

The Piano and Wind Quintets of Mozart and Beethoven: Reception and Relationship

D.M.A. Document

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Abstract

The unusual instrumentation of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's Quintet, K. 452, and Ludwig van Beethoven's Quintet, op. 16, has led many scholars to consider these two works together. Recent scholarship, however, has shed new light on the history of these two works and their relationship to one another. The evidence will show that while Beethoven almost certainly based his Quintet on Mozart's Quintet, the true relationship between the two is more complicated than scholars used to think. Moreover, recent scholarship has argued for the canonic status of Mozart's Quintet and the intrinsic worth of Beethoven's.

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Editorial Assistant, Morris, R. Winston and Daniel Perantoni, eds. *Guide to the Tuba Repertoire: The New Tuba Source Book*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) gave the premiere of his Quintet for piano and wind instruments, K. 452, on April 1, 1784, in Vienna. The work is scored for piano, clarinet, oboe, bassoon, and horn – an entirely novel instrumentation. Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) used the same combination of instruments in his Quintet for piano and wind instruments, op. 16, which had its premiere in Vienna on April 6, 1797. The unusual scoring uniting these Quintets has led a number of scholars to consider these works together. Mid twentieth-century scholars generally recognized Mozart's K. 452 as a mature work (when they discussed it at all), while they viewed Beethoven's op. 16 as an immature, and often inferior, imitation of Mozart's. The reception of these two Quintets, however, has begun to change in the past quarter-century. This document will attempt to discern the early history of the two Quintets, singly and together, and will discuss the effects of recent scholarship on the understanding of both works.

Chapter Two provides insight into the history of Mozart's K. 452. In addition to contextualizing the Quintet within the composer's career, the chapter considers Mozart's interest in composing for different combinations of wind instruments as well as the impact that his piano concertos had upon the development of his chamber music with piano. It will close by reviewing recent scholarship on the value

and canonic status of the Quintet. Chapter Three provides an investigation into the history of the composition of Beethoven's op. 16, with particular focus on Beethoven as a pianist and composer during his early years in Vienna. It will also discuss his 1796 tour, during which he evidently conceived of the Quintet. Chapter Four calls into question traditional assumptions regarding the influence that Mozart's Quintet had on Beethoven's; particularly, it asks whether and how Beethoven had contact with K. 452 before composing his own Quintet. Further, the chapter introduces a reevaluation of Beethoven's Quintet, focused on the younger composer's creative use of his Mozartean model. This study will show that the story of K. 452 and op. 16 is far more intriguing and complex than has previously been acknowledged.

Mozart and Beethoven are two of the most thoroughly studied composers in western music, and a vast body of secondary literature exists for both. For biographical information and surveys of their works, I relied primarily on books by Julian Rushton, Volkmar Braunbehrens, Barry Cooper, and Maynard Solomon.¹ Eric Paul Ohlsson, in his 1980 DMA Document on the two Quintets,² considers the origin of the unusual scoring as well as the mid twentieth-century reception of these works; he also provides a detailed formal analysis of both pieces. More recently, Gertraut Haberkamp, Robert Münster, and Cliff Eisen have provided vital information regarding the history of the manuscript and printed sources of Mozart's

¹ Julian Rushton, *Mozart* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Volkmar Braunbehrens, *Mozart in Vienna: 1781-1791*, trans. Timothy Bell (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1990); Barry Cooper, ed., *The Beethoven Compendium* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Borders Press, 1991); Maynard Solomon, *Beethoven* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1977). A revised edition of Solomon's book was published in 1998.

² Eric Paul Ohlsson, "The Quintets for Piano, Oboe, Clarinet, Horn and Bassoon by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Ludwig van Beethoven" (DMA Document, The Ohio State University, 1980).

Quintet.³ Douglas Johnson offers new insight into the compositional history of Beethoven's Quintet.⁴ Recent studies that have revised our understanding of the reception of Mozart's and Beethoven's Quintets are by William Kinderman and Mark Everist.⁵ A single sentence of Everist's discussing the publication history of Mozart's Quintet led to my curiosity and interest in this subject. For my study of the music I relied on published critical editions of the scores.⁶

³ Gertraut Haberkamp, *Die Erstdrucke der Werke von Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart*, Musikbibliographisches Arbeiten, Bd. 10 (H. Schneider: Tutzing, 1986); Robert Münster, "Mozart und der polnische Graf," in *Mainzer Studien zur Musikwissenschaft: Festschrift Walter Wiora zum 90. Geburtstag*, ed. Christoph-Hellmut Mahling and Ruth Seiberts (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1997); Cliff Eisen, *Mozart and Beethoven: Quintets for Piano & Wind*, <http://www.aam.co.uk/index.htm> (April 21, 2010); Cliff Eisen, *New Mozart Documents: A Supplement to O.E. Deutsch's Documentary Biography* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991).

⁴ Douglas Johnson, "Music for Prague and Berlin: Beethoven's Concert Tour of 1796," in *Beethoven, Performers, and Critics*, ed. Robert Winter and Bruce Carr (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 1980).

⁵ William Kinderman, "A Tale of Two Quintets: Mozart's K. 452 and Beethoven's Opus 16," in *Variations on the Canon: Essays on Music from Bach to Boulez in Honor of Charles Rosen on His Eightieth Birthday*, ed. Robert Curry, David Gable, and Robert L. Marshall (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2008); Mark Everist, "Reception Theories, Canonic Discourse, and Musical Value," in *Rethinking Music*, ed. Nicolas Cook and Mark Everist (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

⁶ Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *Neue Ausgabe Sämtlicher Werke*, Ser. 8, Kammermusik, Werkgruppe 22, Quintette, Quartette und Trios mit Klavier und mit Glasharmonika, Bd. 22, ed. Dietrich Burke and Wolfgang Rehm (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1957); Ludwig van Beethoven, *Werke*, Section IV, Vol. I: Klavierquintett und Klavierquartette, ed. Siegfried Kross (München-Duisburg: Günter Henle Verlag, 1964).

Chapter 2: Mozart's Quintet, K. 452

Mozart was summoned to Vienna in March 1781 by his employer, Prince-Archbishop Count Hieronymus Colloredo, the ruler of Salzburg. The composer and archbishop had a somewhat tumultuous relationship. Mozart despised being treated as a menial servant and was unhappy with his low salary, and he began plotting his escape almost from the moment he arrived.⁷ Ultimately, Mozart was dismissed from the archbishop's services in June and decided – against his father's wishes – to remain in Vienna to pursue a career on his own terms rather than return to Salzburg. The composer “was captivated by Vienna's liberal atmosphere and lack of social complications, his encounters with unconventional people, and the unlimited passion for music shared by all Viennese.”⁸ The early years in Vienna were to be among his most productive as a composer, and it was during this time that he would compose his Quintet, K. 452.

The Quintet for piano and wind instruments, K. 452, was composed in the year 1784, an “*annus mirabilis*” (in Rushton's words)⁹ during which Mozart also composed six piano concertos, one string quartet, two sonatas, and two sets of variations for piano. “This enormous output was not the work of a composer writing

⁷ Rushton, 103.

⁸ Braunbehrens, 184.

⁹ Rushton, 113.

in undisturbed peace and seclusion, but of one whose schedule included teaching obligations, subscription concerts, private concerts, houseguests, and two changes of residence.”¹⁰ Mozart began a personal catalogue of his works on February 9, 1784, with his Piano Concerto No. 14, K. 449.¹¹ The composer entered the Quintet for piano and winds, K. 452, as the fourth item in the catalogue on March 30, 1784. The first performance of the Quintet took place two days later, on April 1, in the Vienna *Burgtheater*, with a notice from the *Wienerblattchen* reading as follows:

Today, Thursday, 1 April, Herr Kappelmeister Mozart will have the honour to hold a great musical concert for his benefit at the I. & R. National Court Theatre. The pieces to occur in it are the following: 1) A grand Symphony with trumpets and drums. 2) An aria, sung by Herr Adamberger. 3) Herr Mozart, Kappelmeister, will play an entirely new Concerto on the Fortepiano. 4) A quite new grand Symphony. 5) An aria, sung by Mlle Cavalieri. 6) Herr Mozart, Kappelmeister, will play an entirely new grand Quintet. 7) An aria, sung by Herr Marchesi, senior. 8) Herr Kappellmeister Mozart will improvise entirely alone on the Fortepiano. 9) To conclude, a Symphony. Apart from the three arias, everything is composed by Kappelmeister Mozart.¹²

Otto Deutsch suggests that the “grand Symphony with trumpets and drums” in entry 1 was Mozart’s *Haffner Symphony*, K. 385, and that entry 9 was the conclusion to this same symphony. Entry 4 was possibly the *Linz Symphony*, K. 425, and the “entirely new Concerto on the Fortepiano” of entry 3 was one of Mozart’s two new piano

¹⁰ Braunbehrens, 198.

¹¹ *Mozart-Eigenhändiges Werkverzeichnis Faksimile*, intro. and ed. Albi Rosenthal and Alan Tyson, British Library, Stefan Zweig MS 63 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1991); cited in Kinderman, 57.

¹² Otto Deutsch, *Mozart: A Documentary Biography*, trans. Eric Blom, Peter Branscombe, and Jeremy Noble (Stanford: University Press, 1965), 223.

concertos: K. 450 or 451. Item 6 was the Quintet, K. 452.¹³ So far as is known, this was the first piano and wind quintet ever composed.

The combination of oboes, clarinets, horns, and bassoons was already a familiar scoring for Mozart (though he used them in the customary pairs, not singly). The following list of Mozart's divertimenti for woodwinds and horns shows that he had considerable experience writing for relevant combinations of wind instruments before his move to Vienna:¹⁴

Divertimenti

K. 166 in E-flat	2 oboes, 2 English horns, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns
K. 186 in B-flat	2 oboes, 2 English horns, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns
K.A. 226 in E-flat	2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns
K.A. 227 in B-flat	2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons. 2 horns
K. 213 in F	2 oboes, 2 horns, 2 bassoons
K. 240 in B-flat	2 oboes, 2 horns, 2 bassoons
K. 252 in E-flat	2 oboes, 2 horns, 2 bassoons
K. 253 in F	2 oboes, 2 horns, 2 bassoons
K. 270 in B-flat	2 oboes, 2 horns, 2 bassoons
K. 289 in E-flat	2 oboes, 2 horns, 2 bassoons

As a patron of the arts, Emperor Joseph II employed a *Harmonie*, a wind ensemble consisting of pairs of oboes, clarinets, horns, and bassoons. Mozart responded to this trend in Viennese musical taste, perhaps in the hope of gaining future employment, by composing three masterpieces for *Harmonie*: the Octet in E-flat, K. 375 (1781), the "Gran Partita" Serenade for twelve wind instruments and string bass, K. 361 (1781 or 1782), and the C-minor Octet, K. 388 (1782 or 1783):¹⁵

¹³ Deutsch, 223.

¹⁴ Ohlsson, 6.

¹⁵ Rushton, 105.

Serenades

K. 375 in E-flat	2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 horns, 2 bassoons
K. 361 in B-flat	2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 basset-horns, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, double bass
K. 388 in C-minor	2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 horns, 2 bassoons

Furthermore, Mozart's time in Vienna coincided with his association with two important wind players, Anton Stadler and Joseph Leutgeb. Stadler was a virtuoso clarinet and basset-horn player for whom Mozart composed a number of orchestral parts and chamber works, including the Clarinet Trio ("Kegelstatt") in E-flat, K.498 (1786), the Clarinet Quintet in A, K. 581 (1789), and the Clarinet Concerto in A, K. 622 (1791). Although there is no proof, it is assumed that Stadler played at the premiere of the Quintet for piano and winds.¹⁶ Also in Vienna, Mozart renewed his childhood friendship with virtuoso horn player Joseph Leutgeb, who had returned to the city in 1777 in order to supplement his income with work as a cheesemonger. Mozart composed his four horn concertos for Leutgeb: K. 412, K. 417, K. 447, and K. 495, as well as the Horn Quintet, K. 407. Thus, Mozart's adoption of wind instruments was influenced not only by the emperor's musical taste and his own prior experience, but also by Mozart's involvement with two of the best wind musicians Vienna had to offer.

During the 1780s, Mozart was considered to be the finest keyboard player in Vienna.¹⁷ He composed the Quintet during an extraordinary period of creativity, a phase that included a dozen piano concertos which he performed before the

¹⁶ Colin Lawson, *Mozart: Clarinet Concerto*, Cambridge Music Handbooks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 18.

¹⁷ Rushton, 107.

Viennese public between 1784 and 1786.¹⁸ “Mozart’s mature piano concertos were central to his musical and economic being in the early Vienna years, combining his brilliance in execution with unprecedented orchestral sensitivity, formal inventiveness, and an inexhaustible variety of mood.”¹⁹ Simon Keefe refers to Heinrich Christoph Koch’s writings on dialogue and drama in the eighteenth-century concerto, stating that when Mozart “turns to solo/orchestra relations he invokes the processive nature of spoken drama exclusively.”²⁰ This dialogical relationship, so prominent in the concertos, carries over to other genres with piano as well, and is not dependent on the scope of the performing forces. In a sense, Mozart was creating a style of chamber music that was, until that time, unknown. Rushton points out that “piano chamber music larger than a trio was comparatively rare until Mozart provided models balancing concertante elements with strong individual contributions from the melodic instruments: the difficulty of the keyboard writing never threatens their integrity as chamber music.”²¹ Kinderman writes:

“The colorful sonorities, lively dialogue, and masterful balance in the handling of the wind instruments that characterize K. 452 also appear in the concertos written around the same time. An enhanced role for the winds in relation to the piano, which becomes a mainstay of Mozart’s concerto style, is signaled by this remarkable quintet, his sole work for this combination of instruments.”²²

¹⁸ Kinderman, 57.

¹⁹ Rushton, 129.

²⁰ Simon Keefe, “Koch’s Commentary on the Late-Eighteenth Century Concerto: Dialogue, Drama, and Solo/Orchestra Relations,” *Music and Letters* 79, No. 3 (August, 1998): 385. Keefe analyzes the relationship of winds and piano in the first movement of Mozart’s Piano Concerto in F major, K. 459.

²¹ Rushton, 140.

²² Kinderman, 57-58.

K. 452 becomes then a concerto in miniature. The relationship of the winds and piano is evocatively described by H. C. Robbins Landon:

“By far the most difficult task Mozart set himself, and wherein lay his most dazzling achievement, was the composition of the Quintet, K. 452...The lack of blend between four different wind instruments meant to Mozart that chord passages unsupported by the piano would have to be brief. The instruments would therefore have to be contrasted in various permutations against the piano, with none of them being allowed to be disproportionately prominent. Mozart adopted a patchwork method in order to build up themes of any length, by stitching together an array of short motifs, supported by constantly varying instrumental combinations. This method risked a superficial instability but ultimately provided its fundamental unity.”²³

While embracing the complexities of a concerto, in conjunction with the difficulties of composing for a unique set of instruments with distinct limitations, Mozart creates a piece that both defies and embraces the period in which it was written.

“Up to the end of 1785, our primary information about Mozart’s concert activity comes from his own letters to his father and Leopold Mozart’s to Nannerl.”²⁴ Probably to prove to his father that he was experiencing great success in Vienna, Mozart listed in one letter twenty-two concerts he took part in from February 26 to April 3, 1784.²⁵ In another letter, dated April 10, 1784, days following the first performance of K. 452, Mozart claimed the Quintet was the best piece he had ever composed:

²³ H.C. Robbins Landon, ed. *The Mozart Compendium* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1990), 288.

²⁴ Mary Sue Morrow, “Mozart and Viennese Concert Life,” *The Musical Times* 126, no. 1710 (August 1985): 453.

²⁵ Rushton, 113.

Mon très cher Père,

Please don't be angry with me for not having written to you for so long, but you know how much I've had to do during that time! With my 3 subscription concerts I've covered myself in glory. My concert at the theatre also turned out very well. I wrote 2 grand concertos and also a quintet that was extraordinarily well received; I myself think it's the best thing I've ever written. It's scored for *1 oboe, 1 clarinet, 1 horn, 1 bassoon and pianoforte*. I wish you could have heard it!²⁶

The degree of hyperbole in this statement can be debated, but it is clear that Mozart held this particular piece in high regard. Mark Everist points out that Mozart's praise of the Quintet "embodies a value-judgment about the work." When Mozart declared, "I myself think it's the best thing I've ever written," he was "setting the quintet alongside, but presumably above, the two piano concertos that he played in the same concert [sic], K. 450 and K. 451, and also at least the first three of the quartets that would be dedicated to Haydn the following year, those in G major, D minor and E flat major."²⁷ Further, Everist states that modern reception of the Quintet is "dominated by considerations of genre."²⁸ Since the work cannot be neatly categorized due to its unique instrumentation, it has often been left out of scholarly discussions altogether. In particular, Everist cites Hans Keller's survey of "Chamber Music" in the influential *Mozart Companion*,²⁹ which does not mention the Quintet at all. That a piece Mozart himself thought of so highly was so neglected by scholars is

²⁶ Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *Mozart: A Life in Letters*, trans. Stewart Spencer, ed. Cliff Eisen (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), 478.

²⁷ Everist, 394.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 395.

²⁹ Hans Keller, "The Chamber Music," in *The Mozart Companion*, ed. H.C. Robbins Landon and Donald Mitchell, (London, 1977), 90-137; cited in Everist, 395.

highly ironic. Nonetheless, as demonstrated by the remarks of Robbins Landon and Kinderman quoted above, the neglect is by no means universal.

Chapter 3: Beethoven's Quintet, op. 16

Beethoven was born into a family of musicians employed by the royal court at Bonn, the capital of the Electorate of Cologne. The court, as well as Beethoven's family, had a long musical tradition. Beethoven's grandfather was previously court *Kapellmeister* and his father was a tenor in the court chapel. When Beethoven was appointed court organist in 1784, he became the third generation of his family to gain employment through the court.

En route to Vienna after returning from London, Franz Joseph Haydn visited Bonn in the spring of 1792. During this visit, Beethoven (who was twenty-two years old) showed Haydn one of his cantatas, and upon the request of the Elector, Haydn accepted him as a student in Vienna. Financed by Elector Maximilian Franz, Beethoven moved to Vienna in November of 1792 in order to begin an apprenticeship with Haydn. Franz aided Beethoven with important social connections as well, including Franz's close friend Count Ferdinand Waldstein, who would become Beethoven's first major patron. Waldstein was himself a musician who recognized Beethoven's talent and was the author of the famous Bonn farewell message to Beethoven:

“Dear Beethoven! You are now going to Vienna in fulfillment of a wish that has been long frustrated. Mozart's *genius* is still in mourning and weeps for the death of its pupil. It found a refuge with the inexhaustible Haydn but no occupation; through him it wishes to form a union with another. With the

help of unceasing diligence you will receive *the spirit of Mozart from the hands of Haydn.*"³⁰

Lessons with Haydn lasted only a little over one year, as Haydn returned to London in January 1794.

Despite Haydn's departure, Vienna was still replete with opportunities for Beethoven. "The close connection between the courts at Bonn and Vienna meant that [Beethoven] was not entirely unknown to the Viennese aristocracy; he arrived with letters of introduction from Count Waldstein...[and] was able to gain access to all the important salons."³¹ Since Beethoven was no longer a student of Haydn, Maximilian Franz expected the composer to return home to Bonn. Beethoven, however, chose instead to remain in Vienna which, at that time, was the leading musical city in all of Europe.³² Spurning the Elector cost Beethoven his financial support, though he would not suffer for long as he gained support from new patrons in Vienna, including Prince Lichnowsky, Prince Lobkowitz, Gottfried van Swieten, and Baron Nikolaus von Zmeskall. "First-class recitals could be heard in salons both in their palaces and in private houses whose wealthy owners patronized individual performers."³³ During this time, Prince Lichnowsky "was Beethoven's foremost patron, and remained so for more than a dozen years."³⁴ While Beethoven was in the financial graces of Lichnowsky, many of his compositions were first performed at

³⁰ Alexander Wheelock Thayer, *Thayer's Life of Beethoven*, ed. Elliott Forbes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 115; quoted in Lewis Lockwood, "Beethoven Before 1800: The Mozart Legacy," *Beethoven Forum* 3 (1994): 42.

³¹ Cooper, 94.

³² *Ibid.*, 88.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Solomon, 61.

parties hosted by the Prince, and “he formed lifelong friendships ...[including one with] Baron Nikolaus von Zmeskall, who remained Beethoven’s most constant Viennese friend.”³⁵

“The primary genres which Beethoven explored during his first Vienna period, which lasted until about 1802, are the piano sonata, the duo sonata, the piano trio, the string trio, the string quartet, chamber music for winds, the concerto, and the symphony.”³⁶ As was the case for Mozart during his early years in Vienna, “the piano was the central vehicle of Beethoven’s musical development during the first Vienna years, both as composer and as virtuoso.”³⁷ While Beethoven was primarily focused on compositions involving the piano, he also composed works for wind ensemble. “During 1793, his first year of study with Haydn in Vienna, Beethoven turned his hand to revising several works from his Bonn years rather than attempting any major new composition.”³⁸ One example is the Octet in E-flat for oboes, clarinets, horns, and bassoons, op. 103, completed in 1792, which was substantially recomposed as a string quintet (op. 4) in 1795.³⁹ Other early chamber music for winds includes, but is not limited to, the Trio in C for two oboes and English horn, op. 87 (1794), Serenade in D for flute, violin, and viola, op. 25 (1795), Sextet in E-flat for strings and horns, op. 81 (1795), and the Sextet for two clarinets, two horns, and two bassoons, op. 71 (1796). In 1795, Beethoven’s first works to

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Solomon, 97.

³⁷ Ibid., 97-98.

³⁸ Cooper, 225.

³⁹ Ibid., 226.

bear an opus number were published: the three Trios for Piano, Violin, and Cello, op. 1.⁴⁰ These Trios were dedicated to Prince Lichnowsky and were a great financial success.

In February 1796, Beethoven embarked on a five- (or possibly six-) month tour through Prague, Dresden, Leipzig, and Berlin. Prince Lichnowsky, who had been both a pupil and patron of Mozart, had accompanied Mozart on a tour of the same four cities in 1789, and now accompanied Beethoven as far as Prague.⁴¹ (Mozart's stay in Prague on that particular tour had been brief, but as we shall see in Chapter 4, the generally important role of that city in Mozart's career might well hold significance for Beethoven's Quintet for piano and winds.) There is little documentation of Beethoven's tour; however, from several nonmusical sources – three letters, a concert ticket, and meeting minutes – we can determine that “Beethoven had traveled to Prague by early February, probably with Lichnowsky, and that he remained in Prague at least two months before continuing in late April without Lichnowsky to Dresden, where he stayed about a week. We then find him in Berlin at the end of June. There is no record of his visit to Leipzig or his arrival in Berlin.”⁴² It is likely the Quintet for piano and winds, op. 16, was completed in Berlin during this tour, since the sketches for all three movements can be found only on paper that Beethoven used there.⁴³ Beethoven returned to Vienna in July 1796.

⁴⁰ Solomon, 99.

⁴¹ Barry Cooper, *Beethoven* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 62.

⁴² Johnson, 24-25.

⁴³ Cooper, 66.

The Quintet was first performed at a benefit concert on April 6, 1797, given by Ignaz Schuppanzigh, “one of the leading exponents of chamber music” in Vienna (who “quickly established a lasting friendship with Beethoven, and was to play an important role in introducing his chamber music in Vienna”).⁴⁴ Beethoven’s name was listed twice on the concert program, as composer of Number 2: an “Aria by Hr. van Beethoven, sung by Mad. Willmann” and Number 5: a “Quintet for Pianoforte and 4 wind instruments, played and composed by Hr. L. v. Beethoven.”⁴⁵ With Beethoven at the piano for the premiere, issues between the composer and his fellow performers arose in the final movement. Ferdinand Ries, Beethoven’s student, reports:

“That same night Beethoven played his quintet for piano and wind instruments; the famous oboist Ramm from Munich also played and accompanied Beethoven in the quintet. In the last allegro a fermata occurs several times before the theme begins again. In one of these pauses Beethoven suddenly started improvising, taking the Rondo subject as his theme and entertaining himself and the others for quite some time. This was not the case with the accompanists, however; they were very annoyed and Mr. Ramm was even angry. It did indeed look very droll to see these gentlemen, expecting to begin at any moment, raising their instruments to their mouths incessantly and then quietly putting them down again. At last Beethoven was satisfied and returned to the rondo. The whole society was enchanted.”⁴⁶

The Quintet was published in Vienna in 1801 by T. Mollo & Co., a firm that had recently been founded by a former employee of the Artaria publishing house

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Alexander Wheelock Thayer, *Thayer’s Life of Beethoven*, ed. Elliott Forbes (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1967), 191.

⁴⁶ Franz Wegeler and Ferdinand Ries, *Biographische Notizen über Ludwig van Beethoven* (Coblenz, 1838), 79-80, as quoted in Eva Badura-Skoda, “Performance Conventions in Beethoven’s Early Works,” in *Beethoven, Performers, and Critics*, ed. Robert Winter and Bruce Carr (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 1980), 55-56.

and which published a number of Beethoven's works.⁴⁷ The composer dedicated the Quintet to Prince Josef Johann Schwarzenberg. Along with the piano and wind instrument version, Beethoven simultaneously provided an arrangement for piano and strings.

While Beethoven, unlike Mozart, did not leave any record of his personal opinion of his Quintet, an 1803 review that apparently refers to this piece described it as "a new quintet by Beethoven, brilliant, serious, full of deep expression and character, but sometimes too bold, with occasional rips in the framework [*Odensprünge*], in accordance with the inclination of the composer."⁴⁸ As we shall see in the next chapter, modern opinion has not been so favorable, but a recent study by William Kinderman uses that reviewer's evocative imagery to reevaluate the compositional worth of Beethoven's Quintet.

⁴⁷ Alexander Weinmann. "Mollo, Tranquillo." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. April 21, 2010 <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.lib.ohio-state.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/18908>>.

⁴⁸ Hermann Deiters and Hugo Riemann, eds., *Ludwig van Beethovens Leben von Alexander Wheelock Thayer* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1922), 2:380; quoted in Kinderman, 68.

Chapter 4: The Question of the Influence of Mozart on Beethoven's op. 16

Mozart and Beethoven were the first composers to utilize the unusual scoring of piano with winds in their quintets, K.452 and op. 16 respectively. As a result, many scholars have been inclined to believe that Beethoven's was written in imitation of Mozart's. Maynard Solomon, for instance, wrote that "completing this brief survey of Beethoven's chamber music are three works for piano and winds [including] the Quintet for Piano and Winds, op. 16, modeled on Mozart's Quintet for the same instrumentation."⁴⁹ This belief naturally leads to comparisons, and these tend to be unflattering to Beethoven's Quintet, as is evident in Donald Francis Tovey's particularly icy analysis:

"In the quintet for pianoforte and wind instruments, Opus 16, Beethoven is, indeed, obviously setting himself in rivalry with Mozart's quintet for the same combination; but, if you want to realize the difference between the highest art of classical composition and the easygoing, safety-first product of a silver age, you cannot find a better illustration than these two works, and here it is Mozart who is the classic and Beethoven who is something less."⁵⁰

Alfred Einstein wrote that "Beethoven...considered it worth while to try to surpass this work [K. 452] in his Piano Quintet, Opus 16, although he did not succeed in

⁴⁹ Solomon, 102.

⁵⁰ Donald Francis Tovey, *Beethoven* (London: Oxford University Press, 1945), 88.

doing so.⁵¹ Other scholars, however, have challenged the underlying assumption. According to Philip Downs, for instance, "...op. 16 is said to be modeled on Mozart's Quintet, K. 452. Beyond the combination of instruments, the number and order of movements, and the key, it is difficult to find any 'modeling' and the work unjustly suffers from this comparison. The piano figuration is most Beethovenian, yet it is undeniable that the melodies have a formal balance more reminiscent of Mozart."⁵² With or without a direct comparison to Mozart, Beethoven's Quintet is generally dismissed as a minor work; thus, Lewis Lockwood described it as "one of the more developed [of] the lesser works, designed for popularity and little more."⁵³ We shall see below that William Kinderman has revisited the questions of modeling and quality, with striking results. First, however, one must ask a more fundamental question: Did Beethoven actually know Mozart's Quintet?

Late twentieth-century scholarship revealed that Mozart's Quintet was not yet published in its original scoring when Beethoven composed his own Quintet. This information has forced a reconsideration of whether, or in what form, Beethoven knew Mozart's Quintet. As previously stated, Mozart entered his Quintet into his catalogue on March 30, 1784, and the first performance took place two days later, on April 1, 1784. The work was not published at all during the composer's lifetime. The first edition was an arrangement for piano and string quartet published in Vienna by Artaria in 1794; that arrangement was reprinted several

⁵¹ Alfred Einstein, *Mozart, His Character, His Work*, trans. Arthur Mendel and Nathan Broder (New York: Oxford University Press, 1945), 265.

⁵² Philip Downs, *Classical Music* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992), 586-587.

⁵³ Lewis Lockwood, *Beethoven: The Music and the Life* (New York: Norton, 2003), 108.

times before 1800, by André in Offenbach, Schott in Mainz, and Götz in Mannheim.⁵⁴ During this time period, many compositions appeared as arrangements. This was a widely accepted method of making works more accessible (as well as profitable), and string instruments were generally more prevalent than wind instruments. Not until 1800 – four years after the composition of Beethoven’s op. 16 – was the work published in its original scoring, by Gombart in Augsburg.⁵⁵ To determine the influence that K. 452 may have had on op. 16, one must try to verify whether Beethoven could have had access to Mozart’s autograph score or a copy of it.

The possibility exists that Beethoven had access to Mozart’s autograph score of K. 452 through his close friend Nikolaus Zmeskall. Mozart’s widow, Constanze, mentions the name in a letter dated May 30, 1800, to German music publisher Johann Anton André: “H. v. Zmeskal, secretary of the Hungarian Chancellery here, has the original of [the] piano quintet.”⁵⁶ Constanze was referring to Hungarian born composer Nikolaus Zmeskall von Domanovecz who came to Vienna in 1784 as Secretary of the Hungarian Chancellery, a post he held until 1825. He was also an amateur cellist who frequently hosted performances in his home. Zmeskall became one of Beethoven’s closest friends; in fact, Beethoven dedicated his String Quartet, op. 95, to him. While we are unable to determine when, precisely, Zmeskall obtained

⁵⁴ Haberkamp, Vol. 1, 219-22; quoted in Everist, 396.

⁵⁵ Ibid.; W. A. Mozart, *Quintuor concertant pour pianoforte, hautbois, clarinette, cor & basson* (Augsbourg: Gombart et Comp. Editeurs et Graveurs de musique, n.d.).

⁵⁶ Cliff Eisen, *Mozart and Beethoven: Quintets for Piano & Wind*, <http://www.aam.co.uk/index.htm> (April 21, 2010). The autograph score of K. 452 is currently in the Bibliothèque nationale de France; former ownership is summarized in Köchel. A facsimile edition is available: W. A. Mozart, *Quintette pour piano, hautbois, clarinette, cor et basson, K. 452* (Courlay: J. M. Fuzeau, 1999). Ludwig Ritter von Köchel, *Chronologisch-thematisches Verzeichnis sämtlicher Tonwerke Wolfgang Amadé Mozarts* (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel; New York: sole agents in USA, C.F. Peters Corp, 1983), 487-488.

the autograph score, we do know from Constanze's letter that he was the owner by 1800.

Constanze penned ten *Anecdotes from Mozart's Life* in a letter to the publishers Breitkopf and Härtel dated November 17, 1790.⁵⁷ The story in the first anecdote provides a window into the events following a performance of K. 452.

Constanze's reminiscence was published much later, on February 6, 1799, in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*:

“A Polish Count was present for a Sunday musical gathering at which Mozart performed and, like the entire audience, he was completely enchanted by a new quintet for piano and winds. He told Mozart as much, and expressed his wish that Mozart would some time compose for him a trio for flute. He promised to do so when he had a chance. As soon as the Count returned home, he sent Mozart 100 gold half-sovereigns (150 imperial ducats) and a very complimentary note, thanking him for the great pleasure. Mozart was grateful and in return sent him the original score of the quintet, which he otherwise never did, and recounted to his friends with enthusiasm this pleasant experience. The Count was [subsequently] away, but a year later came to Mozart again, asking him for his trio. Mozart answered that he had not yet felt himself inclined to compose something worthy of the Count. The Count replied: And perhaps you will not feel inclined to return my 100 gold half-sovereigns, which I paid to you in advance for the trio. It will be remembered that, in the above-cited letter, the money was given as nothing more than a token of his admiration and thanks for his great pleasure. Mozart – angry but noble – paid back the money. The Count kept the original score [of the quintet] and some time later it was published by Artaria as a quartet for violin, viola and violoncello, without Mozart's authorization.”⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Wilhelm A. Bauer and Otto Erich Deutsch, *Mozart: Briefe und Aufzeichnungen*, Vol. 4 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1963), 295; quoted in Münster, 339.

⁵⁸ *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 1 (1798-99) Nr. 19, p. 289; quoted in Eisen, *New Mozart Documents*, 77.

Robert Münster proposes three possibilities for the identity of the mysterious unnamed “Polish Count:” the very same Nikolaus Zmeskall (though he was neither Polish nor a count), a Conte Kluschofsky, and a Comte de Dzieranowschy. While Münster attempts to locate Constanze’s anecdote in actual events, he fails to reach a definitive conclusion. Further clouding the issue is the validity of the anecdote itself:

“The truthfulness of these anecdotes, or that they do in fact derive from Constanze, has never been fully established. In a letter to Gottfried Christoph Härtel of 18 May 1799, Haydn’s biographer Griesinger wrote that ‘It is said that Mozart’s widow will not vouch for the authenticity of the anecdotes published in the *Music-Zeitung*’. While this probably refers to Fredrich Rochlitz’s Mozart anecdotes also published in the first year of the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*,...it is not out of the question that it also refers to the first installment of Constanze’s anecdotes, published in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* in February. Furthermore, the very first anecdote raises problems. Less than five years later, Rochlitz reprinted a garbled version of the anecdote...stating that it came from a source in Paris (actually Carl Friedrich Cramer’s *Anecdotes sur W.G. Mozart*, 1801), and was probably apocryphal; in short, he did not recognize a story he himself had published from a supposedly unimpeachable witness only shortly before, and this must cast some doubt on the claim that Constanze Mozart was the source of the original anecdote.”⁵⁹

In short, who had possession of Mozart’s autograph manuscript during the sixteen years between composition and publication remains a mystery. The two likeliest scenarios (if Constanze’s anecdote is true) are that Zmeskall was the “Polish Count” in the anecdote, or that Dzierzanowski was the Count and Zmeskall purchased the Quintet at an auction of his items held in 1785. Both of these scenarios are plausible, and either puts Zmeskall in possession of the Quintet in Mozart’s lifetime and before

⁵⁹ Eisen, *ibid.*, 80.

Beethoven composed his own Quintet. Nonetheless, Constanze's letter to André of 1800, quoted above, clearly shows that when Mozart's work was published in 1800, the owner of the autograph manuscript was Beethoven's friend Zmeskall, and it is reasonable to assume that he had it for some years before that.

There is another way Beethoven could have become acquainted with Mozart's Quintet in its original scoring. Beethoven's Quintet was likely completed during the composer's 1796 tour, discussed in Chapter 3, and more specifically, it was probably completed in Berlin since the sketches for all three movements can be found only on paper that Beethoven used there:⁶⁰

"Most of the paper used in Vienna in the 1790s was manufactured in what is now northern Italy and is characterized by distinctive watermarks, typically three crescent moons opposite a set of initials, the latter often in combination with some device such as a crown, a crest, or a crossbow. Among the papers used by Beethoven in these years, however, are four other non-Italianate types with very different watermarks, types which can be assigned on the grounds of handwriting and musical content to the year 1796. Beethoven seems to have obtained them during his absence from Vienna."⁶¹

Of the four types of paper (A-D), sketches for Beethoven's Quintet, op. 16, appear exclusively on paper types B and C.⁶² Paper type B was manufactured at a mill in the small town of Wolfswinkel in northern Germany, and while we cannot be certain whether Beethoven acquired the paper before or after Berlin, we do know that the type was in use there.⁶³ The origin of paper type C is unknown, but we may assume

⁶⁰ Cooper, 66.

⁶¹ Johnson, 27.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 35.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 28.

that Beethoven probably obtained the paper in Berlin.⁶⁴ Having established the likelihood that Beethoven completed the Quintet on this tour, Johnson became intrigued by the implications of another set of sketches for a different work for piano and winds:

“The sketches on...a bifolium of Bohemian paper suggest that a group of wind players in Prague had given Beethoven the idea for such a work, perhaps after a performance of Mozart’s quintet (although the latter was still unpublished). Significantly, the abandonment of these sketches appears to coincide more or less exactly with the conception of Op. 16.”⁶⁵

Thus, Johnson posits that Beethoven may have been exposed to K. 452 through chamber musicians. This suggestion is intriguing, as Prague was a city where Mozart's music was well known in his lifetime, and it is quite possible that his Quintet circulated in manuscript copies.⁶⁶

In sum, the curious history of K. 452 clouds our understanding of when, and how, Beethoven was exposed to the work, as Mozart’s Quintet was not published in its original form before Beethoven composed his own. As we have seen, there is sufficient evidence to consider the possibility that Beethoven heard Mozart’s Quintet in Prague, a city known for embracing the earlier composer’s music. Or perhaps Nikolaus Zmeskall – a close friend of Beethoven’s and the owner of K. 452 in 1800 – obtained the work at an earlier (though unknown) date and shared it with the composer.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ The 1786 Prague production of Mozart’s opera, *Le nozze di Figaro*, was a great success and led to the commission of *Don Giovanni*, which premiered in the city the following year. 1787 would also see the premiere of the Symphony in D major, K. 504 (known as the “Prague” Symphony). See Köchel, 487-488, for information on extant manuscript copies of K. 452.

This preponderance of circumstantial evidence led William Kinderman to reevaluate the music of Beethoven's op. 16. Kinderman's analysis "uncovered motivic and thematic affinities that both confirm and limit the kinship between these compositions."⁶⁷ This simultaneous confirmation and disputation challenge the prevailing analysis of simplistically arguing a chronological and structural link between the two Quintets. Kinderman argues that "[the Quintets'] artistic aspirations were not identical, and in some respects even sharply divergent," particularly regarding the role of improvisation in Beethoven's creative process.⁶⁸

K. 452 and op. 16 share many superficial similarities, foremost their unique instrumentation. Additionally, both Quintets are scored in the same key of E-flat major, a factor likely determined by the instrumental limitations of the time, and both have slow middle movements in the dominant key of B-flat. Each work consists of three movements with the first movements in sonata form and the third movements in rondo form. Further linking the two quintets are the extended slow introductions. Considered altogether, "these parallels could scarcely have been accidental."⁶⁹

Kinderman locates the more particular relationship of the two Quintets in Beethoven's work as an improviser. Beethoven's "ability to improvise was extraordinary and was much commented on by his contemporaries."⁷⁰ "Eyewitness reports of [his] improvisations stress his capacity for developing much out of little,

⁶⁷ Kinderman, 68.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 60.

seeing the world as a grain of sand by making some accidental scrap of musical material into the springboard for an astoundingly imaginative musical discourse.”⁷¹ As reported in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* in 1799: “[he] shows himself to the greatest advantage in improvisation, and here, indeed, it is most extraordinary with what lightness and yet firmness in the succession of ideas Beethoven not only varies a theme given him on the spur of the moment by figuration...but really develops it.”⁷²

In particular, Kinderman refers to the descending motive heard in the opening of Mozart’s Quintet and examines how Beethoven develops and transforms this motive in op. 16. The extended “slow introduction of Mozart’s Quintet emphasizes a descending scalar pattern.”⁷³ This same “stepwise falling motive” (outlining the interval of a seventh from G to A-flat) materializes as the opening motive (mm. 1-4) of the *Allegro ma non troppo* in Beethoven’s op. 16.⁷⁴ Although the consequent phrase (mm. 5-8) spans more than an octave, its beginning and ending pitches are A-flat and B-flat, again outlining a descent of a seventh. Beethoven transforms Mozart’s motive metrically, as well. The descending scalar pattern in the opening of Mozart’s Quintet appears in steady sixteenth notes in duple meter, while the opening of Beethoven’s Quintet employs 3/4 time. Additionally, Beethoven develops the motive by highlighting certain notes of the descending seventh motive

⁷¹ Ibid., 62.

⁷² Thayer-Forbes, 205; and Theodor von Frimmel, “Der Klavierspieler Beethoven,” in Frimmel, *Beethoven-Studien* (Munich and Leipzig: Georg Müller, 1906), 2:243-44; quoted Kinderman, 62.

⁷³ Kinderman, 63.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

through the use of longer note duration, ornaments, and note repetition. In the first four measures, the highest pitch, G, has a longer duration through the use of a half-note; the E-flat a major third lower is ornamented; and the lowest tone, A-flat, is repeated.⁷⁵ Beethoven then sets off each four-bar phrase with silences in mm. 4 and 8, which “presents the motive as a more characteristic entity.”⁷⁶

Beethoven uses the same motive throughout the entire first movement, as the “*dolce* phrases at the beginning of the second subject and at the outset of the closing theme also partake of this gestural shape.”⁷⁷ In Beethoven’s Quintet, the falling seventh motive “assumes more prominence” than it does in Mozart’s, “pervad[ing] the principal themes of Beethoven’s entire first movement.”⁷⁸ The same stepwise falling motive returns in the main theme of the second movement, and Beethoven’s “sensitive reinterpretation of these phrases in his variations and coda ensures that the stepwise descending melodic contour remains prominent.”⁷⁹ For the third movement, Beethoven’s uses a theme from a different Mozart work: the Piano Concerto in E-flat Major, K. 485 (1785). Taken together, “Beethoven seized on some specific structural features of Mozart’s music while developing these aspects in ways that extend far beyond his models. At the same time...Beethoven

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 65.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 66.

departs substantially from Mozart, and his thematic model for the rondo theme in Opus 16 is taken from a different Mozartean work, K. 485.”⁸⁰

As a result, Beethoven’s Quintet is not the “easy-going, safety first product” as many assumed at first glance but, rather, it becomes an expansion of Mozart’s “model” – a “rip in the framework” (see end of chapter 3 above) inspired by Beethoven’s improvisational tendencies. Kinderman concludes by arguing that in “the quintet as a whole, we encounter a situation in which resemblances to Mozart have been diminished in a thorough process of transformation.” This “transformation” was not previously understood or even acknowledged.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 68.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

As explored in this document, the story of K. 452 and op. 16 is far more interesting and complex than has previously been acknowledged. While many scholars have characterized op. 16 as merely an inferior imitation of K. 452, Beethoven does more than model his work on Mozart's. The recent scholarship of William Kinderman argues that Beethoven in fact expands the model to accommodate his own improvisatory design. Moreover, the canonic status of K. 452 itself was unclear until recently, despite the composer's own strongly worded opinion. Mozart held his Quintet in high esteem, yet many scholars simply ignored it. An exception was Robbins Landon who, as we read in Chapter 2, called K. 452 a "dazzling achievement."⁸¹ Robbins Landon refers to the "patchwork method" that Mozart uses, "stitching together an array of short motifs, supported by constantly varying the instrumental combinations."⁸² Mozart chose to compose for a combination of instruments with a distinct set of challenges, yet this instrumentation also presented untapped opportunities. By adopting the same instrumentation used in Mozart's Quintet, Beethoven embraced these challenges and opportunities as well.

⁸¹ Robbins Landon, 288.

⁸² *Ibid.*

The main challenge that both composers faced in writing for wind instruments was the need to compose shorter melodic lines due to the musicians' need to breathe. Regarding Mozart's Quintet, W. Dean Sutcliffe states that "the breathing requirements of winds as well as their inherent differences in timbre promote a more intricate interaction. Rather than a whole (melodic) unit being carried out by one player, it is more characteristic for it to be completed by another instrument or group."⁸³ By choosing to compose for piano and wind instruments, both Mozart and Beethoven faced a unique set of circumstances that did not exist for the traditional piano quintet with strings.

The horn, in particular, was the instrument with the most technical limitations; regardless, Mozart and Beethoven both highlight the inclusion of this instrument in their Quintets. An example can be found at the end of the first movement, in m. 121 of Mozart's Quintet. In the first half of the measure, the horn is the solo voice of the ensemble with a forte marking. This bold solo statement uses only the open tones of the natural horn in E-flat, with descending triplet figures evocative of hunting horn calls. A similar figure can be found in the coda of the first movement of Beethoven's Quintet, mm. 377-383, where the horn calls are unaccompanied and use the open tones of the natural horn in E-flat. This pair of passages exemplifies the idiomatic writing for the natural horn that permeated music until the advent of the valve horn.

⁸³ W. Dean Sutcliffe, "The Keyboard Music," in *The Cambridge Companion to Mozart*, ed. Simon P. Keefe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 62-63.

The revised publication history of Mozart's Quintet calls into question Beethoven's access to Mozart's piece at the time he composed his own. Since the publication of K. 452 in its original scoring occurred after the premiere of Beethoven's Quintet, scholars have offered different hypotheses to explain Beethoven's contact with Mozart's work. As discussed in Chapter 4, Beethoven might well have had access to Mozart's Quintet either through Nikolaus Zmeskall (who eventually owned Mozart's autograph score) or through chamber musicians in Prague (who might have played Mozart's quintet from a manuscript copy), or even through both. Taking into account Beethoven's friendship with Zmeskall and the anecdote involving the musicians in Prague, the preponderance of circumstantial evidence leads us to the conclusion that Beethoven was cognizant of the original instrumentation of Mozart's Quintet. For the moment, at least, this is as close as we can come to explaining Beethoven's contact with K. 452.

Thus, the conventional wisdom that Beethoven based his Quintet on Mozart's appears to be accurate, though the full story is much more complicated than mid twentieth-century scholars assumed. Both composers chose to embrace the challenges of writing for a unique instrumentation, but each had his own compositional approach. Mozart's Quintet became a miniature version of the piano concertos he was writing at the same time, which allowed him to explore a sense of dialogue and drama within the ensemble. Beethoven's Quintet underscored the way his improvisational habits permeated his compositional style. Both Quintets are, in

fact, “dazzling achievements,” and this fundamental similarity is the one that has taken the longest to come to light.

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