

MOZART

© 2000, L. Shannon www.MusicatSchool.co.uk


Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born at Salzburg, Austria, in 1756. He began taking piano lessons from his musician father at the age of 4, and at the age of 5 he began composing. Mozart learned quickly and in 1762 his father took him to Munich and Vienna to introduce him to the public. In Vienna, Mozart played for the Emperor of Austria. It was at this time that Mozart learned to play the violin without having lessons. It is also said that he did the same on the organ after someone explained the use of the pedals.

In 1763, the entire family travelled to Paris, where he had his first compositions published. Mozart travelled almost all the time. Before he was 25 he had visited most of the great cities of Europe.

In 1764, while visiting England, he composed several sonatas for violin and harpsichord and a number of symphonies. Mozart was only 8. In 1769, on a visit to Rome, history tells us that Mozart went to hear the Sistine choir sing; and, after returning home. He put the entire work on paper from memory.

Mozart's father was in service to the Archbishop of Salzburg most of his life, so Mozart was appointed concert-master to the archbishop for a short time. He was never able to accept his role as servant very well and was dismissed in 1781. From then on, he was basically "on his own".

He married Constance Weber. It was during their life together, much of which was spent in poverty, that his three great operas, *Don Giovanni*, *The Magic Flute* and *The Marriage of Figaro*, were written. The writing of his last work *The Requiem* (Mass for the Dead) was never finished. Mozart died in Vienna and was buried in a "pauper's grave".



QUESTIONS: Answer in full sentences

1. Where and when was Mozart born?
2. What did his father do?
3. Where did Mozart go in 1762?
4. Why could Mozart be described as a child genius/prodigy?
5. What instruments did he play?
6. What type of music did he compose?
7. What were his great operas?
8. Who was his wife?
9. Why did Mozart never complete *The Requiem*?
10. Find out some names of the pieces Mozart composed.
11. Try to listen to some of his music.