

W.A. Mozart, *Overture to Così fan tutte*



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (27 January 1756 – 5 December 1791), was a prolific and influential composer of the Classical era. He composed over six hundred works, many acknowledged as pinnacles of symphonic, *concertante*, chamber, piano, operatic, and choral music. He is among the most enduringly popular of classical composers.

Così fan tutte (All women act that way) is the last of Mozart's three "da Ponte" operas—those composed to libretti by Lorenzo da Ponte (the other two are *Le nozze di Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*). Long neglected and misunderstood, *Così*

emerged from obscurity in the twentieth century and has come to be regarded as among the composer's finest, if also most problematic, works.

It has been assumed that the opera was commissioned by Emperor Joseph II, probably sometime during the summer of 1789. Coming as it did during a fallow period in Mozart's output, the work was a financial boon to him and allowed for the repayment of some debt. Little is known about the creation of the work, but the first rehearsal took place in Mozart's apartment on January 21, 1790, and the first performance was at the Burgtheater in Vienna five days later. This initial run was extremely brief, due to Joseph II's death after only five performances had been mounted; the closing of the Viennese theaters prevented any further performances until June. The marriage of Mozart's score and da Ponte's libretto represents the apotheosis of the opera buffa genre (making its setting in Naples—the birthplace of the genre—all the more appropriate) and embodies the best of the Classical era.