

Mozart's autograph manuscript of a hastily-penned sonata

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Sonata in G Major for Violin and Keyboard, K. 379 (373A). Vienna, 1781. 8 7/8 inches x 12 7/8 inches (226 x 327 mm), 98 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 a 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.

The Sonata for Violin and Keyboard in G Major (K. 379/373a) was composed early April in of 1781. Mozart wrote in a letter to his father, Leopold Mozart, that he had composed the piece one night between 11 o'clock and midnight for a performance the next day (with violinist Antonio Brunetti), adding that he had played the keyboard part from memory since he had no time to transcribe a copy for his own use. The manuscript indeed shows signs of having been written hastily. It was first published in 1781 by Artaria of Vienna as No. 5 of the Six Sonatas for Violin and Pianoforte.

This manuscript from the Library of Congress is bound in blue paper. It originally formed part of the collection of 531 Mozart compositions bought

from Constanze Mozart by the German music publisher Johann Anton André (1755–1842). Initially divided (by bequest) among his five sons, the manuscripts have since been widely dispersed. K. 379 eventually entered the collection of Oscar Bondy of Vienna, who purchased it from Leo Liepmannssohn on 12 October 1929 as lot 9 of the André auction.