

# Amadeus



Written by  
Peter Shaffer  
Directed by  
Paul Mason  
Barnes



**P.L.A.Y.**  
(Performance =  
Literature +  
Art + You)

**Student  
Matinee  
Series  
2010-2011  
Season**

Sponsored by

**Kodak**

## Table of Contents

**Salieri's story: a bargain with God gone bad. . . . 2**

**Art and the artist . . . . 3**

**What do you do with ambition? . . . . 4**

**Metaphor and design . . . 5**

**"Soyez Bienvenu a la court" (Welcome to the court). . . . 7**

**Mozart's Music. . . . . 9**

**This play includes some sexual and scatological humor and profanity. If you have any questions about specific content, please inquire with the Education staff for more information.**

## *Dear Educators,*

The first summer I lived in New York City – my first summer of the “real world” after college and internships – I picked up a lot of those free advertisement postcards that appear on racks around various city businesses. One of the postcards read:

*“You live in the most exciting city in the world. Now what?”*

As *Amadeus* rehearses, I can't help but think of Mozart and Salieri as hungry young composers arriving in Vienna, that musical paradise of their age, each one knowing, “I have passion, I have skills, I have goals... Now what?”

Isn't that always the question: how will we cross the gulf between what we want and what we have? (These many years later, that postcard still hangs on my refrigerator.) What will we do with what we've got? Where is the opportunity ahead? How can we get there from here? What will we do if we can't? Now what?!

I think part of what I so admire about Peter Shaffer's *Amadeus*, a fictional contest of opposites, is that *neither one* has the answers. Sure, Mozart's a genius – but as we see, that doesn't make things easy for him. And Salieri's dedication is so sincere, his disappointments are wrenchingly familiar; after all, very few of us do get to be the genius of our times. “I was a sober sixteen,” he says, “filled with a desperate sense of *right*.” Can you remember the fierce conviction of that moment when you felt certain, entitled and able – and the first time the world took that certainty away? Where, between conviction and uncertainty, do your students live this year? How many are asking, “now what?” The world of the eighteenth century may feel far away, but the heart of this play is undeniably timeless.

*Amadeus* is a perfect production to celebrate a new season and school year, and this guide introduces avenues for potential discussion whether your students are exploring drama, music, history or language arts. As always, if you can use more guidance or information about a component of this production, or are curious about other resources available throughout the year, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



Kathryn Moroney  
Associate Director of Education

**Participation in this production and supplemental activities suggested in this guide support the following NYS Learning Standards: A: 2, 3, 4; ELA: 1, 2, 3; SS: 2**

## Cast of Characters

**Two Venticelli, Purveyors of information, gossip and rumor**

**Antonio Salieri**

**Count Johann Kilian von Strack, Royal Chamberlain**

**Count Franz Orsini-Rosenberg, Director of the Imperial Opera**

**Baron Gottfried van Swieten, Prefect of the Imperial Library**

**Constanze Weber, wife of Mozart**

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**

**Joseph II, Emperor of Austria**

**Ensemble of servants and citizens of Vienna**

*“There are just as many notes, Majesty, neither more nor less as are required.” – Mozart*

## *Salieri's story: a bargain with God gone bad*

All of Vienna, “a city of slander,” whispers rumors that the famous and now elderly composer, Antonio Salieri, is confessing to the murder of Mozart 32 years earlier. Can it be true, or are these the deluded ramblings of an old man? Having dismissed his servants late one night in 1823, Salieri is alone to conjure his own audience, the “ghosts of the future.” He tells us: “I present to you – for one performance only – my last composition, entitled *The Death of Mozart; or, Did I Do It?... Dedicated to posterity on this, the last night of my life!*”

Salieri describes himself as a young boy in the country, in love with music and ambitious for greatness despite his provincial upbringing. He offers a prayer to God, and a bargain: “I prayed through the moldering plaster with all my soul. *Signore*, let me be a composer! Grant me sufficient fame to enjoy it. In return, I will live with virtue. I will strive to better the lot of my fellows. And I will honor You with much music all the days of my life!”

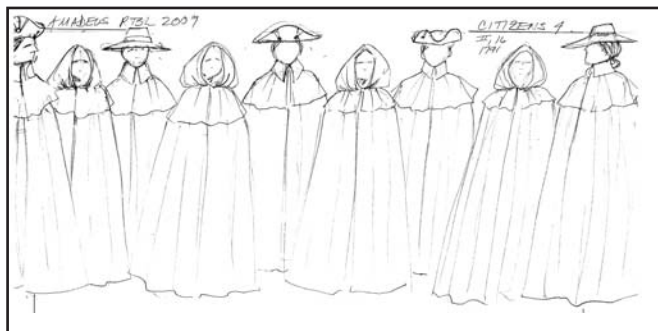
God appears to accept this bargain. In 1781 virtuous Salieri is 31 years old and established as a prolific composer to the Habsburg court. Six years his junior, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart arrives in Vienna with his own remarkable reputation earned as a child prodigy performing all over Europe. Salieri’s first introduction to the young man is to overhear his loud and tasteless escapades with Constanze Weber, who will become Mozart’s wife. Salieri is horrified by his vulgarity – and then hears the sounds of an aching beautiful concert of Mozart’s music in the next room.

“*What is this? Tell me, Signore!* What is this *pain*? What is this *need* in the sound? Forever unfulfillable, yet fulfilling him who hears it, utterly. Is it *Your* need? Can it be *Yours*?... I was suddenly frightened. It seemed to me that I had heard a voice of God – and that it issued from a creature whose own voice I had also heard – and it was the voice of an obscene child!”

Salieri’s identity as God’s favored composer is threatened; at every meeting he finds Mozart’s music as superior as his personality is distasteful. Confused, jealous and angry, Salieri considers seducing Mozart’s wife in revenge, until he realizes his real quarrel is with God, who should either reward the virtuous or else not be honored at all.

“My life acquired a terrible and thrilling purpose. The blocking of God in one of His purest manifestations. I had the power. God needed Mozart to let Himself into the world. And Mozart needed me to get him worldly advancement. So it would be a battle to the end – and Mozart was the battleground.”

Over the following years, Salieri abandons his life of virtue and instead uses every opportunity to secretly sabotage Mozart’s career. His prestige grows as Mozart’s predicament becomes bleak; Mozart can find no advancement with the court, not enough income to support his family, disgrace among the influential nobility of Vienna and poor health. Did Salieri get what he wanted? Did he win his war with God? And did he kill Mozart after all? ♦



Cloaked figures whisper rumors;  
costume designer Dorothy Marshall Englis’  
renderings for the ensemble

Director Paul Mason Barnes says that the play begins and ends with mystery.

Based on the events related in this play, do you believe Salieri is guilty of Mozart’s death? Guilty of other crimes? Was Salieri punished for his actions?

Why do you think Salieri seeks “ghosts of the future” as opposed to, for instance, an audience of his own time? What does he wish to accomplish by connecting with us?

The story of Mozart and his early death could be told from Mozart’s own perspective. Why do you think the playwright chose to tell Salieri’s story instead?

*Amadeus* is a work of fiction; after the play you may be curious to explore the known facts of Mozart’s death. During Geva’s rehearsal period, the *New York Times* published an article about the ongoing mystery.

[www.nytimes.com/2010/08/25/arts/music/25death.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/25/arts/music/25death.html)

“You gave me the desire to praise you – which most men do not feel – then made me mute.” – Salieri

## Art and the artist

**Chose a piece of art you enjoy or admire. Do you know anything about the artist? Does what you know influence your opinion of the work? If an artist is well-known, is it possible to ignore the artist's life and reputation in your opinion?**

**Author Elizabeth Gilbert asks if genius is in the person, in the work or elsewhere. [www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/elizabeth\\_gilbert\\_on\\_genius.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/elizabeth_gilbert_on_genius.html) The Geva lobby display, "What Makes A Genius?" poses great questions for you to refine your own personal definition of genius.**

**"Amadeus" means "beloved of god." Salieri regards musical talent as bestowed (or withheld) by a divine power. Do you think Mozart feels the same? If Salieri believed his talent was within his own control, how might the story alter?**

Peter Hall, director of the original production of *Amadeus*, observed: "There have always been those who cannot bear the destruction of the delicate porcelain Mozart – the composer of tinkling elegance – and the revelation of the mortal child that we meet in his letters. Margaret Thatcher...gave me a severe wiggling for putting on a play that depicted Mozart as a scatological imp with a love of four-letter words. It was inconceivable, she said, that a man who wrote such exquisite and elegant music could be so foulmouthed."

As it happens, Mozart's notable blend of low and obscene humor is well-documented in his surviving letters. But regardless of whether his portrayal in *Amadeus* is historically accurate or the invention of fiction, discussions of his character raise interesting questions. Why do we celebrate the artist as well as the art? If an artwork – canvas, novel or symphony – can be experienced independent of any knowledge of its creator's life, should it be? Why do we so often study the biography of the individual alongside the creative output? Are we seeking an ideal experience of the art that requires an understanding of both?

Perhaps it depends on the art. "Among composers, Beethoven and Wagner possessed strong personalities and philosophies, which suffused their music... Mozart exemplifies the 'universal' genius," writes Howard Gardner. "His own personality does not emerge in its idiosyncratic way in his works. We know Mozart no better from the tragic strains of his 40th (G minor) symphony than from the triumphant bars of his 41st (Jupiter) symphony. Rather, Mozart was able to place himself completely at the service of the genres and themes with which he worked – a statement one could also make about Shakespeare or Goethe."



### **What is genius?**

So why do we want to get to know the genius? Is genius in the individual, or is that a romantic idea? In his book *Extraordinary Minds*, Gardner goes on to delineate some of the recognizable milestones in Mozart's transformation from celebrated child-star to mature creator. Interestingly, most prodigies do not emerge as exceptional adults, but Mozart's trajectory illustrates the confluence of unique personal aptitudes and an environment that cultivated his talents. "He began to create pieces of music at an age when most children are scarcely able to speak in full sentences.... Mozart lived at a time when classical music was prized and when it was possible for a talented young performer to earn money in the courts of Europe, he had a father who was a skilled (if somewhat pedantic) music teacher, and who was willing to devote his life and career to the nurturance of his "gift from God;" he had incredible musical gifts, which certainly included the ability to remember just about everything he heard and to figure out how to realize it on a keyboard (and other instruments); he had the skill, the personality, the will, indeed the rage to transcend mere performance and to want to create works of music of his own."

Such synergy can suggest the potential for achievement, but perhaps the fascination surrounding Mozart's genius is in the intangible, as related by Isaac Asimov: "I have been told that a young would-be composer wrote to Mozart, asking advice as to how to compose a symphony. Mozart responded that a symphony was a complex and demanding musical form and that it would be better to start with something simpler. The young man protested, 'But Herr Mozart, you wrote symphonies when you were younger than I am now.' And Mozart replied, 'I never asked how.'" ♦

*"The purity of his life is reflected absolutely in the purity of his music." – Constanze*

## What do you do with ambition?

Mozart and Salieri, for all their differences, pursue similar goals and face some mutual challenges. Each enjoys an element of success which eludes the other, and each has other needs which go unmet. Which values do you see each composer prioritize, and how does he strategize? Are there mistakes or poor judgments that he might have corrected to find greater success? At what cost does success come? How might each composer answer the questions on this page? Quotations from Salieri and Mozart may inspire discussion before the performance or refresh your memory afterward. (Can you name which character says each?)

When you think about your own ambitions, what do you think you require to feel “successful,” and what might you compromise for that achievement? How would you answer these same questions for yourself? ♦

### **Do you need critical recognition? Do you need fame?**

“I filled my head with golden opinions.”

“I had more kisses than you’ve had cakes!...When I was a child people loved me.”

### **Do you need financial success?**

“How am I to live?...Of course, I realize you don’t concern yourselves with *money* in these exalted circles.”

“My own taste was for plain things – but I denied it! The successful lived with gold and so would I! ... I grew confident. I grew resplendent. I gave salons and soirees, and worshipped the season round at the altar of sophistication.”

### **Do you need family? Love?**

“I had a respectable wife...I required only one quality in a domestic companion – lack of fire.”

“Not male sopranos screeching. Or stupid couples rolling their eyes. All that absurd Italian nonsense. I mean the real thing.”

### **Do you need morals?**

“I was a good man, as the world calls good. What use was it to me? Goodness could not make me a good composer!... Goodness is nothing in the furnace of art.”

“Oh, elevated! Elevated!... The only thing a man should elevate is his doodle.”

### **And as the going gets tougher...**

#### **Will you find stamina despite adversity?**

“I have worked and worked the talent You allowed me. *You know how hard I’ve worked!*”

“My hand is tired – it’s written too much – it can’t catch the notes anymore.”

#### **How will you respond to the rival who threatens your success?**

“You shit-pot!...I’ll hold a rehearsal. You’ll see!”

“What I did to you was nothing to what you did to me!”

#### **Where will you put your faith?**

“I sought only slavery for myself. To be owned – ordered – exhausted by an Absolute. This was denied me – and with it all meaning.”

“Only I could have done it. No one else living.”

#### **Will you be true to yourself?**

“My tongue is stupid, my heart isn’t.”

“In ten years of unrelenting spite – I had destroyed *myself!*”

*“My ambition burned with an unquenchable flame.” – Salieri*

## Metaphor and design

**Director Paul Mason Barnes** identified a line from the play that inspired the design of this production:

**SALIERI:** I wanted to blaze like a comet across the firmament of Europe.

Of course, the bright comet of this story – and history – is not Salieri but Mozart, and his anguished disappointment precipitates the desperate and destructive actions in this play. This production seeks to create the contrast between Mozart’s unparalleled brilliance and Salieri’s inferiority as a palpable reality on stage. **Costume designer Dorothy Marshall Englis** explains how this metaphor translated into visual choices, making Mozart the comet in his surroundings:

“*Amadeus* is, at its most basic, a memory play. We hear the story of Mozart through the recollections of Salieri. We see the world of the play through his eyes. Given Salieri’s obsession, we decided that Mozart is the visual focus of every scene he is in. Salieri’s world around Mozart is dark, conservative and stiff. Mozart, by contrast, is light, active and creative. Through the use of colors, patterns and fabrics, we hope to create a world where Mozart’s strange genius makes him stand out as the exotic puzzle he presents to Salieri.”

Style in fashionable Vienna was very important, and styles changed notably from the late eighteenth century to the early nineteenth, when we meet Salieri as an old man. In addition to the opulent clothing of Mozart’s lifetime, you will see figures at the beginning and end of the play representing Viennese citizens of 1823. Distinct differences in the shape or “silhouette” of the clothing of the two time periods helps to evoke the passage of time. Without a word, costume design can suggest these two different worlds with their changed tastes and values.



Above: Costume designer Dorothy Marshall Englis’ rendering for Mozart

What do you observe that makes Mozart’s costuming unique? Does the actor, Jim Poulos, also create a distinctive character by moving or using his voice differently than other characters on stage?

Watch for how the use of color and texture helps to differentiate the characters. Does it also differentiate class? Can you observe differences between the dress of the aristocracy and their servants, or between the audiences at the imperial theatre and the suburban music hall? How would you describe the differences you see?

Clothing also reflects the changing fortunes of individual characters themselves. When does Salieri change clothing in the second act – what has happened in his life? How does Mozart and Constanze’s clothing alter over the decade in Vienna, and are the changes related to events in their lives?

Salieri transforms from an old man to his younger self and back in both acts of the play, right in front of the audience. This takes more than just a costume change! How do you see the actor, Brent Harris, create the same character at two different ages? Why do you suppose Peter Shaffer wrote his play so that the audience watches this transformation rather than, for instance, having Salieri leave the stage?

Try this: how many time periods can you think of just by visualizing changes in silhouette? Imagine, for instance, ancient Greece, Elizabethan England, the 1960s; can you picture the silhouette of each time? (Can you do the same for non-Western cultures?) You may be surprised to discover that your impression of history includes this visual information. If you picture the American patriots of the Revolutionary War, what clothing do you visualize? Do any common pieces appear across the ocean in this story, which dates to roughly the same era?

“Too much spice. Too many notes.” – Count Orsini-Rosenberg

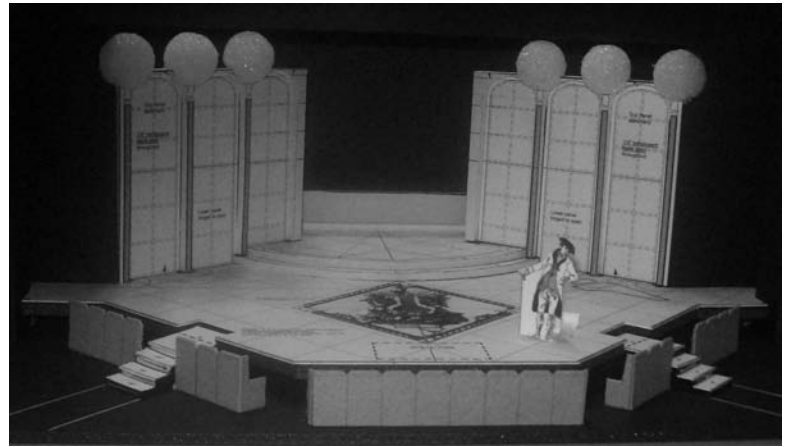
**Scenic Designer Bill Clarke** explains how the single line about a blazing comet inspired the stage space as well:

“Our viewpoint is that the action of *Amadeus* takes place in the mind of Salieri; the narrative is essentially the recollection of his tormented life. My challenge as a designer was to filter 18th century Vienna – a world of pastel, light, whimsy and curvilinear splendor – through the imagination of this dark and paranoid individual. Accordingly, the set is almost expressionistic in style as it reflects less the frivolity associated with the Rococo than Salieri’s conviction of God’s cruel trick. This scheme allows us to be very selective and minimal about the physical elements needed for scene changes, which additionally helps keep the action rapid and fluid.”

Director Barnes says that using this style of fluid, minimal staging is not unlike working on Shakespeare’s plays, which can shift time and location quickly, primarily through reliance on the language and action without complex scenery. The movable scenery consists almost entirely of chairs and tables, but creates ten specific locations ranging from intimate domestic scenes to grand public spaces, as well as a variety of other unnamed city streets and the suggestion of events elsewhere in Europe. Those locations include:

- Two apartments: Salieri’s home, and Mozart’s last apartment in the “slums” of Vienna’s suburbs, Rauhensteingasse 980.
- Schönbrunn Palace, residence of the Emperor
- Two gathering places in the homes of the aristocracy: the Baroness Waldstaten’s library and Kapellmeister Bonno’s salon
- Two performance venues: the Imperial Court Theatre (or *Burgtheater*, which saw premieres of Mozart’s *The Abduction from the Seraglio* and *The Marriage of Figaro*) and the Theatre by the Wieden (where *The Magic Flute* premiered).
- Elsewhere in Vienna: the Prater (an imperial hunting ground opened as a public park during Joseph II’s reign), a Masonic lodge and a cemetery.

Above: Scenic designer Bill Clarke created a scale “white model” of the Geva set; notice the apparent simplicity of the design.



Pay attention to Salieri’s personal spies, the “*Venticelli*,” who mention important details about offstage events and introduce many of the new locations the play visits; they keep Salieri informed and, combined with his own narration, also help move the audience through the story. You may notice how smoothly and efficiently they deliver information, and how important they are to the evolution of Salieri’s plans

Note your first impression of the set. Observe the wooden inlay design in the center of the floor, which brings warmth and a sense of the historical period to a space that is largely black and glossy. You may notice that its square outline provides the shape of the room in the staging of a several interior scenes where a sense of intimate, confined space is useful. What other elements move in and out of the space? Why do you suppose they were chosen? Did your impression of the set change when a specific location “came to life” in the play? What object never leaves the stage – does it have any special significance?

Either before or after the performance you may want to look up images of the real locations depicted in the play. In your opinion, did the production succeed in helping you imagine the overall flavor of those places? Did you ever wish for more or less detail?

A number of operas are “staged” in this play, even though we don’t see the actual performances. How do the designers, director and actors create the events of these operas? Is each opera performance the same? Why do you think the artists chose to show only the parts they did? Do they succeed in giving you the information you need for the story each time? ♦

“I must endure thirty-two years of being called ‘distinguished’ by people incapable of distinguishing.” – Salieri

## “Soyez Bienvenu a la court” (Welcome to the court)

“My principal aim here is to get to the emperor in some appropriate way, for I am *absolutment* resolved that he shall get to know me,” wrote Mozart in one of many letters detailing his plans for success in Vienna. In this play, Emperor Joseph II tells a story of Mozart’s previous visit to Schönbrunn Palace as a young boy of six; at twenty-five he was eager to make a bold new impression on the Emperor’s court, where Salieri was already in place as a court composer.

A young musician could not have arrived at a more auspicious time in the history of this expanding, increasingly wealthy city which relished both private and public recitals, concerts and theatre performances, and offered numerous opportunities for advancement.



Interior at Schönbrunn Palace

Outranked only by London and Paris as cities with active musical cultures, Vienna was not only the closer destination for Salieri (from Legnago) and Mozart (from Salzburg), but a superlative cosmopolitan capital. As the seat of government for the sprawling Habsburg domains, Mozart biographer Peter Gay observes that it was “especially attractive to ambitious provincials in search of rewarding connections with the powerful. The imperial establishment was an impressively large and impressively influential employer. Vienna was the emperor’s official residence, and appointments to coveted posts, including that of *kapellmeister*, were largely in the emperor’s hands.”

### Favorites and foreigners

MOZART: “I know what goes on, and so do you. Germany is completely in the hands of foreigners. Worthless Italians like Kappelmeister Bonno!...Court Composer Salieri!”

While the Habsburg Empire included a vast territory of lands, they were not unified and homogenized: the regional and historic identities of many nationalities were distinct. Thus the court officials and nobility introduced in *Amadeus* represent a variety of nationalities and dominant influences in European culture. Consider the clarity and economy with which Shaffer, by way of Salieri, introduces key figures and their viewpoints in Joseph’s court:

“The Emperor Joseph the Second of Austria. Son of Maria Theresa. Brother of Marie Antoinette. Adorer of music – provided that it made no demands on the royal ear.”

“First Royal Kapellmeister, then held by Giuseppe Bonno, seventy years old, and apparently immortal.”

“Johann von Strack. A Court official to his collarbone.”

“Count Orsini-Rosenberg. Benevolent to all things Italian – especially myself.”

“Baron van Swieten. Prefect of the Imperial Library. Ardent Freemason. Yet to find any thing funny. Known, for his enthusiasm for old-fashioned music, as ‘Lord Fugue.’”

### **Kapellmeister?**

In German-speaking countries between approximately 1500-1800, the word *kapellmeister* often designated the director of music for a monarch, nobleman, or church. This was a senior position and involved supervision of other musicians. Becoming a *kapellmeister* was a mark of success for professional musicians of this time. As society evolved and the prestige of the nobility declined, composers came to value their freedom more highly, and being a *kapellmeister* became less desirable. For example, Beethoven never worked as a *kapellmeister*, instead pursuing a career as a freelance musician.

### **Germans or Austrians?**

While Vienna is the capital of modern day Austria, Austria as a nation did not exist in the 18th century.

The Austrian territories of the Habsburg empire were ethnically and linguistically Germanic, hence the references to German as the local identity, with French and Italian as the foreign influences.

*“All the journeys ... all the carriages ... all the rooms of smiles.”*  
– Mozart

**Note that the Emperor occasionally refers to Salieri as “cattivo,” an Italian word meaning wicked, naughty or mischievous. Joseph seems to use the label affectionately: what does Salieri do to earn this description? Is it an apt description of his behavior at court? Outside of court?**

The Viennese court depicted in *Amadeus* is a place to compete for favor: a place of politics, personalities, etiquette, allegiances and judgement. Salieri demonstrates that he is well aware of the pitfalls of securing and maintaining popularity in a mercurial climate where influence and preferences can change quickly.

SALIERI: These are my *Venticelli*. My “Little Winds,” as I called them. [He gives each a coin from his pocket.] The secret of successful living in a large city is always to know to the minute what is being done behind your back.

### “Chittero-chattero”

As audience, we hear the use of many languages in *Amadeus*. Enjoy! Shaffer incorporated conversational phrases in Italian and French in the play’s dialogue without sacrificing our understanding. Some passages are also reiterated in English so we know what is being communicated, as in many of Salieri’s Italian rants, or are clear in the context of the physical action – we can recognize actions such as praying, begging and threatening even without comprehending specific words. Other phrases are simple pleasantries which need no translation to follow the plot. Finally, untranslated passages can reflect the secret-keeping and alliances of the court, such as when Chamberlain von Strack is deliberately left out of the details of a plan which is revealed one scene later, and the audience shares his frustration and alienation. Notably there are no occurrences of German conversation; most speech would have been in German rather than the English we hear when the play is performed. However, you may notice the German pronunciations of proper names, and in the use of titles such as *Herr*, *Fräulein* and *Kapellmeister*. ♦

**As you meet these characters at and around Joseph’s court, observe which characters side with Salieri, and which with Mozart. How do those alliances influence each composer’s advancement? Do the alliances change?**

**While the play is a work of fiction, each of the named characters in *Amadeus* was a real individual in history. Choose one character to research: can you discover what of the portrayal in this play appears to be fact, and what fiction?**

### Freemasons?

Salieri explains: “In those days almost every man of influence in Vienna was a Mason, and the Baron’s lodge by far the most fashionable.” Imagine an exclusive, popular but secretive fraternity. The Freemasons were (and are) a private membership society for men with a common goal of self-improvement through ideals of learning both in science and spirituality; the “Compass and Square” emblem, which appears in this production, represents the balance between the spiritual and physical, and these values were consistent with the larger themes of the Enlightenment. Mozart was an active Mason, and the brotherhood provided a useful support network during his periods of diminished income. In *Amadeus*, Salieri orchestrates the catastrophic loss of the Masons’ support by encouraging Mozart to include their secret rituals and practices in *The Magic Flute*; while it is true that Mozart embedded Masonic ideas in this opera, no real-life falling-out occurred. You may spot additional Masonic symbols, many inspired by Egyptian mythology, in the *Magic Flute* costume, and in the small aprons worn by Baron von Swieten, Salieri and Mozart inside the Masonic lodge. As membership has several levels, the differing designs on each of the three men’s aprons are meant to reflect their relative standing in the lodge.



*“There is far too much Italian chittero-chattero at this court!”  
– Chamberlain von Strack*

## Mozart's Music

**Sound Designer Rusty Wandall** reflects, “The sound design for *Amadeus* is one of the more challenging and exciting projects I’ve worked on. Mozart’s music is at the forefront of this production and actually turns into another character, unseen but definitely heard and experienced.... My goal is to stay back and let Mozart himself speak through his music.”

Peter Shaffer’s script offers suggestions about how works by Mozart may be incorporated into the staging of his play, to be interpreted by directors and designers. In the hands of a lesser playwright such musical excerpts might be introduced as a straightforward chronological sampling of the composer’s accomplishments as they accompany his unfolding biography. But beyond that, Shaffer is actually guiding the audience to experience the beauty of this music by introducing it within the emotional context of specific scenes, and thereby highlighting its particularly expressive power. The classical style may be cherished by some audiences and unknown to others, but by matching the music to the emotional highs and lows, a production can celebrate what is timeless and universal in Mozart’s art.

**SALIERI:** You, when you come, will be told that we musicians of the eighteenth century were no better than servants: the willing slaves of the well-to-do. That is quite true. It is also quite false. Yes, we were servants. But we were learned servants! And we used our learning to celebrate men’s average lives. We took unremarkable men – usual bankers, run-of-the-mill officials, ordinary soldiers and statesmen and wives – and sacramentalized their mediocrity.... Trumpets sounded when they entered the world, and trombones groaned when they left it! The savor of their days remains behind because of us, our music still remembered while their politics are long gone. Tell me, before you call us servants, who served whom? And who, I wonder, in your generations, will immortalize *you*?

In his book, *What to Listen for in Mozart*, Robert Harris describes the historical context:

*Mozart saw the end of the feudal era in Europe, but he was still living and writing in it. Since his music was written for the nobility, to charm and entertain them, it was often quiet, restrained, modest and pleasant....It was considered unseemly to display emotion too violently in art, just as it was inappropriate to do so in polite company....Balance was a great virtue in life and in art; symmetry and order were valued more highly than expression and passion.*

*“Working strictly within the limitations imposed on him by his time, he managed to create a musical universe that nonetheless overcomes those very limitations.... Mozart has passed down to us, through his polished, elegant phrases and textures, perhaps the most vivid and palpable portrait of late-eighteenth-century aristocratic life that has ever been drawn. His music is full of the salon, the ballroom, the dining room and the artificial world that these rooms represent. At the same time, Mozart’s music represents the ambiguity and contradiction that was part of late-eighteenth-century society. As much as his music provided a perfect reflection of the elegance and decorum to which the era aspired, there is a fiercely independent voice in his art.*

In *Amadeus* we have the opportunity to experience the spirit of the era as well as that independent voice, and to savor music that communicates across the ages.

Think of a favorite piece of music. How would you describe it for a friend? Listen to the characters in this play as they describe the way they feel about their favorite music. Is there any character who shares your own feelings?

Why is music important to you? A musician and educator shares his own thoughts about music’s role in our lives in a speech found here:

<http://greenroom.fromthetop.org/2009/03/11/karl-paulnack-to-the-boston-conservatory-freshman-class/>

Opera does not enjoy the same prominence it did in Mozart’s time. Why do you think that is? Is there another art form that has taken its place? Is there a form of entertainment we enjoy today that you can imagine growing less popular in the future?

Does seeing this play inspire you to attend or listen to performances of opera or classical music?

*“I bet you that’s how God hears the world!” – Mozart*

## The operas

MOZART: How can we go on forever with these gods and heroes?

BARON VON SWIETEN: Because they go on forever – that’s why! They represent the eternal in us. Opera is here to enoble us, Mozart – you and me just as well as the Emperor. It is an aggrandizing art! It celebrates the eternal in Man and ignores the ephemeral. The goddess in Woman and not the laundress.

In *Amadeus*, opera – and debates about its appropriate subjects and styles – becomes the key arena for Mozart’s virtuosity and independent vision. Even those unfamiliar with opera will recognize the discussion about conforming to expectations versus creating something wholly new. In the first act you will hear Mozart clearly mocking the musical conventions of his time, and in the second he shares his vision for what opera can and should be.

Operas featured in *Amadeus* include:

*The Abduction from the Seraglio* – the aria written for Katerina Cavalieri, “*Martern aller Arten*,” is a good sample to preview

*The Marriage of Figaro* – “*Non più andrai*” makes a prominent appearance

*Don Giovanni* – the opera’s famous Overture is highlighted in this production

*Così Fan Tutti* (*Thus do All Women*)

*The Magic Flute*

*Idomeneo, King of Crete* is referenced, but not heard in this production

(Additional notes about the operas are also included in the program you will receive at the theatre.)

## Other recommended listening

The Adagio from Serenade No. 10 for winds (K. 361) is the first piece of Mozart’s music heard in the play, and has a profound impact on Salieri. Listen for how Shaffer matches Salieri’s narration to the music itself

The Kyrie from the Mass in C minor (K. 427) appears at the end of Act One as Salieri comprehends the scope of Mozart’s brilliance and the depths of his betrayal by God.

In a perfect parallel of biography and music, Mozart was writing his Requiem Mass (K. 626) at the time of his death. The “Requiem,” “Kyrie” and “Lacrimosa” are heard in this production.

## On film

*Amadeus* reached a broader audience with the 1984 film adaptation, which is credited for creating a resurgence of interest in Salieri and his music. The screenplay differs from the stage script in some important ways, so it will best serve classes who want to pursue a detailed comparison. For educators who are seeking a general introduction to the world of the play, we do not recommend watching the entire film prior to attending; previewing an individual scene might help to discuss the history and style of the piece.

Many opera productions and concerts can be viewed on DVD or sampled online; watching a bit of performance can be a good way to engage with the music as Mozart’s audiences would have done, not through audio recordings, but with the virtuosity of engaged musicians providing part of the experience along with the sound of the music itself.

## Art in the lobby

Geva’s production of *Amadeus* includes an exhibition of paintings and sculptures by artist Virginia Martin, “Mozart – Motions of Genius,” inspired by Mozart’s music and life. ♦

## Staff

### Skip Greer

Director of  
Education/  
Artist in Residence

### Kathryn Moroney

Associate Director  
of Education

### Eric Evans

Education  
Administrator

### Gabriella Perez

Research  
Assistant

### Marge Betley

Literary  
Manager/  
Resident  
Dramaturg

### Jean Gordon Ryon

Dramaturg /  
New Plays  
Coordinator

### Mark Cuddy

Artistic Director

“Was this his response to all my injuries –  
these priceless sighs of exaltation?” – Salieri

# 2010-11 P.L.A.Y. Student Matinee Series

## A CHRISTMAS CAROL

December 2nd, 8th, 9th,  
15th, 16th, 21st & 22nd at 10:30 a.m.

Recommended for all audiences (ages 5 and up)

## RADIO GOLF

March 31st & April 7th at 10:30 a.m.

Recommended for high school and up

## Over the Tavern

March 3rd at 10:30 a.m.

Recommended for grade 8 and up

## THE MUSIC MAN

May 5th & 12th at 10:30 a.m.

Recommended for all audiences (ages 5 and up)

**To reserve seats please call (585) 232-1366, ext. 3035**

### Education Supporters

Thank you to the supporters of the 2010 Summer Curtain Call Event,  
our annual gala in support of our education programs.

#### Education Partners

Thank you to our corporate and  
foundation donors who support  
our education programs.

Ames-Amzalak Memorial Trust  
Caldwell Manufacturing  
Company  
The College at Brockport  
Cornell/Weinstein  
Family Foundation  
The Donald F. and Maxine B.  
Davidson Fund  
St. John Fisher College  
Sherwin & Linda  
Cornell Weinstein  
Louis S. & Molly B. Wolk  
Foundation  
Xerox Corporation

#### Business Supporters

Ameriprise Financial  
Services, Inc.  
Boylan, Brown, Code,  
Vigdor & Wilson, LLP  
Buckingham Properties LLC  
Canandaigua National  
Bank & Trust  
Clark Patterson Lee  
Connors and Ferris, LLP  
Conolly Printing  
Constellation Brands, Inc.  
Cornell/Weinstein  
Family Foundation  
Cut-it-Out! Cookies  
Dollop Gourmet  
Cupcake Creations  
ESL Federal Credit Union  
Fioravanti Florists  
First Niagara Risk Management  
Harter Secret & Emery LLP  
Home Properties, Inc.  
Ketmar Development  
Corporation  
LaBella Associates, P.C.  
Midtown Athletic Club

Nocon & Associates,  
A private wealth advisory  
practice of Ameriprise  
Financial Services, Inc.  
Nolan's Party Rentals  
Red Barn Properties, Inc.  
REDCOM Laboratories, Inc.  
Tasteful Connections Catering  
The College At Brockport State  
University of New York  
The Pike Company  
Time Warner Cable  
UltraMobile Imaging, Inc.  
Verizon Wireless  
Woods Oviatt Gilman LLP

#### Individual Supporters

Mrs. Carol Adams  
Mr. Robert W. August  
Mr. & Mrs. Bill Broomfield  
Mr. & Mrs. Bob Brenna  
Mr. Tom T. Clark  
Mr. Spencer Cook  
Mr. & Mrs. Bernard P. Fallon  
Jay & Betsy Friedman  
Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Gallina

Pamela Giambrone  
Michael & Joanna Grosodonia  
Mrs. Suzanne Gouvernet  
Mr. & Mrs. Chris Hayes  
Mr. & Mrs. Brian Hickey  
Mr. Nicholas Juskiw  
Mrs. Dawn & Dr. Jacques  
Lipson  
Mr. & Mrs. Staffan Lundback  
Mr. & Mrs. Peter Messner  
Mr. & Mrs. Doug & Lynn Neff  
Ms. Nannette Nocon &  
Mr. Karl Wessendorf  
Pat O'Connell  
Mrs. Peter Parts  
Ms. Lesia Pavlovych  
Ms. Julie E. Petit  
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Raca  
Ms. Jean Ryon  
Carl & Barbara Sassano  
Janet & Kim Tenreiro  
Jeffrey Valentine  
Mr. & Mrs. John Weisberg  
Mrs. Helen Zamboni &  
Mr. Steven I. Rosen

(Listed In Alphabetical Order)

Interested in becoming  
a sponsor of Geva's  
Educational  
programming?  
Please contact Bonnie  
Butkas at (585) 232-1366  
ext. 3041



**Geva**  
Theatre  
Center

75 Woodbury Boulevard  
Rochester, New York 14607  
Box Office: (585) 232-Geva (4382)  
Education Department: (585) 232-1366, ext. 3058  
[www.gevatheatre.org/learn](http://www.gevatheatre.org/learn)