

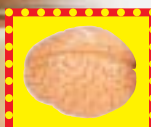
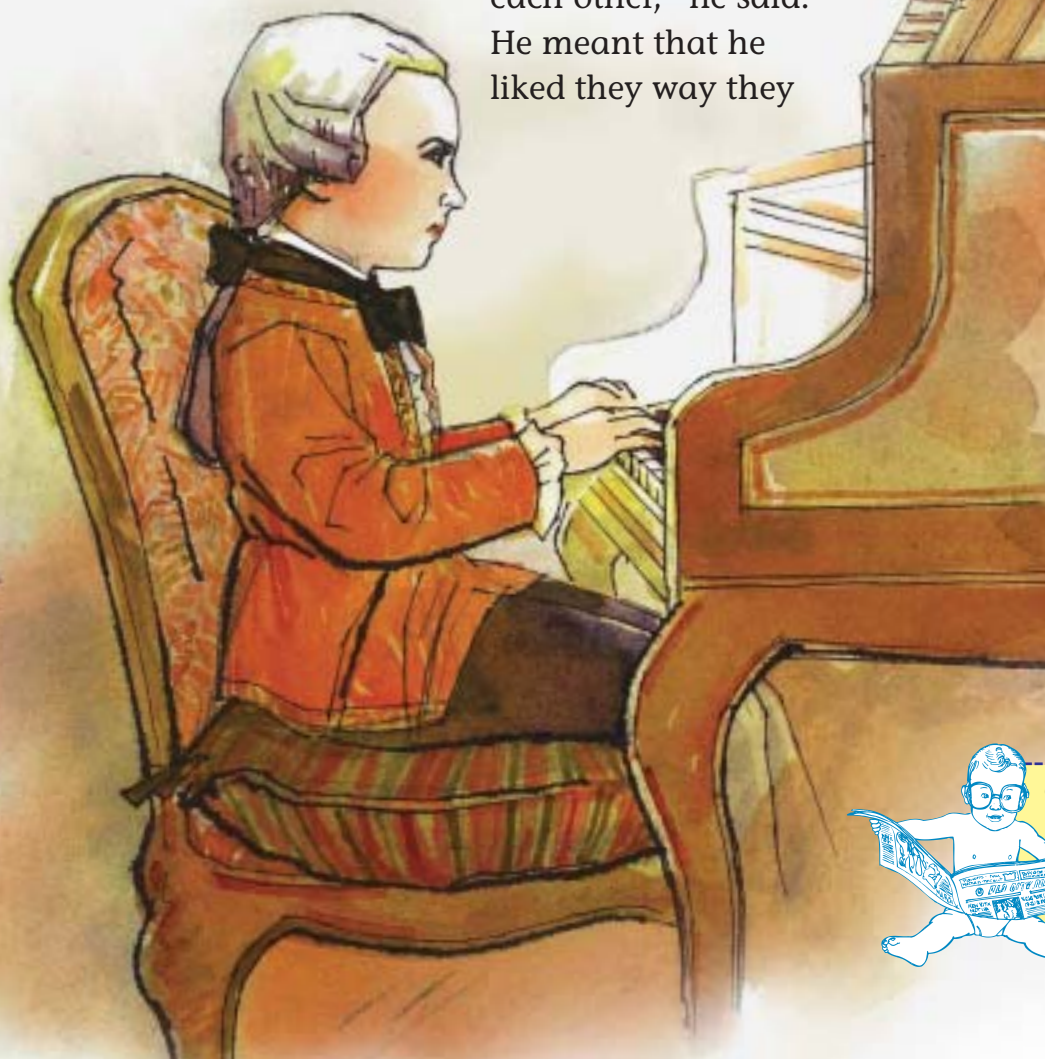
# Mozart, BOY Wonder



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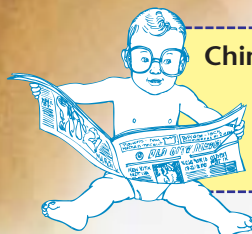
What were you doing when you were 4 years old? Were you playing with toys and watching cartoons on television? Did you ever bang on the keys of a piano just for fun? If you had been Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, by the time you were 4, you would have been playing the harpsichord (an instrument similar to the piano). By 5, you would have been composing your own music and playing concerts for the kings and queens of Europe.

Wolfgang Mozart was born more than 250 years ago, in Salzburg, Austria. His father was a violinist and composer. Herr Mozart (Herr means “Mister” in German) gave Wolfgang his first lessons. Wolfgang was so tiny he had to sit on pillows to reach the keys! When he was only 3, Wolfgang would sit at the harpsichord and play notes “that like each other,” he said. He meant that he liked them that way they



### Colin says:

I have a special talent in reading because I can read books like *Harry Potter* and *The Diary of a Wimpy Kid*. I read every night in bed. I read all of the commercials on TV. I would like to read for children when I grow up.



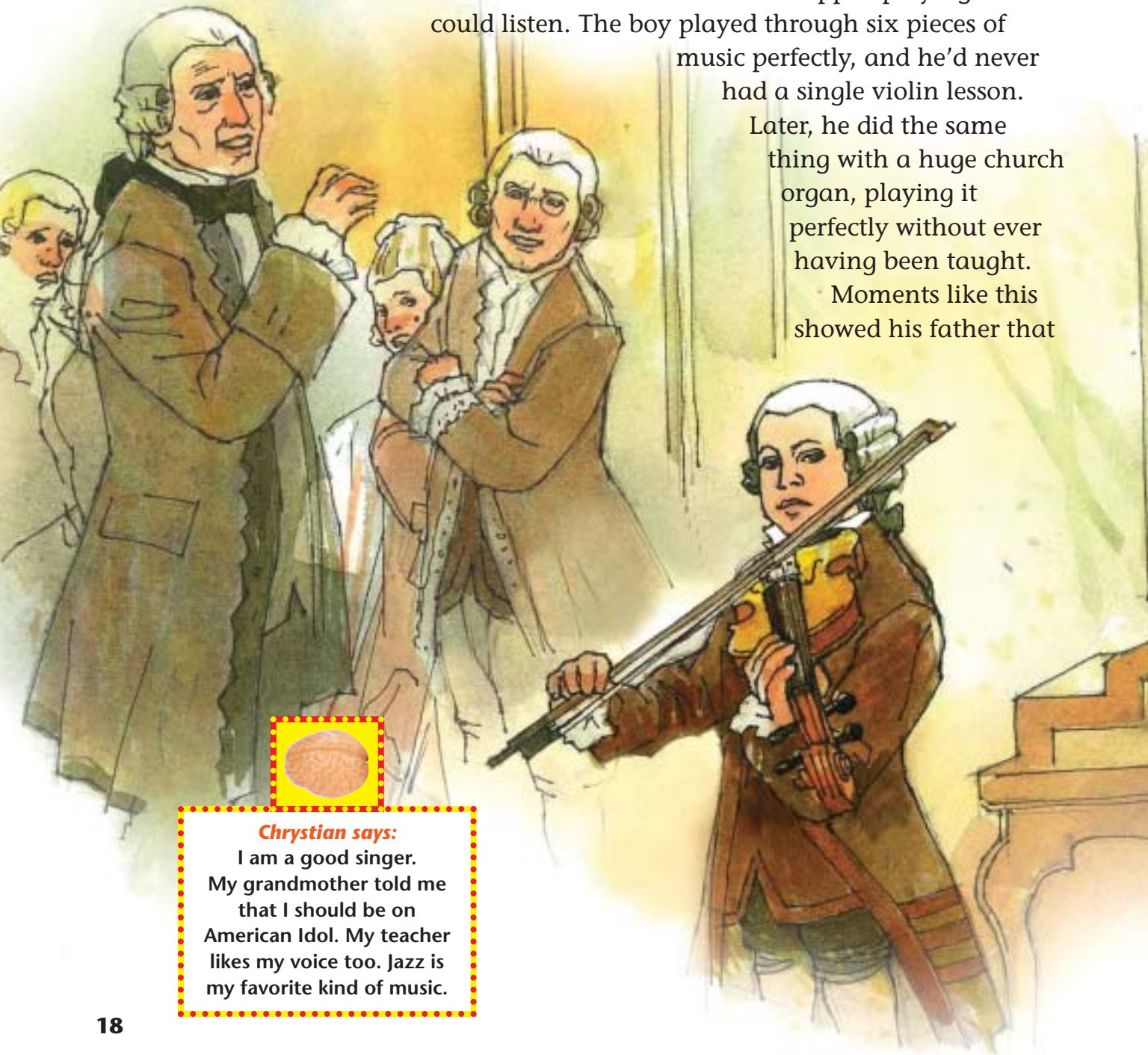
Chinese pianist **Lang Lang** played his first recital at the age of **5**.

sounded together. He was writing music before he could write his name.

When he was 6, friends of Herr Mozart came to the house to play music together. Wolfgang begged to be allowed to play his little violin. He had received it as a gift but hadn't been taught to play it yet. Herr Mozart refused. The other musicians insisted that the boy be allowed to play. Finally Herr Mozart agreed that he could play along, softly. Soon Wolfgang was playing so well that the other violinist stopped playing so he could listen. The boy played through six pieces of music perfectly, and he'd never had a single violin lesson.

Later, he did the same thing with a huge church organ, playing it perfectly without ever having been taught.

Moments like this showed his father that



**Chrystian says:**

I am a good singer. My grandmother told me that I should be on American Idol. My teacher likes my voice too. Jazz is my favorite kind of music.



**David says:**

My special talent is taking care of babies. My mom baby-sits and I get to help her. I might babysit during the day and work at night when I grow up. I think it will help me be a good dad.

Wolfgang was a child prodigy who had an incredible gift for music. By the time he was 8, Wolfgang had written his first symphony. He wrote his first opera at the age of 12.

Herr Mozart took Wolfgang and his sister, Maria Anna, on musical tours through Europe. The two children played for royalty and wealthy citizens. (At that time, there were no musical recordings of any kind. You could only listen to live music. Wealthy people paid musicians to play music for them.)

One of the tours lasted more than three years. On that tour, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart became “a household name.” Everyone—from royalty to the general public—was amazed by this boy who could play better than most adults. His name was mentioned in newspapers all across Europe.

A Paris newspaper said, “All those who know about music were greatly surprised to see a child carry out what they would have admired in the most skillful adult.” Although there were other child prodigies who were known locally, Wolfgang was the first “celebrity” prodigy known throughout Europe. And in those days, news traveled very slowly!

Today, Mozart’s music is very famous. It is played, performed, and enjoyed all around the world. Although he was only 35 years old when he died, Wolfgang had written more than 600 musical compositions. His amazing talent at a very young age forever changed the idea of what a child prodigy was. All other prodigies after him have been judged by his standard. Even today, kids who show great talent in music want to be like Mozart, whose musical abilities made him one of the original “whiz kids.” 🎭

