

Mozart's original manuscript of his celebrated "Turkish" concerto

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Concerto in A Major for Violin, K. 219 ("Turkish"). Salzburg, 1775. 6 5/8 inches x 9 inches (169 x 230 mm), 98 pages with gray-blue pastepaper boards.

From his earliest years as a child prodigy touring the courts of Europe to his death and burial in a pauper's grave at the age of 36, 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 a seemingly effortless grace. 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.

Mozart wrote all five of his concertos for violin and orchestra between April and December of 1775 while at Salzburg — there are in addition two concertos of doubtful authenticity and several single movements. Mozart disliked playing the violin, a duty at court, although his father Leopold assured him that "You have no idea how well you play the violin, if you would only do yourself justice and play with boldness, spirit and fire, as if you were the first violinist in Europe."

K. 219 is the last of Mozart's violin concertos, the famous "Turkish" concerto — an allusion to the insistent rhythms of the minuet finale. It was once the property of the family of the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein and is now in the Library of Congress.

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