

History 152  
Windward Community College  
Early College High School  
Kailua High School  
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## Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Salieri, the prince of mediocrity, claims he killed Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

Salieri claims that he drove Mozart mad by first, driving him into poverty, and second, causing Mozart, by commissioning him to write a Requiem, to psychologically re-enact his fathers tragedy. Antonio Salieri was jealous of Mozart because Mozart was gifted with music and played the notes of god; and at the same time, in Salieri's eyes, Mozart was foul, dirty minded and vulgar. This of course did not sit well with Salieri, for he gave many things—his chastity, his industry, his humility--to God in order to become the court composer.

With jealousy and rage Salieri made sure that Mozart did not have any chances to make money either by performing in the theatre or by instructing students. He then hired a maid to spy on Mozart to re-ensure that he was losing money and not breaking any of the king's orders. Eventually Salieri caught Mozart creating the forbidden play called "The Marriage of Figaro". With his new findings Salieri and his co-workers, who also despised Mozart, complain to the king hoping that he would show Mozart justice. Of course in the end Mozart got

his way and that led Salieri deeper into his hatred for the young prodigy.

Eventually Mozart's father died and Salieri took note on how Mozart took full responsibility for it. Salieri then devised a plan to drive Mozart mad. He dressed up in Mozart's last costume he gave to his father and then promised Mozart he would pay him only if he created an Requiem ( a musical composition setting parts of a Mass for the repose [a state of rest, sleep, or tranquility] of the souls of the dead). Of course this drove Mozart mad and he began to drink heavily, causing his wife and child to leave him. As the movie began to end, Mozart began to get sick with pneumonia. During his last performance he fainted and Salieri suprisingly took him home and helped him continue the Requiem. The next morning Mozart's wife and son came home and that is when Mozart passed away, in front of all their wary eyes.

He and Salieri were nearly done with the Requiem. After Mozart died, immediately his wife noticed what Salieri had in his hand—music written in both Salieri's and Mozart's handwriting. She took it and explained to him that it was the real cause of Mozart's madness. That is when Salieri confesses that it was he who killed Mozart and caused him all of his suffering. Salieri wanted to be known as the man who killed Mozart. But his claim to greatness was not that he would be known as a murderer, but that he would be known as the prince of mediocrity.

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Rewrite the above essay by creating a thesis and integrating the thesis into the essay. Also include themes and the time period of Mozart.

The Mozart Project: K. 626

[http://www.mozartproject.org/compositions/k\\_626\\_.html](http://www.mozartproject.org/compositions/k_626_.html)

Requiem in D Minor

Each generation has added its own layer of embellishment to the story of the Requiem. But many of the elements were in place by 1808, when Franz Xaver Niemetschek published his biography of Mozart. Niemetschek wrote:

Shortly before the Coronation of the Emperor Leopold, and before Mozart received the commission to go to Prague, an unsigned letter was handed to him by an unknown messenger which, with many flattering remarks, contained the question whether Mozart would like to undertake the composition of a Requiem, for what price, and how soon he would be able to

**Constanze watches as Mozart, on his deathbed, works on the Requiem in this idealized depiction created years later.**



deliver it.

Mozart, who was accustomed to take no step without consulting his wife, related to her this strange commission, and at the same time mentioned his desire to try his hand at this type of work too, the more so as the elevated and exalted style of church music was always close to his genius. She advised him to accept the commission. He therefore wrote to the unknown gentleman to say that he would write the Requiem for a certain sum; he could not exactly state the time he would require to complete it; but he would like to know the destination to which he was to deliver the work when it was finished. The same messenger shortly reappeared, bringing not only the agreed honorarium with him, but also the promise that, as he had been so reasonable in his price, he would receive a generous additional payment on handing over the work. He was moreover to write according to the mood and frame of his mind, but he was not to trouble to try and find out the name of his patron, for this search would certainly be in vain....

On his return [from Prague] he at once took up the Requiem, and worked

at it with much effort and keen interest: but his illness visibly increased its hold on him and made him dark and melancholy. His wife noticed it with sadness. One day when she was driving with him in the Prater to divert and cheer him, and they both sat there alone, Mozart began to talk of death, and maintained that he was writing the Requiem for himself. Tears were in the eyes of this sensitive man. "I am only too conscious," he continued, "my end will not be long in coming: for sure, someone has poisoned me! I cannot rid my mind of this thought."

This speech fell heavily on his wife's heart; she was scarcely able to comfort him, and to show him the groundlessness of his heavy imaginings. As she was of the opinion that he was sickening from some illness, and the Requiem was overstraining his sensitive nerves, she called the doctor and took away the score of the Requiem....

On the day of his death he had the score brought to his bed. "Did I not say that I was writing this Requiem for myself?" he said, and carefully looked through the whole score with moist eyes. It was the last painful, parting glance at his beloved art -- a presentiment of his immortality!

Immediately after his death the messenger announced himself, asked for the work, unfinished as it was, and received it. From that moment the widow did not see him again, nor did she learn the least thing about the Requiem or the man who had commissioned it. Every reader can imagine for himself that they tried hard to seek out the mysterious messenger, but all means and attempts were fruitless.

Niemetschek drew upon several sources for his biography, not all of whom were reliable. And he may have added a few dramatic touches of his own. He is incorrect on at least two counts: The messenger did not show up to ask for the completed work after Mozart's death, and by 1800 Constanze was well aware of who had commissioned it.

The "mysterious stranger" mentioned by Niemetschek was, in all likelihood, Franz Anton Leitgeb (or Leutgeb), steward of Count Franz Walsegg-Stuppach. The

count was a music lover who gave concerts at his home twice a week. When it came to acquiring music he spared no expense, though he always recopied the scores in his own hand. Thus only he knew the identity of the composer.

After each performance, Walsegg would ask his guests who had written the music. "Usually we guessed the Count himself, because he did in fact occasionally compose a few trifles; he would smile at that and be pleased that he had (or so he believed) succeeded in mystifying us; but we laughed because he thought us so credulous," wrote one of his guests, Anton Herzog, many years later. "We were all young folk, and considered that we were giving our master an innocent pleasure. And in such manner the mutual deception continued for several years."

Walsegg commissioned the Requiem in honor of his wife, who had died the preceding February. Leitgeb (or someone else) was the intermediary; in July 1791 he delivered to Mozart the commission, along with a substantial sum of money. The balance would be paid upon delivery. The whole affair was to be kept secret. But whether Walsegg intended to take full credit for the Requiem, as has been alleged, is open to debate.