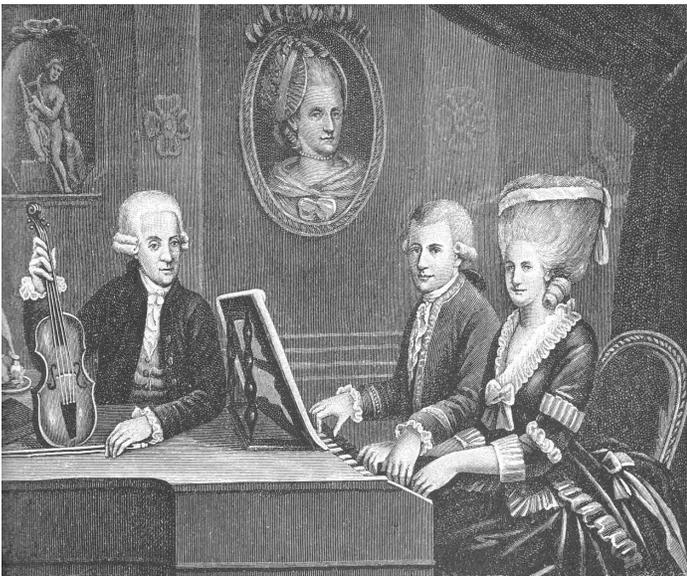


the greatest delicacy, and keeping exactly in time. He made such progress that by the age of five he was already composing little pieces.” It was no doubt that Mozart was a child prodigy. Leopold was excited by this discovery and, although he felt a bit guilty about it, he was eager to show off his son immediately in order to get the most financial benefit. He also was certain that Mozart’s gifts were God-given and saw it his duty to share his son’s talents. So, before Mozart’s sixth birthday, Maria Anna and young Mozart set out touring much of Europe with their parents.

Mozart’s ability to sight read any music put in front of him and to improvise at the keyboard greatly impressed his audiences. He truly enjoyed playing, performing, and of course, showing off a bit. He was a true genius of music, playing complex pieces of music after hearing the piece only once. Traveling through Europe for many years, Mozart played for church hierarchy and royalty and was commissioned to write for kings and emperors.



Mozart was a happy man, though he fell into financial difficulty as he and his wife, Constance Weber, lived a life well beyond their means. Composing for the public performances had become their main source of income so Mozart composed as much as he could during this time, including his three most famous operas: *Don Giovanni*, *The Magic Flute*, and *The Marriage of Figaro*.

Mozart died impoverished at the early age of 35 and was given a pauper’s funeral, which unfortunately meant he was buried without a coffin in an unmarked grave. The legacy, however, that Mozart left behind will live forever and he will always be known as one of the greatest musicians of all time.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) was born in Bonn, Germany on December 16. His childhood was full of troubles and unhappiness, mostly brought on by his cruel father Johann. His father, being his first teacher and seeing that he had talent, wanted Beethoven to be the next Mozart. In turn, Johann believed he would gain some recognition and financial benefit for himself. He suffered from a disease that had no name at the time: alcoholism. He was ill-tempered and often beat his son when his playing displeased him. Often, young Beethoven was awakened in the middle of the night to practice and if the sleepy, young boy played a wrong note, his ears were boxed or his knuckles were struck. When Beethoven was seven, Johann provided the opportunity for his young son to give his first public performance. When the performance was not a success, Johann yelled at Beethoven, believing him a failure and complaining that he would never become the next Mozart.

Beethoven then had a line of bad teachers who were mostly friends of his father and only taught him after they had spent much of the night at the tavern. Finally, Beethoven studied under Christian Gottlob Neefe, a fine new teacher who took Beethoven under his wing and taught him in an orderly and disciplined manner. Under his tutoring, Beethoven learned all of Bach’s 48 Preludes and Fugues and organ works. As a result, Beethoven got his first paying job as court organist at fourteen years old.