

# Tafelmusik

## MOZART MASTERWORKS



### TEACHER AND STUDENT MATERIALS

This guide was created by Alison Mackay to accompany Tafelmusik's music education initiatives.

There is no specific CD referred to in this guide.

To hear the sound of the classical orchestra you may wish to listen to:

Mozart: *Rondo and Horn Concertos* (CD# SK 53 369)

Ab Koster, natural horn

Sony Classical: Vivarte 1993

Mozart: *Six Symphonies after Serenades* (CD# S2K 47260)

Sony Classical: Vivarte 1991

Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, Jeanne Lamon, Music Director

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**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** was born in 1756 in Salzburg, Austria. He began to study music with his father at a very young age and began composing when he was five. He spent his entire childhood travelling around Germany, Austria, France, England, Holland, Switzerland and Italy, giving concerts on the organ, harpsichord, piano and violin and being rewarded with gold rings and watches.

From the age of 18 until he was 25, Mozart continued to travel but lived mainly in Salzburg where he worked for the Archbishop, a prince of the church who employed an orchestra and many singers. At this time Mozart began to compose his first masterpieces in many musical forms – operas, sonatas, string quartets, symphonies, concertos and music for church services.

From 1781-1791, the last 10 years of his life, Mozart lived in Vienna. During this time he composed most of the work for which he is most famous – *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, *The Magic Flute*, the *Requiem*, and many famous symphonies and concertos. From this time come the works you will hear in the Tafelmusik concert – the *Jupiter Symphony* (K. 551), *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* (K. 525) and the D Minor Piano Concerto (K. 466).

#### What does "K" mean in the titles of Mozart works?

Mozart composed more than 600 works before his early death at the age of 35 in 1791. Fifty years later an Austrian botanist and teacher, Ludwig Köchel fell in love with Mozart's music and decided to put his compositions in chronological order. He published a catalogue that assigned a number to each piece. Since then Mozart's works have been identified by their "Köchel" or "K" numbers.

Mozart was able to memorize whole pieces of music on one hearing, and to hear his own compositions in his head before he wrote them down. There are many stories about him composing while he was doing other things. One comes from a hairdresser who came regularly to his apartment to do his hair:

"As I was doing Mozart's hair one morning he suddenly jumped up, and despite the fact that I was holding him by his pigtail he went into the next room, dragging me along with him and started to play the piano. Another day I was arriving at his place and he drew up on horseback. As he rode the last few steps he took a little board out of his pocket and wrote down some music."

#### What was Mozart's life like when he was composing the pieces in Tafelmusik program?

During the three years in which Mozart composed the *Jupiter Symphony*, the D Minor Piano Concerto and *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*, he was living with his family in the very centre of Vienna in a rented apartment with four rooms. He had simple but elegant furniture and kept two servants. The Mozart family loved to play pool. They often ate food that was brought in from a restaurant – apartments of this type often didn't have very well-equipped kitchens.

Mozart earned his living by giving music lessons at home, composing operas, and arranging concerts featuring new works of his own. There was constant anxiety about money because the income from ticket sales at concerts could fluctuate wildly.

The *Jupiter Symphony* and the D Minor Piano Concerto were composed for concerts like this. Mozart's father was visiting when Mozart finished this concerto in a great rush and he wrote in a letter to Mozart's sister, "he did not even have time to play it through" before he had to run off with it to have parts copied for the first performance that evening in which he himself would play the solo part.

#### What will the audience see and hear at the Tafelmusik concert?

The audience will see and hear instruments of the type that Mozart would have known. *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* requires only the stringed instruments of the orchestras using bows that have a more squared-off tip and longer stick than earlier baroque bows, but they are lighter and more flexible than modern bows.

The monumental *Jupiter Symphony*, Mozart's last symphony (the origin of the name "Jupiter" is unknown) adds 1 flute, 2 oboes, 2 bassoons, 2 horns and timpani. The wooden flutes, oboes and bassoons have only a few keys, and the so-called "natural" horns have no valves. The timpani have small copper kettles with calfskin stretched over them.

We'll demonstrate our instruments so you'll have a chance to hear them individually. For more details have a look at the Tafelmusik Teachers Guide.

For an introduction to the 18th-century orchestra you can listen to the Tafelmusik CD that is included with this material. Although the precise repertoire is not the same as the concert programme it will let you hear how an orchestra would have sounded in Mozart's day.

#### Mozart's Piano

Mozart was extremely famous in his own time as virtuoso pianist and the D Minor Concerto would have been composed for Mozart to perform himself. The piano he would have used, however, was a very different instrument from the one we know today. The instrument's original name was "gravicembalo con piano e forte" or "harpsichord which can play loud and soft" for indeed when it was first developed in 18th-century Italy it was the first keyboard instrument which could vary the dynamics on one keyboard, using hammers to hit the keys instead of the plucking quills of the harpsichord.

During the 18th-century the hammer action was further refined by a maker called Stein upon whose pianos Mozart loved to play. The Stein pianos usually had 5 octaves (F' to f'), small hollow hammers made of hazel wood, a soundboard made of spruce and damper pedals underneath the keyboard controlled by the player's knees. The "white keys" were black (made of ebony) and the "black keys" were white. The sound was softer than that of a modern piano but very clear and silvery. Malcolm Bilson, our soloist in the concerto, will demonstrate the sound of the instrument, explain its mechanism and perform a bit of music by Mozart for the solo piano.