

## **A manuscript with six minuets written in Mozart's own hand**

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Six Minuets, K. 164 (130a). Salzburg, 1772. 13 inches x 17 1/2 inches (330 x 445 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 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 ten staves, which is unusual for manuscripts from Mozart's Salzburg years. This manuscript includes the unusual key signatures (with the order of the sharps and flats varying from staff to staff) that Mozart used in his compositions from about 1772 until his death in 1791.

These simple but pleasing minuets were scored for oboes, flute, and strings with the addition of either horns or trumpets. As with the K. 104 minuets, some of these dances may have been adapted from works by Michael Haydn.

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.

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