed with the audience.