

An autograph manuscript of a Mozart fugue fragment

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Fragment, Fugue in C Minor, K. 626b/27 (Anh. 39a). Vienna?, 1782?. 6 1/2 inches x 15 3/4 inches (165 x 399 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.

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. It has only six staves and was cut to this size after having been ruled; the top of the seventh staff is visible at the bottom edge of the paper.

Mozart began composing fugues around 1782 after he had the opportunity to study Baron Gottfried van Swieten's extensive collection of manuscripts by Bach and Handel. Mozart was apparently intrigued by Bach's fugues, for he wrote arrangements (K. 405, 1782) of a set of fugues from Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*, adding preludes of his own. He subsequently composed original fugues in the Baroque style, among them the Fugue in C minor for Two Keyboards (K. 426, 1783), to which he eventually added a prelude to produce the renowned Adagio and Fugue for Strings in C Minor (K. 546, 1788). Mozart later used the fugal form in the Symphony in C, No. 41 (K. 551, 1788), *Die Zauberflöte* (K. 620, 1791), and the Requiem in D minor (K. 626, 1791).

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: mozmod