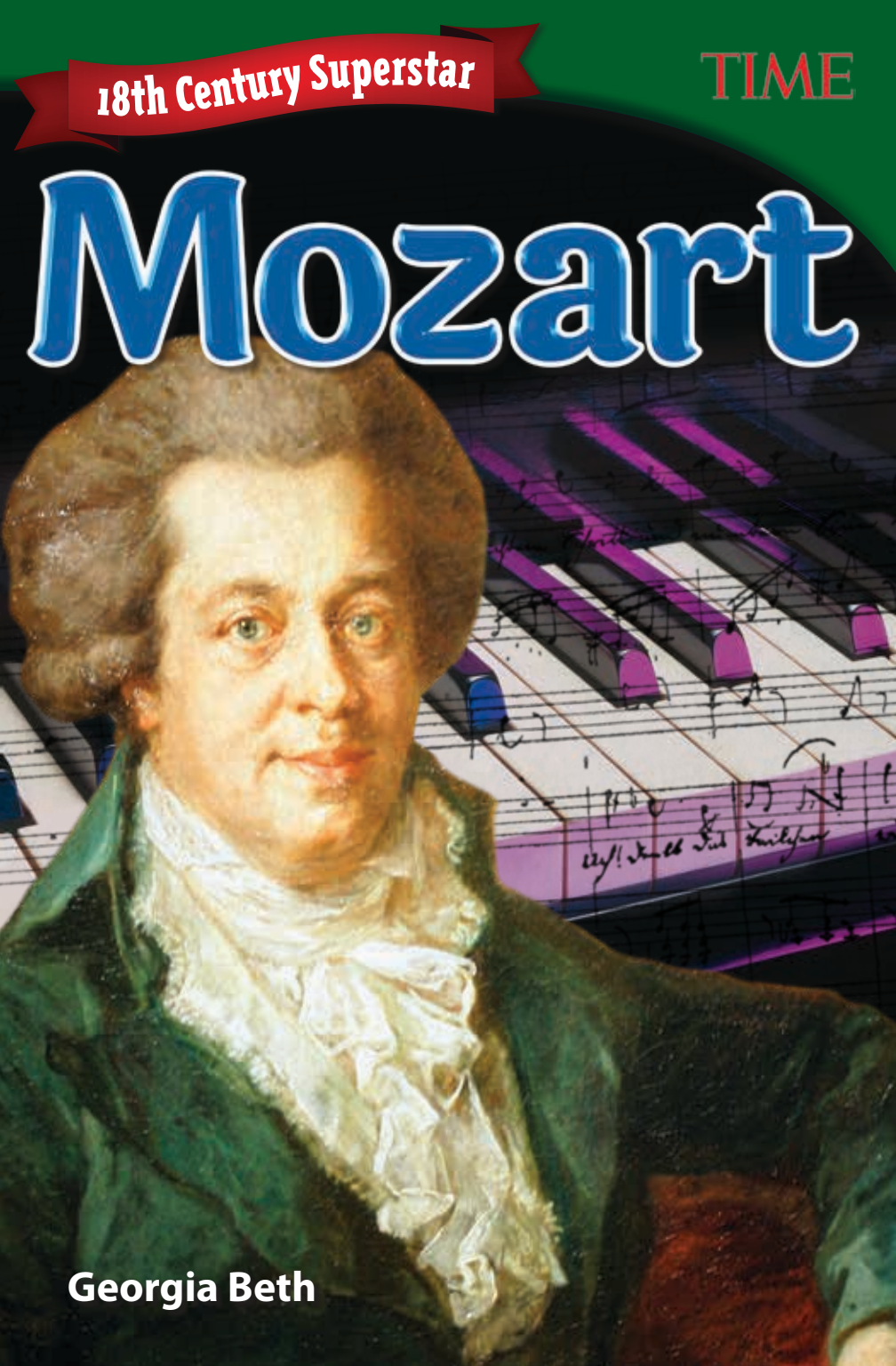
18th Century Superstar

TIME

Mozart



Georgia Beth

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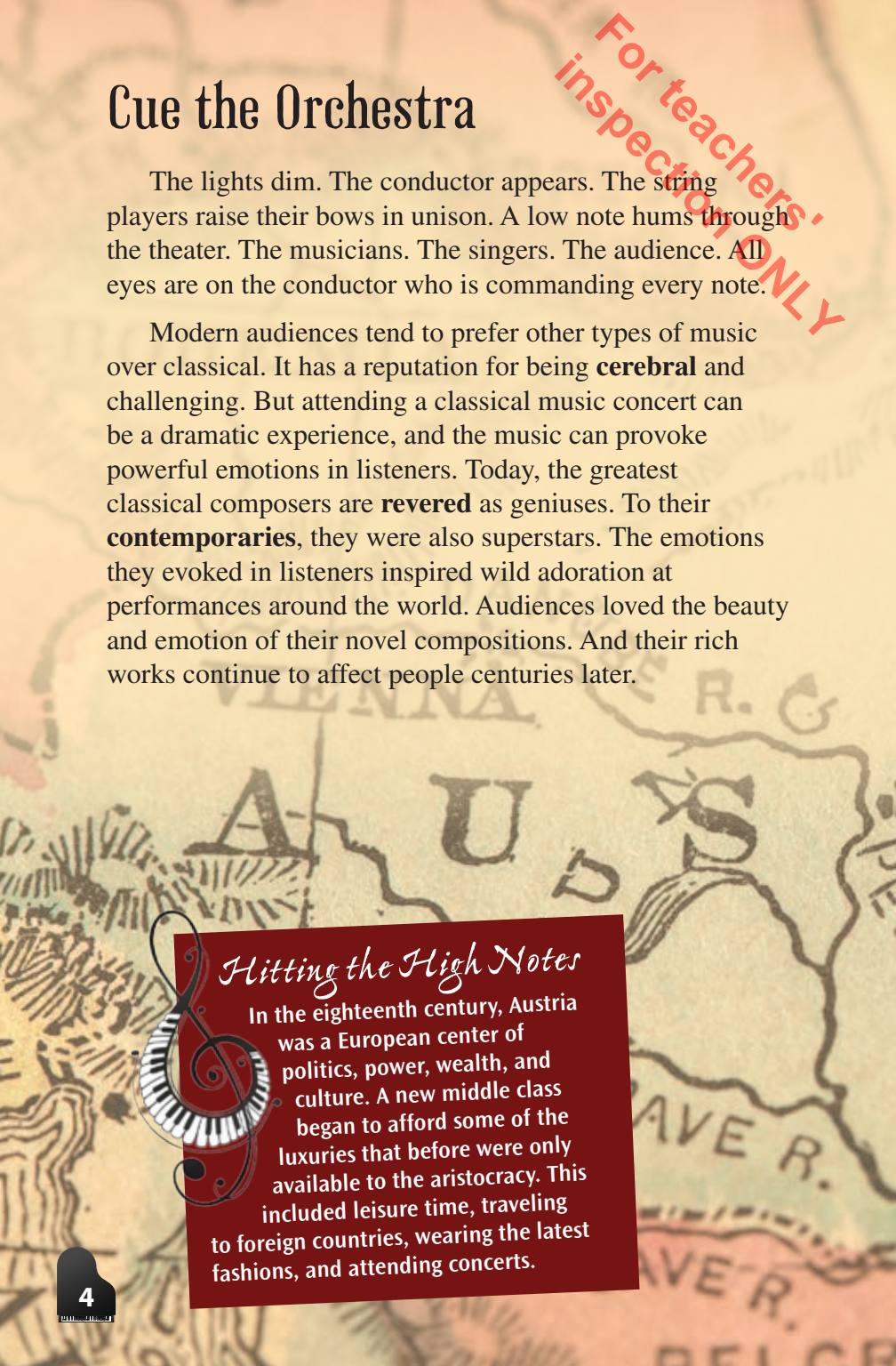
For teachers' inspection ONLY

Cue the Orchestra

For teachers' inspection ONLY

The lights dim. The conductor appears. The string players raise their bows in unison. A low note hums through the theater. The musicians. The singers. The audience. All eyes are on the conductor who is commanding every note.

Modern audiences tend to prefer other types of music over classical. It has a reputation for being **cerebral** and challenging. But attending a classical music concert can be a dramatic experience, and the music can provoke powerful emotions in listeners. Today, the greatest classical composers are **revered** as geniuses. To their **contemporaries**, they were also superstars. The emotions they evoked in listeners inspired wild adoration at performances around the world. Audiences loved the beauty and emotion of their novel compositions. And their rich works continue to affect people centuries later.

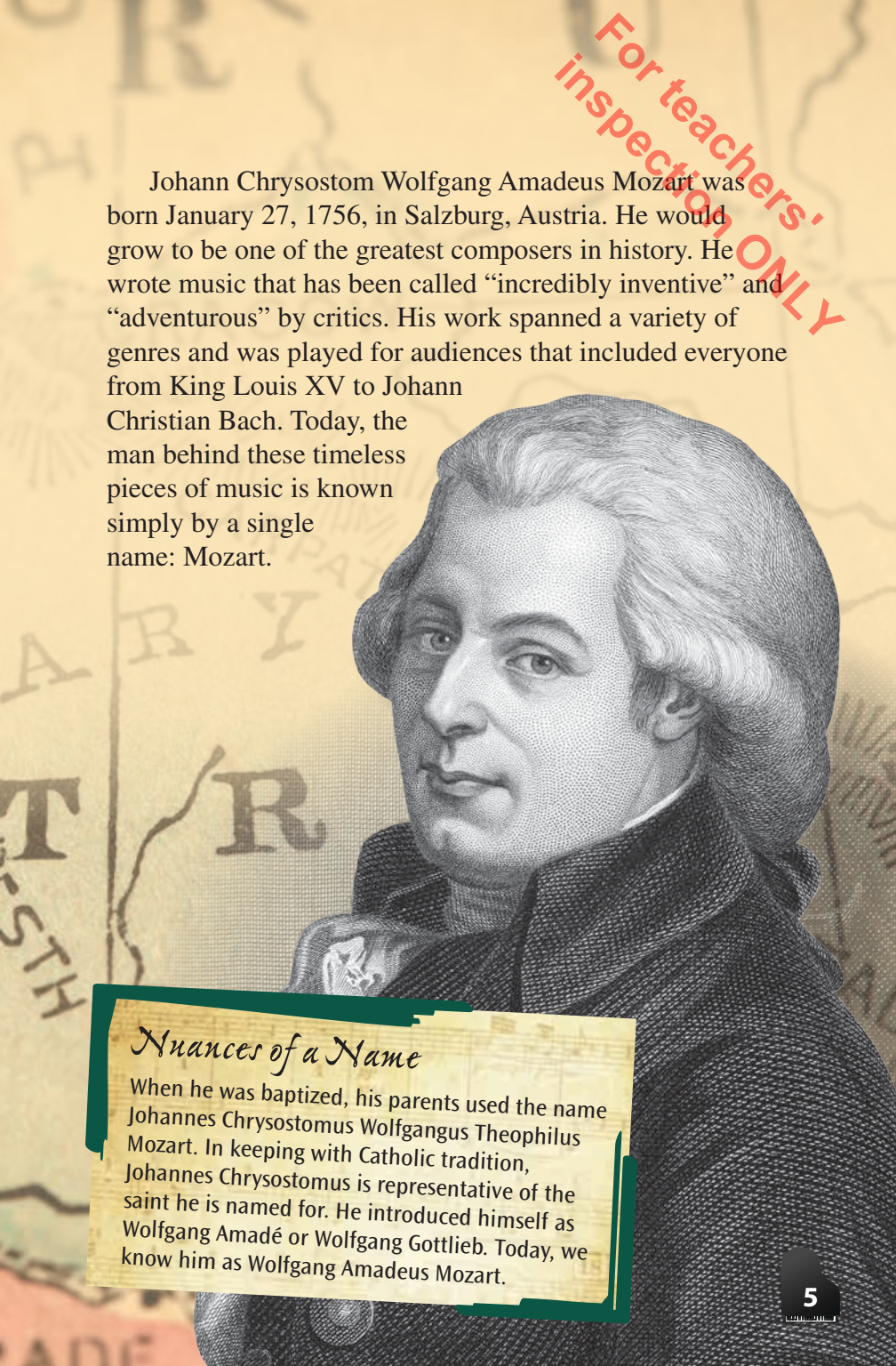


Hitting the High Notes

In the eighteenth century, Austria was a European center of politics, power, wealth, and culture. A new middle class began to afford some of the luxuries that before were only available to the aristocracy. This included leisure time, traveling to foreign countries, wearing the latest fashions, and attending concerts.

For teachers' inspection ONLY

Johann Chrysostom Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born January 27, 1756, in Salzburg, Austria. He would grow to be one of the greatest composers in history. He wrote music that has been called "incredibly inventive" and "adventurous" by critics. His work spanned a variety of genres and was played for audiences that included everyone from King Louis XV to Johann Christian Bach. Today, the man behind these timeless pieces of music is known simply by a single name: Mozart.



Nuances of a Name

When he was baptized, his parents used the name Johannes Chrysostomus Wolfgangus Theophilus Mozart. In keeping with Catholic tradition, Johannes Chrysostomus is representative of the saint he is named for. He introduced himself as Wolfgang Amadé or Wolfgang Gottlieb. Today, we know him as Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

Prelude to Greatness

For teachers' inspection ONLY

Philosophers have long asked whether it is nature or nurture that turns ordinary children into geniuses. Scientists look for evidence that genius is genetic. They study the early lives of their subjects. They hope to understand the early influences, motives, and challenges that shaped the **prodigies'** work. Studying the early life of Mozart may not provide all the answers, but it should help us understand the background of his musical genius.

Family Life

Mozart was the youngest of seven children. Only he and his sister, Maria Anna, survived past infancy. His father, Leopold, was a musician. He wrote *Treatise on the Fundamental Principles of Violin Playing*, a manual used to teach students how to play the violin. Mozart's mother, Anna, came from a middle-class family and was devoted to her children. Throughout his childhood, Mozart's home was filled with love and music.

Attending school was not a part of young Mozart's life. Like many children of the time, he never had a formal education. His father taught him arithmetic, history, and music. He also studied German, Italian, French, and Latin. But his lack of formal training became clear when he later moved through more educated circles or wrote letters home. He was famous for using his own **idiosyncratic** spelling and grammar.

For teachers' inspection ONLY

Deconstructing Genius

True genius is about more than intelligence. It can't be measured with a test, and it's difficult to define. The term *genius* is most often used to describe someone, such as Mozart, who develops ideas that move a field of study forward in dramatic ways.

The First Stage Parent

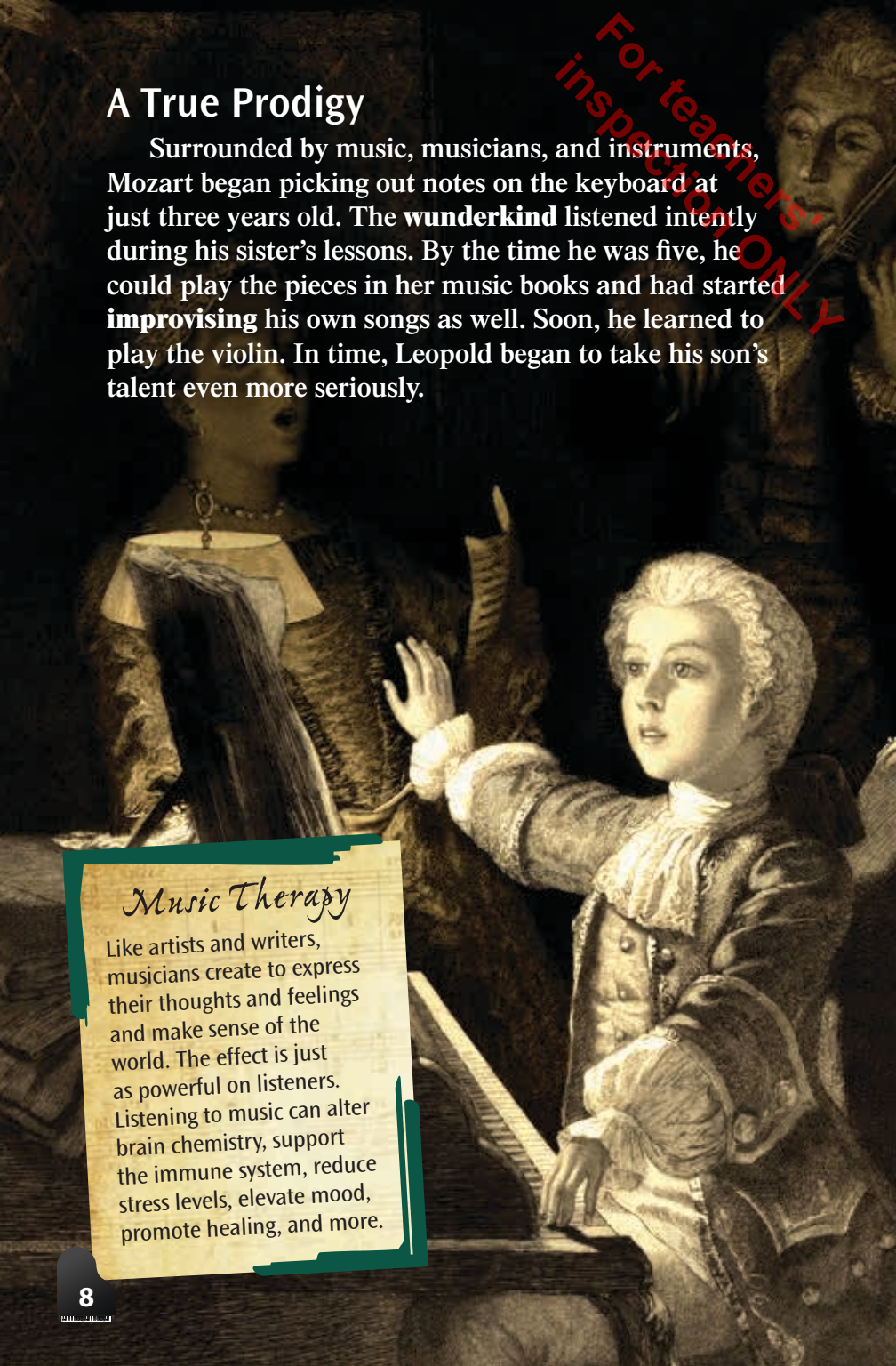
As a musician, Leopold Mozart was proud of his children's talents. But he also used their talents to make money and become famous himself. He often looked for ways to ensure Wolfgang and Maria Anna would be able to perform for royalty and other influential people. Leopold pushed them to travel long distances to perform for wealthy audiences.



For teachers' inspection ONLY

A True Prodigy

Surrounded by music, musicians, and instruments, Mozart began picking out notes on the keyboard at just three years old. The **wunderkind** listened intently during his sister's lessons. By the time he was five, he could play the pieces in her music books and had started **improvising** his own songs as well. Soon, he learned to play the violin. In time, Leopold began to take his son's talent even more seriously.



Music Therapy

Like artists and writers, musicians create to express their thoughts and feelings and make sense of the world. The effect is just as powerful on listeners. Listening to music can alter brain chemistry, support the immune system, reduce stress levels, elevate mood, promote healing, and more.

For teachers' inspection ONLY

The prodigy enjoyed surprising audiences with his talent. He practiced playing blindfolded or with the keys covered. He showed off whenever the opportunity arose. Mozart charmed audiences with his spirited performances and took advantage of his young age by ignoring proper manners. Once, he even jumped on Empress Maria Theresa's lap and gave her a kiss. Not the manners expected at a royal performance!

Nannerl's Talent

Maria Anna, known as "Nannerl" by family and friends, may have been as talented as her more famous sibling. Her father once wrote, "My little girl plays the most difficult works which we have . . . with incredible precision and so excellently." She also composed her own music, though sadly, her compositions have been lost.



THINK LINK

- Do you think true genius can be identified early in life or only with the passage of time? Explain.
- What makes a musician a genius? Are these qualities different from those found in a scientist or a philosopher?

Reader's Guide

For teachers' inspection ONLY

1. What if Mozart's sister had been allowed to continue composing and playing music? In what ways might her life have been different?
2. What did Mozart mean when he stated, "People err who think my art comes easily to me. I assure you, dear friend, nobody has devoted so much time and thought to compositions as I"?
3. Look at the sidebar on page 8 titled "Music Therapy." Do you agree with the last sentence about how listening to music can reduce stress, lift your mood, and have other positive health effects? Defend your opinion.
4. How did Mozart and other classical musicians of his time inspire musicians who came after?

