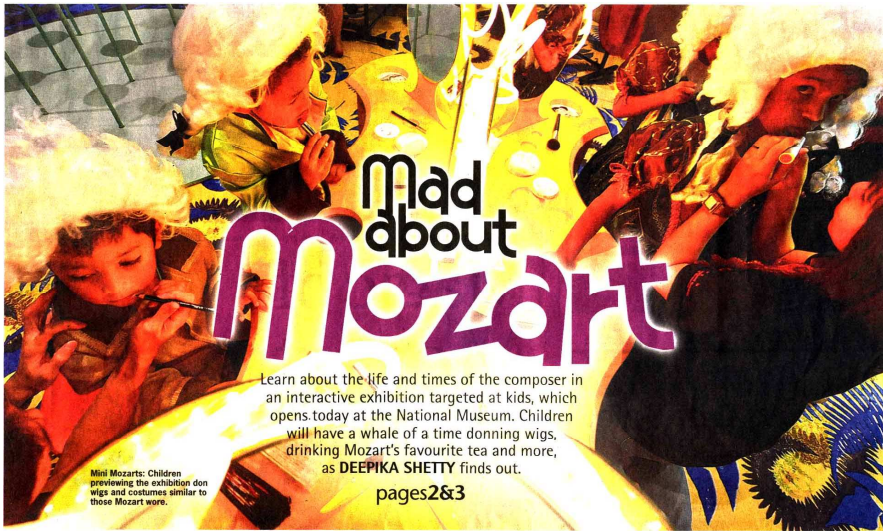




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Headline: Mad about Mozart



Learn about the life and times of the composer in an interactive exhibition targeted at kids, which opens today at the National Museum. Children will have a whale of a time donning wigs, drinking Mozart's favourite tea and more, as DEEPIKA SHETTY finds out.

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Mini Mozarts: Children previewing the exhibition don wigs and costumes similar to those Mozart wore.



YOU'RE SO VAIN: Start preening and posing, peeps. Look grand as you sweep the floor in those wigs and Mozart costumes.

PHOTOS: DESMOND FOO, AP

Magic of Mozart

Come face to face with the musical child genius in this Austrian interactive exhibition for children



Deepika Shetty

MOZART madness begins today at the National Museum. Kids will be able to put on powdered wigs and costumes from the 18th century, and learn more about the life and times of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart in an interactive exhibition. Called Mozart: A Child Prodigy, the exhibition will run till July 6. Brought in by the museum at a cost of \$500,000, the exhibition aims to show children how one of the great musical geniuses of all time lived. It was designed by Austria's Zoom Kindermuseum, a children's museum in Vienna and the Da Ponte Institute, a music research institute named after Mozart's li-

brettist, Lorenzo Da Ponte. The show was developed to mark the Salzburg-born composer's 250th birth anniversary in 2006. He was born in 1756 and died in 1791. This is the first time the exhibition is travelling out of Austria, and the National Museum is targeting 50,000 visitors. Its director, Ms Lee Chor Lin, 45, found out about the exhibition a year ago and decided to bring it here as part of the museum's first-ever children's season. "Attention has been paid to every little detail, like the height of the dressing table, the chairs, the costumes. I firmly believe this is the way to engage young people." The idea behind the exhibition is to take children into the life of Mozart, whose life story has been - albeit mostly to adults - in books, documentaries and a movie titled Amadeus (1984). By all accounts, he was small, very thin and pale, and at various points in his life was considered vain, enormously talented



PILLOW TALK: Climb onto a huge bed, rest your head on the pillow and listen to Mozart's music. Beware of 'bed bugs' on the sheets, but they don't bite.

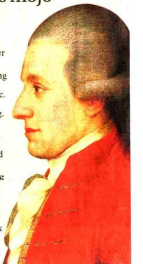
and slightly mad. This exhibition focuses on his childhood years, to give children an appreciation of the time he grew up in. Visitors entering the exhibition first see an opera-like setting, complete with plush red curtains. Before they find out what lies beyond the curtains, two performers provide a quick peek into the life of the composer. The child prodigy composed his first work at age five and wrote his first successful opera by the age of 12. Before his early death at the age of 35, he had created hundreds of solo and orchestral pieces, and inspired other musical greats like Beethoven and Wagner. Beyond the curtains are 11 interactive rooms with themes such as The Aristocratic Salon, the Pharmacy and Barber Shop and the Scriptorium. Each shows what life was like for young Mozart, providing an insight into his everyday life during the Rococo period. Activities include mixing herbal remedies and playing the games he played. The 5,381 sq ft exhibition area, about the size of two four-room HDB flats, have been fitted out with chandeliers and elaborate furniture. Children can climb onto a huge bed and when they put their heads on the pillows, they can listen to Mozart's music. The sheets are printed with "bed bug" designs because insects and bugs were rampant during those times.

Continued on facing page

Mozart's mojo

Five fun facts about Mozart

- Pet:** A fox-terrier named Pimperl
- Hobbies:** Dancing when not composing music. Liked to sketch while composing.
- Favourite dish:** Liver dumplings with sauerkraut, a kind of pickled cabbage.
- Favourite games:** Billiards, target shooting and card games.
- Distinguishing marks:** Smallpox scars and a large nose.





Be Mozart

Some highlights of the exhibition:

Pharmacy and The Barber's Shop
Learn about the types of diseases Mozart suffered from when he was a child and the medical treatments used.
Mix herbal teas used to cure coughs and colds, and pack a toothpowder made of cloves and anise that he used to clean his teeth.

Boudoir
Kids can transform themselves into mini Mozarts here, by trying on wigs and beards and putting on make-up powder, beauty spots, masks and perfumes.

Aristocratic Salon
Act like Austrian nobility in this room. Children will learn dance steps from that era, shown on semi-transparent mirrors which capture the children's reflections too.

Scriptorium
Write with quill pens and ink like Mozart did, in this room equipped with writing desks.

Games
The Rococo age was a time when games were everybody's favourite pastime. Don't leave without trying the card games and indulging in some target shooting.

Take a break
Rest tired little feet by relaxing on a grand canopy bed with four large pillows that pipe in the music Mozart wrote when he was a child.

ST PHOTOS: DESMOND FOO

GIGGLING MUSE: Kids will learn to act like nobility, dance the waltz, dress up and play lots of parlour games just like the genteel people of Mozart's era.

Keeping it clean

From previous page

As Ms Lee points out: "Most exhibitions are arts centric and more focused on adults. I felt it was time to get something for children."

Parents worried about the outbreak of hand, food and mouth disease can rest easy.

Mr Tan Boon Hui, 36, deputy director, programming, National Museum of Singapore, says: "We are concerned about the recent resurgence of hand, foot and mouth cases and have taken measures to ensure hygiene standards are kept at all times."

"The exhibition area and exhibits will be cleaned three times a day, and the wigs are all quick-frozen in a special freezer daily to kill bacteria and other possible parasites."

"Visitors to the exhibition will be provided with sanitizing wipes and lotions. In addition, the costumes are dry-cleaned and will be rotated regularly to ensure cleanliness."

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> Mozart: A Child Prodigy opens today and runs till July 6 from 10am to 6pm daily. Entry fee is \$15 for adults and \$7.50 for children. Free admission for children below six years old, but they must be accompanied by an adult. Tickets are available from Sistic at www.sistic.com.sg. For inquiries, call 6332-3653 or visit www.nationalmuseum.sg.



RITE OF PASSAGE:

Pretend to be a nobleman and ride a horse through a map of Austria (above) or use quill and ink (left) to scribble some love notes at the scriptorium.