

## **Mozart's original manuscript of his gorgeous String Quintet in C**

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, String Quintet in C Major, K. 515. Vienna, 1787. 9 1/4 inches x 12 5/8 inches (235 x 321 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.

Although Mozart's string quintets are very fine works, they are perhaps not so well known to present-day audiences as his string quartets. He wrote six string quintets in all, one when he was only seventeen. The String Quintet in C Major (scored for two violins, two violas, and cello) was dated Vienna, 19 April 1787 in Mozart's thematic catalogue. In 1788, he was compelled to sell this and the K. 516 string quintet to music publisher Artaria and Co., and K. 515 was first published early in the following year. With an exquisite first movement that is among the lengthiest in all of Mozart's catalogue, this is his most extensive chamber work for strings.

This unbound manuscript from the Library of Congress was formerly owned by Viennese piano-maker J.B. Streicher, organist Julius André from the

family of music publishers, and singer Jenny Lind. It was acquired by the Library of Congress from Dr. Jerome Stoneborough in 1944.

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