

## The rise of the poisoning tale

Within six years of Salieri's death, the Russian writer Pushkin wrote a play, *Mozart and Salieri*, which portrayed the danger of envy. In 1898, Rimsky-Korsakov turned Pushkin's play into an opera.

In both, it is suggested that Salieri's jealousy of Mozart led him to poison the younger composer.



The murder plot was perpetuated in Peter Shaffer's hugely successful 1979 play, *Amadeus*. Through the subsequent film, Salieri firmly entered our consciousness as a Machiavellian manipulator, who sets out not only to destroy Mozart's career but the man himself.

Salieri's bitterness sends him mad. In a mental hospital, he announces himself as "the patron saint of mediocrity".