

## **An autograph manuscript of six minuets composed by Mozart in 1784**

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Six Minuets, K. 461 (448a). Vienna, 1784. 12 3/4 inches x 17 5/8 inches (324 x 448 mm), 2 pages.

From his earliest years as a child prodigy touring the courts of Europe to his death and burial at the age of 35, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was a legendary figure. He was one of the most striking examples of artistic genius in human history. The composer's extraordinary musical gifts, expertly cultivated by his musician father, achieved an unparalleled fullness of expression in works that combine depth and fluidity with seemingly effortless grace.

Printed scores, however faithful to the original, are stripped of the personality of the composer and immediacy with the moment of creation that characterize an autograph manuscript. To reach the wellsprings of Mozart's genius one must turn to his musical manuscripts. Their assured, almost calligraphic appearance, reflecting the fact that the music was apparently composed mentally before Mozart put pen to paper, enables the reader to follow the score with ease. The manuscript is made of the oblong-format paper (*querformat*) characteristic of Mozart and other composers of the period. The paper was mechanically ruled with twelve staves, as is typical of manuscripts from Mozart's time in Vienna.

This group of six minuets is believed to have been composed just before Mozart began keeping his thematic catalogue in 1784. The dances are scored for two oboes with doubling flutes, two bassoons, two horns, two violins, and basso; each is in a different key (C, E flat, G, B flat, and D). With only eight measures, the final minuet is incomplete.

This unbound manuscript was once the property of Gisela Selden Goth (1884–1975), the Hungarian pianist, composer, and musicologist, a pupil of Bela Bartok and Ferruccio Busoni. Her celebrated collection of musical autographs contained at least one notable example of the work of every great composer, from Johann Sebastian Bach to Arnold Schoenberg. She gave all but a few of these to the Library of Congress in 1940.

Octavo code: mozmoa