

# Counterpoint

CCO COMMUNITY ORCHESTRA  
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*A Toast  
to Mozart!  
on his 250<sup>th</sup> Birthday*



## HAPPY BIRTHDAY WOLFGANG: 250 YEARS YOUNG

His name may conjure up dated images of aristocrats, powdered wigs and European opera houses, yet Mozart's music still pervades our society and turns up almost everywhere today - in popular culture, media and even science.

This year, in recognition of his influence, Austria and the world are preparing for a year of celebrations marking the maestro's 250th anniversary. Throughout 2006, Mozart's hometown plans 260 concerts, 55 masses and 22 operas devoted to his sacred music. The composer will also figure prominently in tourism ads, tacky souvenirs and other stagy events. Even the Vienna marathon is hiring hundreds of costumed musicians to play Mozart along the running route to give participants a boost.

Born in Salzburg, Austria on January 27, 1756, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was the seventh child of Leopold and Anna Maria Mozart. A child virtuoso, he began playing the keyboard at the age of three and was composing by age six. Deciding not to waste his son's precocious talents, Leopold dragged the young Wolfgang across Europe to perform for royalty, earn money and extend his reputation.

As time went by, Mozart developed into a sophisticated and complex man. His letters reveal him as remarkably creative, fascinated by the arts, principled, religious and devoted to his father. After years spent playing in royal courts, composing sacred works, symphonies and dramatic music, Mozart longed to advance. Working within the restrictions of his time, he began to rewrite the musical rules and opera remained at the centre of his ambitions.

(continued on page 2)

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### ALL MOZART PROGRAMME - MARCH 4, 2006

Symphony No.1, 1st Movement  
Symphony No.25 in G minor  
Andante for Flute & Orchestra - Andria Kilbride, flute  
"Queen of the Night" from The Magic Flute - Michelle Ketrick, soprano  
"Soave sia il vento" from Cosi Fan Tutte  
- INTERMISSION -  
La Clemenza di Tito, Overture  
CONCERT PERFORMANCE  
Le nozze di Figaro K.492, finale to ACT 2 - featuring:  
Michelle Ketrick, Christopher Wilson, James Crispin Janz, Rachel Huys,  
Ramona Carmelly, Paul Oros, James Levesque

**BIRTHDAY BOY: continued from page 1**

Seeing little opportunity in Austria, Mozart looked elsewhere for work. He traveled to Italy, France and other European cities throughout his formative years. During these trips, Mozart met many musicians and acquainted himself with the works of other composers, including Haydn and Bach.

Finally choosing to settle in Vienna, Mozart married Constanze Weber at the age of 26, against his father's wishes. She was the younger sister of his former love interest, Aloysia. Constanze and Wolfgang were a well-suited couple, both having high-spirited and playful personalities. She was one of Mozart's greatest allies and enjoyed the rewards of his operatic triumphs.

Mozart made his living over the ensuing years as a freelancer, teaching, publishing his music, playing for patrons or in public and writing commissioned works. For the most part he earned a decent income. However, his life was also burdened by financial difficulty and illness. Mozart often received no payment for his work, his money was quickly consumed by lavish spending and poor management, and it meant he had to borrow money later in life.

Scholars disagree about when Mozart knew of his impending death and whether this awareness influenced his final works, such as the *Requiem*. In his last months, Mozart believed he was being poisoned, assuming one of his rivals responsible. In 1791, at the age of 35, Mozart died and was buried in a mass grave in accordance with the customs of the day. Legend has it that a gravedigger took Mozart's skull, which scientists have recently used for DNA testing.

Hearing his music, many listeners claim to experience an increased sense of happiness. These theories have been investigated by scientists, who have found that early exposure to Mozart's music can have a beneficial effect on mental development.

While most composers specialize in certain types of pieces, Mozart created masterful works for almost every category of music. Clarity, balance, simple harmonic language and memorable melodies are the hallmarks of his 626 works. Remarkably, Mozart could compose anywhere - during meals, while talking to friends, playing billiards, and even while his wife was having a baby. Now, it would take more than eight days to play all of his music without stopping.

Though Mozart may be most famous for writing sublime and enduring music in the classical period, the composer remains a source of inspiration, interest and mystery today.

by Katya Diakow

Plays in the Violin Section

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## FORBIDDEN FIGARO: A GROUNDBREAKING OPERA

Following the success of his comedy *Le barbier de Seville* (The Barber of Seville), the French playwright Pierre Caron de Beaumarchais decided to follow up with a sequel, *Le mariage de Figaro* (The Marriage of Figaro). *The Barber of Seville* was a witty, sophisticated, but essentially light comedy based on the traditional scheme in which a street smart member of the lower classes (Figaro) helps the lord (Count Almaviva) get his sweetheart (Rosina). *The Marriage of Figaro*, however was an altogether different story and nothing short of incendiary. In it, Count Almaviva, married to Rosina, is a philanderer chasing every skirt on his domain; Figaro is in the Count's service and engaged to Susanna, Countess Rosina's maid, on which the Count has cast his roving eye. Figaro and Susanna ultimately succeed in punishing the Count and teaching him a lesson. Pitting servants against masters and letting them win was a clear violation of the existing social conventions and it sent a strong message; lest anyone would miss the point, Beaumarchais made the centerpiece of his play a long monologue in which Figaro openly criticizes the existing social order. The point was indeed not lost - at least not on King Louis XVI of France, who promptly banned its performance; the ban wasn't lifted until five years before the French Revolution, when it got its first performance to great acclaim.

But even before its first performance, Beaumarchais, a canny self-publicizer, had the play printed and circulated. In due course, it reached Vienna and King Louis's imperial brother-in-law, the emperor Josef II (his sister, the ill-fated Marie-Antoinette, was married to Louis XVI and would die in the revolution Beaumarchais' play helped spark), who also slapped a ban on it. It also reached the librettist Lorenzo da Ponte who brought it to Mozart's attention, suggesting they make into an opera. But first, the little matter of the ban had to be dealt with which da Ponte solved by appealing directly to the emperor. Josef II - who prided himself to be an enlightened monarch - relented after da Ponte promised to remove the politically sensitive passages from the play. Da Ponte did indeed delete the more inflammatory passages (such as Figaro's tirade), but faithfully translated the rest into Italian (the customary opera language of the day), therefore preserving its social message and its revolutionary character. Under the title *Le nozze di Figaro* the opera was finally premiered in 1786, enjoying a great success and becoming an instant smash hit.

What makes the opera *The Marriage of Figaro* revolutionary is not only in its social content; in composing it Mozart revolutionized the art form itself, making it the first modern musical drama, in the sense that plot and character development are borne out in the music. To begin with, Mozart did away with the stop-and-go form of alternating recitatives and arias. No character has more than two arias, and they are seamlessly integrated into the plot. The only exception is Figaro who has three arias, including the only showstopper. (It is interesting to note that, just as the plot turns the social conventions on its head, so does Mozart with the musical ones: Figaro has more arias than the count, and the music displays the same complexity as that of the Count). Most of the opera is a succession of duets, trios and other ensemble scenes; the two most extensive ones are those at the end of acts II and IV, of which we present the former: almost 20 minutes of uninterrupted music of increasing complexity, by the end of which all the principal characters, except one are on stage. All through the opera the orchestra becomes essentially an additional character, providing a running commentary to the action on stage; it often contrasts the action, thus revealing to the audience what's going on underneath the surface. Finally, and most important, all characters are fully characterized musically, and as they develop and transform, so does the music. While in Beaumarchais' play, the protagonists are still closer to being types, in Mozart's hands they are fully characterized, flesh and blood human beings we can relate to, thus making *Le nozze di Figaro* a compelling human drama.

© Joseph Nachman  
Plays in the Violin Section

### ANDRIA KILBRIDE, FLUTE



Andria Kilbride will be performing the *Andante for Flute and Orchestra*, K.315 which some suggest Mozart composed as a replacement for the Adagio from the *Flute Concerto*, K. 313. The lyrical flute solo is accompanied with a backdrop provided by strings, oboes, and horns. Andria has been teaching Instrumental Music in the Toronto District School Board for the past six years. Her career began at Bliss Carman Sr. P.S., and she is thrilled to be the newest member of the music department at Cedarbrae Collegiate Institute. She is the former conductor of the Toronto East Sr. Symphonic Band, and former flautist for the Ardeleana Trio. Andria currently serves on the Executive Board of Directors of the Ontario Band Association as Treasurer, an organization that serves music educator's from around the province. She holds an education degree from the OISE/University of Toronto and a Bachelor of Music from the University of Western Ontario.

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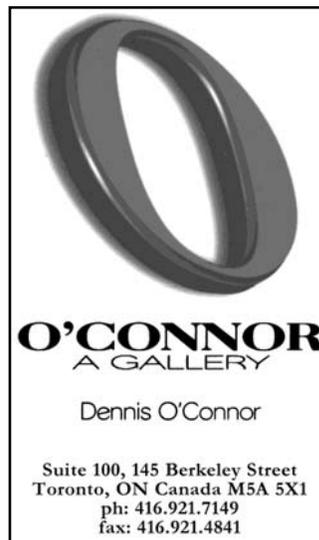
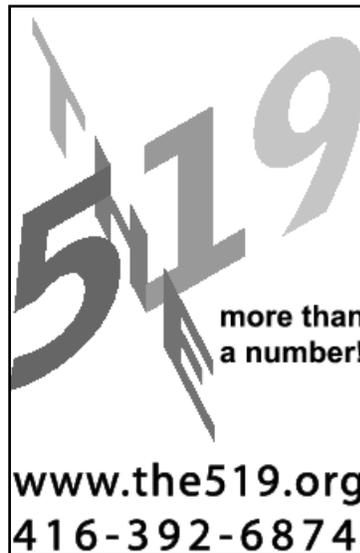


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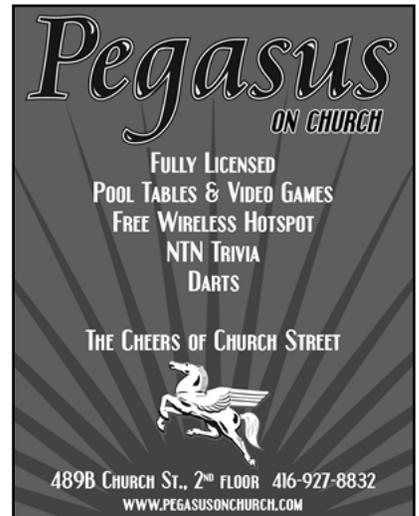
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