

Mozart, Fragment of an Allegro in G for String Trio Fr 1789g

Four Completions

Editorial Introduction

Brief Introduction: This fragment contains 100 bars of a movement in sonata form: the whole of the exposition and the first 9 bars of the development section. The texture is complete except for the last four bars, where the viola and cello lines become blank just before the fragment breaks off, mid phrase, in the violin.

Source: Autograph Manuscript, on two leaves of 12-stave Querformat (Tyson paper types 99 and 100), held in the Fitzwilliam Museum Cambridge. Call number: MuMs. 905. The autograph shows different periods of work on the piece.

Date: All editions of the Köchel catalogue assumed that this fragment was an abandoned dry run for the Divertimento K. 563 (1788); but the paper types of the autograph manuscript show that it is the start of a later work, dating from late 1789 at the earliest.

Style of the fragment: The music has a transparency and gestural boldness that is of a piece with other examples of Mozart's late chamber music. The music is at a turning point at the end of the fragment. Was it about to cadence in B flat major? Or G minor? Or is it in the middle of a harmonic labyrinth that is proceeding towards another subsidiary tonal goal? All four of my completions explore these possibilities.

Completion 1

The continuation cadences immediately into B flat at bar 101 and the rest of the development section is dominated by the exposition's cadential theme (bars 76–82). After an initial statement in B flat it becomes the subject of an ascending progression leading to V/vi (B major as the dominant of E minor). A retransition (bars 123–131) modulates back to V/I through a series of incremental chromatic alterations. The recapitulation begins in bar 132.

Completion 2

The continuation cadences into a false reprise of the opening theme in B flat at bar 102. The next phase of the development section contrapuntally elaborates aspects of the opening theme within an ascending progression to the dominant of E minor (V/vi) in bars 102–139. The retransition (bars 140–149) contrapuntally elaborates the contour from the previous bars, modulating from V/vi to V/I in preparation for the recapitulation at bar 150.

The recapitulation varies exposition materials considerably, carrying forward variation processes from the development section.

Completion 3

The continuation takes the phrase at the end of the fragment as part of a longer progression, and the music does not cadence strongly until it arrives at A minor (ii) in bar 100. At that point an imitative passage based on material from the second subject (bars 53–4) plays out over a descending seventh (A–B) in the bass until the music becomes stuck on a B pedal (V/vi) from bar 128. The retransition (bars 132–9) continues the imitation in the violin and viola while the cello falls stepwise through over two octaves (b¹–A), taking the music to an implied V chord to cadence into the start of the recapitulation at bar 140.

The recapitulation makes two large changes to exposition materials. First, the transition section is harmonically altered to end on V rather than V/V and the V pedal is decorated by the tonic minor so that the second subject begins in bar 182 with a switch back to the major mode. Second, the penultimate phrase (bars 222–31) is extended by a reference back to the long cello descent from the end of the development section.

Completion 4

The continuation takes bars 12–25 as its motivic substance, covering the harmonic space B flat to the dominant of E minor via an array of contrasting linear intervallic progressions in bars 102–130. A rapid descending circle of fifths in bars 131–2 ushers in a dominant pedal in preparation for the start of the recapitulation in bar 140. Unlike the other completions, this has a substantial coda (bars 226–41) that rhymes with the end of the development section.