



History 101

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, baptismal name Johannes Chrysostomus Wolfgangus Theophilus Mozart (27 January 1756 – 5 December 1791), was a prolific and influential composer of the Classical era. He composed over 600 works, many acknowledged as pinnacles of symphonic, concertante, chamber, piano, operatic, and choral music. He is among the most enduringly popular of classical composers.

Mozart showed prodigious ability from his earliest childhood in Salzburg. Already competent on keyboard and violin, he composed from the age of five and performed before European royalty. At 17, he was engaged as a court musician in Salzburg, but grew restless and travelled in search of a better position, always composing abundantly. While visiting Vienna in 1781, he was dismissed from his Salzburg position. He chose to stay in the capital, where he achieved fame but little financial security.

During his final years in Vienna, he composed many of his best-known symphonies, concertos, and operas, and portions of the Requiem, which was largely unfinished at the time of Mozart's death. The circumstances of his early death have been much mythologized. Mozart fell ill while in Prague for the premiere of his opera La Clemenza di Tito, written in 1791. The illness intensified on 20 November, at which point Mozart became bedridden, suffering from swelling, pain, and vomiting. In his final illness, it is clear that he was mentally occupied with the task of finishing his Requiem. Mozart died at 1 a.m. on 5 December 1791 at the age of 35. He was survived by his wife, Constanze, and two sons.

Mozart learned voraciously from others, and developed a brilliance and maturity of style that


encompassed the light and graceful along with the dark and passionate. His influence on subsequent Western art music is profound. Beethoven wrote his own early compositions in the shadow of Mozart, of whom Joseph Haydn wrote that "posterity will not see such a talent again in 100 years."

[<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>]

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