

Allegro in D minor for Piano Trio Fr 1785e

Two Completions

Editorial Introduction

The fragment consists of 55 bars of an Allegro for piano, violin and cello in D minor, seemingly the opening sections of a movement in sonata form. All three parts are notated by Mozart in bars 1–49 and the piano continues for a further six bars before the fragment ends abruptly in the middle of a phrase. Given the proportions of the competing tonal areas D minor and F major, the distribution of themes, and the style of the closing theme in the piano, it is reasonable to conclude that the fragment breaks off just short of the end of the exposition. The task of the completions, then, is to round off the exposition, and supply a development section and recapitulation.

The source of the fragment is an autograph manuscript written on both sides of a single leaf. The document is in the collection of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Musikabteilung mit Mendelssohn-Archiv (D: B, sig. Mus. Ms. Autogr. W. A.Mozart 442).¹ The notation in this source is in two hands: Mozart's in bars 1–49 and the piano staves in bars 50–55; and Maximilian Stadler's in the violin and cello staves in bars 50–55.

Context of the Fragment

Mozart composed five Trios for piano, violin and viola during the last five years of his life.² This medium was regarded as an 'accompanied sonata' by Mozart's contemporaries, in which the keyboard part is shadowed and amplified by the strings. In his later examples of the genre, Mozart loosened this concept by giving the strings more independent action and by bringing more concertante aspects into the musical discourse: sometimes this takes the form of dialogue between the piano's right hand and the violin, sometimes as concertante exchanges between the piano and the paired strings, and occasionally as imitation between the violin and cello. These works contain a few textural highlights where all three instruments are exchanging motives in a contrapuntal complex, though Mozart reserves these for moments of the greatest intensity where quartet-like density emerges.³ Solos for the cello and dialogue between the cello and the piano are rare.⁴ It would, however, be mistaken to take a progressive view of Mozart's Piano Trios following a pre-ordained, clear and incremental development from the 'old' conception of the accompanied sonata to a new concertante model. The different types of writing described above happily co-exist – often unpredictably in adjacent passages of the same work – throughout this repertoire.⁵ And it is worth remembering that the period between the completion of K. 496 (the first of his 'mature' works in this genre) and K. 564 (the last) was just 27 months.

¹ A facsimile of the autograph is published in NMA 10/30:4 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2002) p. 118.

² K. 496, K. 502, K. 542, K. 548 and K. 564, in addition to the Trio for piano, clarinet and viola K. 498.

³ For example: K. 502, first movement, bars 59–62, and K. 542, first movement, bars 74–83.

⁴ Isolated examples are K. 496, first movement, bars 85–92 and 181–4 (cello and LH dialogue), and K. 548, second movement, bars 16–20 (a cello solo). The cello plays a more prominently independent role in these two Trios than in the others.

⁵ For instance, had K. 548 survived only as a 75-bar fragment of its opening movement, it would have been impossible to predict the leading role the cello takes at various moments later in the piece.

In addition to the five completed works, three incomplete Trio movements date from the period after 1785: an Andantino in G major, a Presto in D major, and the present fragment. All three fragments (completed by Maximilian Stadler) were published by Breitkopf & Härtel in 1797 as the D minor Piano Trio K. 442. But there is no evidence that Mozart conceived them as a three-movement work; nor were they composed in 1783 as Köchel believed.

Date of the fragment

The autograph manuscript of the fragment is on a single leaf of a paper type that Mozart used between late 1785 and the end of his life.⁶ It is impossible to date the fragment more precisely in the absence of corroborative evidence. There is no mention of the fragment in Mozart's surviving correspondence, nor is there any way of determining its date in relation to the established chronology of Mozart's finished Trios (for example, in preparation for the publication of a set of three works).⁷ The leaf of the autograph manuscript was identified by Tyson as quadrant 3a of the master sheet, but there is no extant quadrant 2a which could be matched with it (for instance, through matching tear profiles) and with a demonstrable date.

The dangers of attempting to attribute a date on the basis of the style of the music are well known and will be resisted here. The comments made below about the musical style of the fragment are not offered as a contribution towards its date, but as a prolegomenon to the premises of these completions.

The music of Fr 1785e

The fragment has an individual tone, due to its direct expressive qualities, its harmonic subtlety and the plasticity of its phrase structure. Bars 1–24 are direct to the point of being terse: an effect generated by the abrupt punctuating *forte* chords, the short silences between phrases (bars 3, 6 and 14) and within them (bars 17–18), the transparent 3-part textures in which the cello is used very sparingly, the harmonic ellipsis in bar 14 (where the V chord is missing), and the compressive tension of the opening pair of complementary three-bar phrases.

The phrase structure in bars 1–24 has prosaic qualities. It is additive rather than balanced, and in this way resembles earlier 18th-century phraseology than contemporary norms. There is a process of phrase expansion over the entire span of the section: 6 – 8 – 10 bars. But the more detailed picture of these phrase patterns is irregular. Lying behind the eight-bar phrase (bars 7–14) is a six-bar model: the weakest chord of the phrase (#6-4-2 in bar 9³) is expanded throughout bars 10 and 11, as though suspending musical time for two bars, before temporal normality is restored at the approach to the cadence in bars 12–14.⁸ The internal structure of the 10-bar phrase (bars 15–24) carries yet another level of complexity and ambiguity. It begins with the violin leading a four-bar development

⁶ For a description of the paper, see Alan Tyson, *Wasserzeichen-Katalog* [NMA: X:33/2] (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1992), pp 39–40. This paper type (Tyson, type 82) is also found in the autograph manuscripts of Acts 1 and 2 of *Le nozze di Figaro*, a false start for the third movement of the Piano Quartet in E flat K. 493, the third movement of the 'Prague' Symphony K. 504, the Minuet of the String Quintet in C K. 515, the opening of the third movement of the Piano Concerto K. 537, the fragmentary Allegro for String Quartet in G minor Fr 1798b, the fragmentary Concerto for Bassett Horn in G K. 584b, and Act 1 of *Die Zauberflöte*.

⁷ K. 502, 542 and 548 were published as Op. 15 by Artaria in 1788; but K. 564 was published (within a collection of works by Clementi and Attwood) by Stephen Storace in London in 1789, and as a single work by Artaria in Vienna in 1790.

⁸ The expansion in bars 10–11 enables the performers to dwell on the piquancy of the c sharp²/c natural³ clash, an idea no doubt motivated by the chromatic neighbour-note figure which characterises the bars 1 and 4.

of the principal theme (bars 15–18). This is answered by a three-bar cadential phrase (bars 19–21) whose final bar is elided with the following four-bar phrase with its ‘multiplication of closing formulae’.⁹

Bar 24 is the weakest metrical point in the phrase structure, but it presents the strongest call for attention. Mozart dramatises the sudden wrench from D minor to the dominant of F major with sudden changes in register, dynamics, harmony, instrumentation and motif. This is the most laconic of transitions, alluding to a trope which briefly flourished in the early 1770s.¹⁰ Mozart composes a similar (though more extended) outburst in bar 28ff in the first movement of his G minor Symphony K. 550: a gambit which Matthew Riley believes would have been interpreted as deliberately old-fashioned by Mozart's contemporaries.¹¹

Although the violin flourish in bar 24 is clearly designed to signal a change in the music's direction, it is nevertheless a surprise that it provides the material for the start of the second subject in bar 25.¹² The second subject begins with an eight-bar period in F major: a rounded melodic statement in the violin accompanied by sustained piano writing. The piano begins a decorated repeat of this theme (now with bass support from the cello) in bar 33, but the switch to F minor in bar 39 leads to a remarkably original harmonic excursus and a return to the irregular phrasing that characterised the first section of the movement.

To bring the subtlety of this excursus into relief, it is worth comparing it with a few other examples where Mozart takes a second subject to the local tonic minor, thence to a tertiary tonal region, paying particular attention to how he gets back out of the harmonic labyrinth to the local tonic major.

Because the fragment breaks off before the end of the exposition, this completion is based on the precedents set by Mozart's finished Piano Trio Allegros from the last years of his life. Fortunately, these are remarkably consistent in their proportions, tonal schemes and in other aspects of their standard operating procedures:

- The exposition concludes with a reminiscence of the opening theme
- The development section begins with a new theme, continues with dialogue based on a striking idea from the exposition, and avoids a prominent V pedal in the lead in to the recapitulation
- The development section lasts between 35% and 51% of the exposition (equating to between 34 and 38 bars)
- The recapitulation balances the length of the exposition and follows very closely its thematic running-order
- The recapitulation's transition section may be expanded, but later excisions compensate for the expansion.

⁹ The phrase is H. C. Koch's, in *Versuch einer Anleitung zur Composition* (1787–93).

¹⁰ See Matthew Riley, *The Viennese Minor-Key Symphony in the Age of Haydn and Mozart* (Oxford: OUP, 2014) especially pp. 15–24 where Riley identifies and discusses a convention of an abrupt ‘mediant tutti’ in Viennese minor-key symphonic allegros in the 1770s.

¹¹ Riley notes that this convention was no longer current in the second half of the 1780s.

¹² I cannot find another example of this in Mozart's instrumental music from the 1780s.

These precepts form the framework for the present completions, but the movement's minor mode poses some questions that have no precedents in the Piano Trios. In most of the minor-mode Allegros in his chamber music, Mozart concludes the exposition with a harmonic transition from III to i in order to introduce the exposition repeat smoothly. A similar transition at the end of the recapitulation leads to the repeat of the second reprise (i.e. the development and recapitulation). In turn, this necessitates a coda to provide appropriate harmonic closure to end the movement.¹³ None of Mozart's finished (major-mode) Piano Trios have codas. The question therefore arises as to the type of coda this completion should have. Mozart's own chamber music codas follow one of two expressive types: (1) an apotheosis of some significant musical idea, often in tandem with an energetic outburst;¹⁴ (2) a diminuendo coupled with the motivic liquidation of a main idea.¹⁵ Mozart's fragment is remarkable for the way it eschews 'showy' rhetoric, and the coda of the Completion 1 therefore follows the composer's 'type-2' coda governed by understatement while that of Completion 2 is a more energetic, climatic treatment of principal motives.¹⁶

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A recording of Completion 1, taken from a live performance by the Trio Cardinale, is available at <https://youtu.be/ubj2aOkFzD0>.

¹³ Examples include the first movements of the Violin Sonata in E minor K. 304, the String Quartet in D minor K. 421, the Piano Sonata in C minor K. 457, the Piano Quartet in G minor K. 478 and the String Quintet in G minor K. 516.

¹⁴ Examples include the first movements of K. 304 and K. 478

¹⁵ Examples include the first movements of K. 421 and K. 457; orchestral examples of this strategy are the close of the first movements in the two minor-mode piano concertos, K. 466 and K. 491.

¹⁶ An alternative, type-1 coda can be found on the Mozart Fragments website (www.ram.ac.uk/mozartfragments)