

Mozart, Fragment of a Sonata Allegro for Piano and Violin in A, Fr 1784b

Four Completions

Editorial Introduction

The fragment consists of 34 bars of an Allegro for piano and violin in A major, seemingly the opening sections of a movement in sonata form. The fragment ends at what was presumably the closing phase of the exposition's transition section, immediately before the subsidiary tonicisation of E.

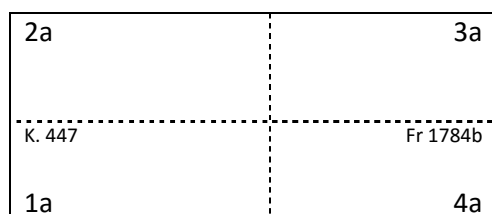
The source of the fragment is an autograph manuscript written on one side of a single leaf. The document is in the collection of the Bibliotheca Mozartiana in the Internationalen Stiftung Mozarteum in Salzburg (A-sm, sig: K⁶ 385E).

Date of the fragment

The autograph manuscript of the fragment is on a type of paper that Mozart predominantly used in 1784. In his catalogue of watermarks, Alan Tyson identified the leaf as quadrant 4a of paper type 71. Other manuscripts which contain type 71 are:

- 1) The fragmentary Accompanied Sonata K. 403 (385c)
- 2) Mozart's newly composed introduction to Michael Haydn's G major Symphony K. 444
- 3) Leaves 19-37 of the Piano Concerto K. 449
- 4) Leaves 13-32 of the Piano Concerto K. 450
- 5) Leaves 1-4 of the Quintet K. 452
- 6) Leaves 20-43 of the Piano Concerto K. 453 (together with the first-movement cadenza K. 624/22)
- 7) All eight leaves of the Accompanied Sonata K. 454
- 8) The fragment of a piano concerto Andante K. 459a
- 9) Leaves 41-44 of the Piano Concerto K. 466
- 10) One leaf of the second movement of the Horn Concerto K. 447 (tentatively identified by Tyson as being quadrant 1a of type 71)

Five of these works (nos 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7) can be securely dated to the period February to early April 1784. K. 444 most likely dates from late 1783; and manuscripts 8) and 9) are from the period December 1784 to February 1785. Ulrich Konrad – following Tyson – dates our fragment to 1784 on these grounds. But an alternative hypothesis is worth consideration. Scholarly consensus has long dated the Horn Concerto K. 447 to 1787. Its autograph manuscript, like that of Fr 1784b, contains only a single leaf of paper type 71. (All the other autograph manuscripts have gatherings of bifolia, which was Mozart's usual practice in the 1780s.) Furthermore, the single leaf of type 71 in K.447 comes from an adjacent quadrant to the leaf in Fr1784b. Therefore it is possible that both these single leaves were at one time attached as a bifolium.



This raises four open questions about a possible relationship between the concerto and the sonata fragment:

- 1) Did Mozart find a random leaf of empty manuscript paper while he was composing the Horn Concerto?
- 2) Or did he raid his store of fragments and detach the empty leaf of a bifolium which contained an abandoned three-year-old Sonata fragment?
- 3) Or did he detach the empty leaf of a bifolium which contained a very recently abandoned Sonata fragment?
- 4) Or did he need only a single leaf for the concerto manuscript and subsequently begin the Sonata movement on the 'orphan' leaf of manuscript paper?

In the absence of definitive answers to these questions, the date of Fr 1784b must remain conjectural, but there is nothing in the physical evidence of the manuscript (or from the other manuscripts that contain paper type 71) that rules out the possibility that Fr 1784b might date from 1787 rather than 1784.¹

So, in preparing these completions, three conjectural scenarios about the genesis of Fr 1784b have been considered:

Perhaps Mozart wrote Fr 1784b in the spring of 1784 with a view to performing it with Regina Strinasacchi at the concert on 29 April, but it was supplanted by K. 454. The concert on 29 April took place in the large space of the Kärntnertortheater, and the boldness of K. 454's writing (especially in the Sonata's opening *Largo*) was clearly designed to be projected in this unusual public context. Similarly, Fr 1784b has characteristics that might point to an unconventionally public setting for its performance. It starts with a bold *unisono* gesture and there is the opportunity for virtuosic display in the piano. But in other respects its scale and tone seem designed for performance in the more conventional domestic setting of accompanied sonatas from this period: for example, the delicacy of interplay between the two instruments, the largely subservient role the violin takes in the opening paragraph, and subtle the harmonic twist that extends the first period in bars 8–12. These features might have made the movement inappropriate for performance at the Kärntnertortheater on 29 April 1784, but they do not imply any musical weakness on the part of the fragment – quite the opposite.

Alternatively, Mozart may have intended Fr 1784b as a companion piece for publication with K. 454.² If this were the case then his failure to complete fragment is more puzzling. Mozart's output slowed significantly in the summer months of 1784 before picking up again in the autumn. Was Fr 1784b a casualty of this lull, or was there something in its content which made Mozart pause and abandon the torso? The compositional history of the C major Piano Concerto K. 503 may cast some light on this question. The paper types of this concerto's autograph manuscript show two distinct phases of work. The opening orchestral ritornello and the initial paragraph of the first solo section were written in 1784 and left as a fragment. In December 1786 Mozart returned to the fragment, rewrote the start of the first solo section and completed the concerto. It seems from the evidence of the autograph manuscript that in 1784 Mozart reached a point in the concerto where, due to the path-

¹ It may be germane to note that another paper type with a single leaf in the autograph manuscript of the Horn Concerto K. 447 is Tyson's type 55. All 11 leaves of the autograph manuscript of the A major Sonata K. 526 (from 24 August 1787) are also type 55. Is it a coincidence that both single-leaf paper types in the autograph of K. 447 are shared with the autograph manuscripts of two accompanied sonatas in A major?

² It might seem unlikely that Mozart would pair together sonatas in B flat and A, but as part of a set of three works that key scheme would not be unique: in the winter of 1784–5 Mozart worked on three string quartets in B flat (K. 458), A (K. 464) and C (K. 465).

breaking nature of the writing, an immediate way forward was not clear. With two years' further experience – not least from the piano concertos K. 467 and K. 491, and from *Le nozze di Figaro* – that Mozart was able to return to the concerto fragment and, with minimal adjustments, complete the opening *Allegro maestoso*. As it happens, some of the key innovative features in the opening sections of K. 503 are also present in Fr 1784b: they both open with unconventional tonal or modal gambits that have potential large-scale consequences – the unusually strong emphasis on supertonic minor and subdominant in Fr 1784b and the predominance of the tonic minor in K. 503; and both contain strong sequential passages in invertible counterpoint in their transition sections – passages which build the kind of tensions considered generically more appropriate to the symphony than to either the concerto or the accompanied sonata in the 1780s.³ So it is possible that Mozart abandoned Fr 1784b, like he abandoned K. 503, because the opening had unleashed forces which in his view breached generic decorum or that he only became able to control to his satisfaction some years later.

A further alternative is that Fr 1784b was composed not in 1784, but in August 1787, only to be superseded by K. 526 in the same key but with a more striking opening. (As mentioned above, the paper types of the sources do not preclude this scenario.)

The premises of these completions

These four completions develop different hypotheses based on the chronological questions raised above.

Completion 3 takes the fragment as a rival to the 'public' sonata K. 454: the beginnings of a sonata that could have been completed for the Kärntnertheater concert in April 1784. To this end the completion draws on K. 454 and Mozart's other 'public' sonata from the early 1780s (the Sonata for two pianos K. 448 of November 1781). From them it takes the importance of clear-cut dialogic exchanges and transparent formal paragraphing together with a certain gestural boldness.

Completion 4 views the fragment as a complement to K. 454: a potential companion piece in a publication. In this scenario it is the contrasting features of the two works that are emphasised, rather than their similarities. It assumes that if Mozart had completed the fragment as a sonata for domestic use in 1784, he might have composed the type of ear-wormish second subject found in his piano concertos from that year and kept the development section compact and within conventional tonal limits.

Completion 2 imagines how Mozart might have completed the movement were it to date from 1787 rather than 1784. The Sonata K. 526 is the obvious touchstone here, and the completion attempts to reflect the contrapuntal delicacy and tonal range of that work's first movement.

Completion 1 is has the most speculative hypothesis of the four. It imagines how Mozart might have approached completing the fragment had he returned to it some twenty months after he composed K. 526.⁴ In May 1789 Mozart was in Berlin, Potsdam and Leipzig. Only two surviving instrumental pieces date from this trip: the Variations on a Theme by Duport K. 573, written in Potsdam at the

³ Bars 29–32 in Fr 1784b have much in common with bars 26–31 in the first movement of K. 503: their function within the movement (a modulatory transition), their powerfully purposive ascending sequences, the invertibility of their counterpoint, even the *sospirando* figures of the 7-6 suspensions between the outer voices at the start of each bar. Might these similarities in themselves be a clue to the date of Fr 1784b, with the striking ideas of one fragment carried over into the other?

⁴ There are gaps of roughly 20 months between each of Mozart's three accompanied sonatas from the mid 1780s: K. 454 (April 1787), K. 481 (December 1785) and K. 526 (August 1787).

end of April, the Little Jig in G K. 574, written into Engel's visitors' book in Leipzig on 16 May. Mozart arrived back in Vienna on 4 June and over a summer which saw him heavily involved in rehearsals for the revival of *Figaro* he completed only two new pieces of instrumental music: the first of the 'Prussian' String Quartets K. 575, and the Piano Sonata in D K. 576.⁵ The middle of 1789 is also the earliest possible date for the fragmentary Sonata in G for piano and violin Fr 1789f. What if Mozart had returned to the A major fragment as a companion piece to the projected G major Sonata? The jig, quartet and piano sonata all demonstrate a marked thematic economy, an expressive directness, the propensity to use a wide-ranging tonal spectrum, and – above all – a tensile approach to texture foregrounding invertible counterpoint with motivic imitation. These are the stylistic features that characterise Completion 1.

The music of Fr 1784b

The fragment, although short, is rich in content. The relationship between the piano and violin is very collaborative, with the flexibility and mutability which had become customary in Mozart's accompanied sonatas during the 1780s. Its unison opening aside, the opening paragraph is unconventional: by placing an unusually early emphasis on supertonic minor and subdominant areas, it creates strong harmonic tensions from the outset. In bars 1–21 the music is not composed of balanced, rounded units; rather it emphasises the process of achieving tonal and metrical stability after the disruptions of the first four bars. This stability having been secured by the broad cadential action of bars 13–21, the music continues with two well-formed, balanced four-bar phrases (bars 21–8). The fragment ends as the music begins powerfully to push towards the dominant through a passage of three-part invertible counterpoint. The density of this harmonic action is matched by the large number of pregnant motives in bars 1–28. These provide ample material for a completion: for the exposition's second group of themes as well as the development section.

But the ripeness of the fragment also poses challenges. A completion must attempt to continue the subtle, complex relationship between the two instruments, to live up to the power and unconventionality of the opening paragraph, and to balance the richness of the fragment's ideas with formal and rhetorical coherence. Mozart was particularly adept at seizing on a detail from a passage near the start of a movement (and not necessarily from a prominent theme) and developing it so that it comes to dominate the later stages of the movement, all done with such confidence and aplomb that it seems not in the least contrived. So a fundamental question for a completion is which detail to seize upon and how to make it sound 'natural'.

The Completions

Completion 1

Completion 1 ponders how Mozart might have completed the fragment had he returned to it in the summer or autumn of 1789. Therefore its stylistic considerations are those of the completed chamber music pieces from those months, especially the String Quartet in D K. 595 and the Clarinet Quintet K. 581. In the first movements of each of those works the opening paragraph sets the motivic and rhetorical agenda for the rest of the movement in very specific ways: most notably by avoiding conventional gestures of formal punctuation in favour of a more malleable approach to punctuating formal sections with the deformation of principal motives. In Completion 1 the processes which drive the movement's opening paragraph return to animate the second half of the exposition. The second subject is not conventionally rounded. Drawing its themes from the transition section and a small cadential tag from the opening paragraph, it too sets up tension

⁵ The only completed instrumental composition from the autumn of 1789 is the Clarinet Quintet K. 581 from September.

between the (local) tonic and supertonic minor, with destabilising effects which take some time to resolve. E major is finally cemented as the local tonic with two broad cadential phrases (bars 54–65) which draw on their parallel from the movement's opening paragraph. The exposition ends with a feature found at this formal juncture in several chamber works from 1789–90: a contrapuntal intensification of the opening theme with references to the original pitches (a² and c sharp²) from the start of the exposition.

Between 1787 and 1789 Mozart began to explore a wide tonal range in the opening phases of his sonata-form development sections. The most spectacular examples date from the middle of 1788: the outer movements of the G minor Symphony K. 550 (July 1788) and, in major-mode works, the finale of the E flat Symphony K. 543 (June 1788) and the Divertimento K. 563 (September 1788). In this completion the start of the development seizes on this typical strategy of tonal obfuscation. Starting with a switch of mode to E minor at bar 79, the music then moves through a series of thirds and mode switches to lead to A flat major (a local enharmonic tonicisation of the movement's leading note) on the way to a more emphatic moment of punctuation in C minor.⁶ The second part of the development section is an ascending cycle of fifths that is more obviously learned in its contrapuntal style but less smooth in its tolerance of foreground dissonance. The dominant pedal leading into the recapitulation attempts to knit together the two halves of the development motivically, modelled on the combinatorial play of motives at the end of the development section in the first movement of the String Quartet in D, K. 575.

The recapitulation extends the first paragraph through a contrapuntal elaboration (in bars 133–40) that takes the music to the subdominant. The following transition section reproduces the modulation pattern of the exposition in order to restore A major as the tonic at the start of the second subject. In keeping with Mozart's chamber music in 1789, there is only a short coda at the end of the movement.

Completion 2

Modelled on the underlying processes of opening movement of K. 526, this completion attempts to emulate the contrapuntal finesse and motivic concision of the finished sonata from August 1787. In order to begin engineering this, it seemed expedient to take a small liberty with the end of Mozart's fragment, replacing bars 33–4 in order to capitalise immediately on the contrapuntal potential of bars 29–31 and to push more powerfully towards the dominant.⁷ This stronger articulation of V/V then allowed a reconfiguration of the movement's opening gesture at the start of the invented second subject. The second half of the exposition mirrors the broad paragraphing and supertonic minor emphasis of the first half, but – like the parallel section in K. 526 – it gives greater rein to virtuosity and the violin assumes the role of *Hauptstimme* more frequently.

As in the first movement of K. 526, the development section has two phases: the first proceeds from a sudden twist to C major (flat III) through an ascending progression to F sharp minor (vi) and its dominant in bars 86–118. The second phase moves rapidly through a descending circle of fifths to settle on a dominant pedal in bars 122–6. This progression underpins stretto treatment of the characteristic slurred-quaver figure: imitation is squeezed from the distance of one bar (as in bars 114–17) to a half bar (bars 118–121) and then to a crotchet (bars 123–6).

⁶ For the progression that leads to A flat major, compare Mozart, Symphony no 39, K. 543, fourth movement, bars 82–99. For the local tonicisation of the leading note, see the start of the development section in the first movement of the G minor Symphony K. 550.

⁷ There several instances of Mozart returning after several years to a fragment and replacing the last bars of the torso or making significant revisions to passages close to the point at which he had earlier laid the work aside (for example, K. 503 first movement, and K. 488 first movement).

The recapitulation follows the thematic running order of the exposition, but from the beginning of the second subject (bar 162) the transposition of music from E major to A major is not mechanical. Rather, it varies the register (and occasionally the melodic contour of the treble) in order to fit within the five-octave range of Mozart's piano, to clarify some motivic and phrase patterns, and heighten the rhetoric at the close of the movement. All these features are typical of Mozart's recapitulations in 1786–7.

Completion 3

This completion takes as its starting point the hypothesis that Fr 1784b was a rival sonata to K. 454. It therefore continues the fragment as a piece designed for a first performance in a large public space. Therefore the interaction between the piano and violin, together with the organisation of the different paragraphs, is more clear cut than in the other completions. The shape of the rest of the exposition is as follows:

- (a) An invented second subject, derived from bars 2⁴–4, contains a switch of mode from E major to E minor for its second statement (bar 49ff) following various 'theatrical' models from the early 1780s.⁸
- (b) The return of E major in bar 61 is marked by a reprise of the transition section's invertible counterpoint. The continuity of the musical line is interrupted by the rhetorical trope *abruptio* in bar 73. The end of the paragraph is an understated arrival at a new cadential theme derived from the movement's opening gesture.

My aim was to make the processes of the development section as transparent as possible, so that they would 'carry' effectively in a large space. The theatrical qualities of *abruptio* are intensified at the start of the development section (bars 86–93). The rest of the development consists of a dialogue between the two instruments, involving a gradual foreshortening of the cadential theme from the end of the exposition.

The recapitulation is the simplest out of the four completions. The necessary tonal adjustments are made by minimal alterations to the transition section. And the materials transposed from the dominant to the tonic are not subject to much variation, other than the engagement of different registral levels through transposition up or down.

Completion 4

What if Mozart had completed Fr 1784b as a companion piece to K. 454 in the late Spring of 1784? In all the publication projects of his last decade he juxtaposed works of contrasting character and style.⁹ So the task in this completion was to explore those aspects of the fragment that lend themselves to a more intimate elaboration. Paradoxically, particularly useful models for this purpose are the moments in the 1784 Piano Concertos that seem to be offering Mozart's public audience a privileged glimpse of private music-making, especially the lyrical, delicate second subjects introduced by the soloist.

In completion 4 the newly invented second subject is derived from the fragment's bars 13–14. The expansion of its second period (bar 45ff) follows the example of the parallel passage in the first movement of the Quintet for Piano and Winds K. 452 (March 1784), extending the cadential

⁸ Including the overture to *Idomeneo* (January 1780) and the last movement of the Sonata for two pianos K. 448 (November 1781).

⁹ This is as true of pairings like the Fantasia K. 475 (May 1785) and Sonata K. 457 (November 1784), published together by Arataria in 1785, as it is of the Piano Concertos K. 413, 414 and 415 or the 'Haydn' Quartets.

progression through a chromatic composing out. But while the Quintet's passage foregrounds concertante exchanges between the piano and the three woodwind instruments in the ensemble, in this completion the extension of the period tries to echo the harmonic momentum of the fragment's transition section.

The development section emulates multiple examples from Mozart's work in 1784 in running rapidly through a series of contrasting linear intervallic progressions to arrive at the subsidiary tonal goal V/vi. In this completion the patterns are:

Bars 79–88 ¹	An elaborated descending 7–10 linear intervallic pattern
Bars 88–93	An elaborated 10–5 linear intervallic pattern descending through thirds
Bars 94–8	An elaborated 6–5 linear intervallic pattern above a chromatically ascending bass

In bar 98–9 a chromatic descending tetrachord in the bass leads to a prolongation of V/vi in bars 100–104. The retransition (bars 104–8) progresses from V/vi to V/I while the motive of the previous bars is squeezed to just its anacrusis.

The recapitulation proceeds regularly until bar 125 where a mode switch to A minor leads to the prolongation of flat III and an extended circle of fifths to work back to V/I at the half close before the arrival of the second subject in bar 148. This means that one of the first paragraph's principal themes appears in C major rather than A major: a tonal kink that is corrected in the movement's short coda.

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Recordings of Completions 1 and 2, performed by Preston Yeo (violin) and Cristian Sandrin (piano) are available on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/g3e7HoAuQZU> and <https://youtu.be/7EpslGCJu3g>). Rachel Podger (violin) and Christopher Glynn (piano) perform completions 1 and 4 on the CD *Mozart Violin Sonata Fragments completed by Jones* (Amsterdam: Channel Classics, March 2021). The first performance of completion 3 was given in Salisbury by Philippe Honoré (violin) and Timothy Jones (piano) on 20 April 2019.