

# Mozart's *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*: Behind the Editions

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## Introduction

When I began comparing the facsimile of Mozart's *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* to current and widely-accepted editions, I expected to find few discrepancies. Mozart is known for writing contrapuntally perfect compositions without any need for revisions. However, I found that critical controversy is not always located in the compositional process. The earliest commonly-used edition is the 1900 Breitkopf & Härtel *Gesamtausgabe*, which is based on the first edition edited by Johann André in 1827. Mozart's autograph was not discovered until 1943 by Manfred Gorke, and the Eulenberg and Neue Mozart Ausgabe editions make use of both the autograph and the *Gesamtausgabe*. While recent additions agree that the serenade was written for a quintet, *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* is performed by chamber groups and string orchestras alike. In addition, Mozart's usage of staccato dots and dashes is inconsistent (let alone ambiguous) in his autograph, and this has led to extremely different articulations among current editions. Mozart also gave directions to repeat sections near the beginning of a given movement (for the first two movements), and subsequent editions have reprinted the indicated measures. The most intriguing source critical problem in this piece, however, is the fact that it is said to have a missing minuet and trio movement. While the serenade exists today as an Allegro, Romanze, minuet and trio, and a finale, Mozart's thematic catalogue lists its contents as "Allegro, Menuett und Trio.–Romance. Menuett und Trio, und finale." In order to understand the reason for each inconsistency of this piece, we must first examine the context in which the composition appeared. In this paper I will propose why *Eine*

*Kleine Nachtmusik* was created, explain the discrepancies of the piece, and suggest an explanation for each.

## Mozart in 1787

The circumstances of Mozart's life in early 1787 suggest that he wrote *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* (hereafter: *EKN*) for immediate sale. On April 23, 1787, he had moved from his elegant apartment to a more economical location as a result of financial decline. As his father wrote to his sister on May 11, "your brother is now living in the Landstrasse No. 224. He does not say why he has moved. Not a word. But unfortunately, I can guess the reason." During that time, he had written the quintets in C major (K.515) and G minor (K.516), which he immediately tried to sell on a subscription basis starting in July. Unfortunately, no one subscribed. On April 23, Cramer's *Magazin der Musik* accused his new music of being "too highly seasoned" (Hildesheimer 199-202). If Mozart was in desperate need of having pieces sold at the time, he probably would have taken the advice and written a less emotional piece than the two quintets. The appearance of *EKN* after the failure of the quintet subscription suggests Mozart did exactly that. This serenade for strings represents balance and elegance, something that should have been much more marketable at the time. Strangely enough, there are no records of this piece being offered to the public. If Mozart really began *EKN* as an attempt at a marketable piece, he certainly changed his mind by the time it was finished. If Mozart did in fact change his mind about the purpose of the piece, perhaps he made musical changes that would better fit his new purpose.

Corroboratively, the piece contains large-scale discrepancies regarding both composition and performance.

## Discrepancies in Ensemble Size

The most apparent discrepancy in performances of *EKN* is that of the number of players. André’s first edition existed as a four-part score with an ambiguity as to whether Mozart intended the piece for a string orchestra or a quintet. Breitkopf & Härtel indicated “Violino I” and “Violino II” for the violin parts. When the autograph was discovered, however, Mozart’s own heading indicated “2 violini,” which some interpreted as two solo violins. H.F. Redlich, in the preface to the Eulenberg edition, called for a quintet because Mozart “asks for ‘2 Violini...’, and not for [‘]Violino I, Violino II...’” (Redlich, ii). However, Mozart entered ‘2 violini’ in his own thematic catalog for symphonies as well as chamber pieces. Such an entry thus tells us nothing about the number of players per part.

Present performances still vary in the number of performers utilized, but as Alfred Einstein declares, “there is no reason why Mozart’s *Kleine Nachtmusik* may not be performed either orchestrally—with double basses—or as chamber music” (Einstein, 170). Many other compositions were (and still are) performed with varying numbers of players; in these cases, the style of the work often determines the number of performers. In addition, the fact that a double bass simply doubles the cello for the entire serenade may appear out of place for a chamber piece today, but this was also typical in the eighteenth century. While most agree that the serenade is more appropriate for a chamber group, the presence of oppositely-stemmed notes on the same beat in parts of *EKN* strongly suggests that the instruments should go into *divisi* instead of playing double-stops: occurrences of such notes in the autograph are listed in Table 1. All subsequent editions transcribe these notes as double-stops.

Table 1. Occurrences of *Divisi* in Autograph

	<i>measures</i>	<i>instrument</i>
Allegro	5	violino 2
	9	violino 2
	24 to 26	both violins
	27	violino 2
	39 to 40	both violins
	47 to 48	both violins
	112	violino 2
	131	violino 2 and viola
	133	violino 2
	135 to 136	violino 2
Menuett	8 to 9	viola
Rondo	10 to 11	viola
	72	viola
	76 to 77	violino 2
	78 to 79	viola
	148	viola
	164	viola

If Mozart truly intended this piece for one instrument per part, the stemming of these measures would appear contradictory! To me this indicates that Mozart was toying with the idea of whether or not the piece should be for an orchestra or small ensemble. If he had published *EKN*, he might have adjusted these incongruencies to indicate a serenade for string quintet.

## Markings for Doublings of Parts

Numerous blank measures in the autograph are filled in by doubling another part in subsequent editions; the four types of markings Mozart placed at the start of these blank areas indicate this solution. The double slash (//) in the second violin's part indicates that the second violin doubles the first. The *8va* next to the double

slash in the second violin part indicates that the second violin doubles the first an octave below. In addition to the slashes, Mozart employed two abbreviations, which are tracked in the chart below as “vp” and “cp.” While “colla parte” was often used in scoring to indicate doubling of a neighboring instrument, the two abbreviations here most likely stood for “violino parte” and “cello parte”. The “vp” appears only in the second violin section, and editions realize them as doublings of the first violin part. The “cp” appears in the viola section, and editions realize them as doublings of the cello part. Table 2 indicates where these symbols appear. Some of these symbols are followed by blank measures for that part, which indicates that the initial doubling will also be applied to the blank measures.

*Table 2. Symbols indicating doublings in Autograph*

	<i>Symbol</i>	<i>measure indicated</i>	<i>blank measures</i>	<i>part</i>
Allegro	vsym	1	2,3,4	2nd violin
	csym	1	2,3,4	viola
	csym	21		viola
	csym	26	27	viola
	8va //	28	29	2nd violin
	//	30		2nd violin
	csym	39	40	viola
	csym	47	48	viola
	csym	51	52,53	viola
	vsym	51	52,53	2nd violin
	csym	56	57,58,59	viola
	vsym	56	57,58,59	2nd violin
	vsym	70	71	2nd violin
	8va //	101		2nd violin
	//	102,103		2nd violin
	csym	112,113		viola
	csym	120,121		2nd violin
	vsym	124,125		2nd violin
	vsym	126		2nd violin
	csym	136	137	viola
vsym	136,137		2nd violin	
8va //	1,2,3	4	2nd violin	
//	5	6	2nd violin	

Menuett	csym	2,3	4	viola
	8va //	9,10	11	
	//	12	13	
	8va //	26,27	28,29	
Rondo	csym	13	14-17	2nd violin
	8va //	22,23		2nd violin
	8va //	48		2nd violin
	//	49		2nd violin
	csym	58	59	viola
	vsym	58		2nd violin
	//	59,60		2nd violin
	csym	71		viola
	vsym	82	83	2nd violin
	8va //	114		2nd violin
	//	115,116		2nd violin
	csym	123,124		viola
	vsym	123,124		2nd violin
	csym	130,131		viola
vsym	130,131		2nd violin	

Mozart used “dal segno” directions to indicate repetitions. He placed a curved cross-hatch symbol in the second measure of the Allegro, and at measure 99 he gave the following directions: “Dal segno 22 takt,” indicating that measures 2 to 23 should be inserted there. He placed a wavy symbol on the second measure of the Romanze, and at measure 35 wrote, “dal segno nur den 1.Theil,” which indicates that only the first part (up to the first repeat sign) should be inserted there. He wrote, “dal segno beide Theile aber durchaus” at measure 58; this indicates that both parts should be inserted, but without the repeat signs. Mozart also put repeat signs around measure 33 of the Rondo. All of these repetitions were written out in subsequent editions.

## Discrepancies in Staccato Markings

The most significant notational discrepancy in this piece involves Mozart’s distinction between staccato dots and dashes. In Mozart’s time, the dash indicated an isolated accent (Stowell, 135). Mozart employs both dots and dashes in the

autograph: André’s edition gives mostly dashes, and Breitkopf & Härtel’s gives only dots. The Neue Mozart Ausgabe edition attempts to follow Mozart’s distinctions, but it also adds dots and dashes to reflect parallel passages. Table 3 provides a chart of all the dots and dashes used in these four editions for the first and second violin parts in the first movement. (The autograph entries in parentheses correspond to the repeated measure from the beginning section, as the autograph includes “Dal Segno” instructions). Note the overwhelming differences; in only the measures 13, 41, 49, and 92 do all of the sources agree! Because of the abundance of material, I limited the chart to two instruments within one movement. Most differences result from André’s edition adhering to dashes, or the B&H edition adhering to dots; these sections are of no exceptional interest. Certain sections of differences are marked with letters in the leftmost column, and descriptions of these sections appear after the chart. Many of these sections involve judgments made by the editors concerning Mozart’s intentions, as his distinctions between his dots and dashes are often quite unclear. In addition to the ambiguity,

Mozart often leaves notes without staccatos where they should clearly be present in order to follow the articulation of phrasings already established in parallel passages. To take the staccatos in Mozart's autograph literally would result in many lopsided phrases, which do not accurately reflect his balanced compositional style.

The ambiguity in Mozart's articulation indicates that he did not discern a difference between dots and dashes. Until the mid-eighteenth century, the staccato dot was a performance articulation that was not explicitly notated by composers. When staccatos began to appear on paper in the varying forms of dots and strokes, their interpretation varied greatly among the treatises of performance in the latter half of that century. Most treatises made *no* distinction between staccato dots and strokes in terms of their execution. Others failed to agree on which marking should make its note shorter or more accented (Riggs, 234-235). This ambiguity should not be too surprising, as no central authority had standardized the notation. As a result, staccato markings initially varied by style of music, region, and even composer. The

articulation in Mozart's early compositions imitates that of his father, who used only one type of staccato. The interpretation in the *Neue Mozart Ausgabe* resulted from a musicological essay competition held in the 1950s, concerning the meaning of staccato markings in Mozart's autographs. The three prize-winning essays agreed that dots and strokes should be distinguished from each other, and *NMA* adapted this interpretation in its edition of every piece by Mozart that had varying markings in his autographs. Unfortunately, the ambiguity and inconsistency of Mozart's markings make it extremely difficult to create an authoritative yet elegant edition. As Table 3 shows, the editors of *NMA* often disagreed with the markings of the autograph or added new markings in order to maintain symmetry. Furthermore, *NMA* editions ignore the articulation of early editions that consolidate staccato markings to one type of marking. Mozart's failure to protest the staccato variance of pieces copied in his time creates a strong case against *NMA*'s dualist interpretation of staccato markings. Meanwhile, today's "authentic" editions of Mozart compositions give directions that had not existed before 1950.

*Table 3. Staccato markings on violins in the First Movement*

Reference	Measure	Part	Note	Editions			
				Autograph	André	B&H	NMA
	5	1st violin	last G	dash	dash	dot	dash
	6	1st violin	last F	dash	dash	dot	dash
	7	1st violin	last G	dash	dash	dot	dash
	8	1st violin	last F	dash	dash	dot	dash
	9	1st violin	first pair G's	dot	dash	dot	dot
A	9	1st violin	second pair G's	none	none	dot	dot
A	10	1st violin	first pair B's	none	none	dot	dot
	13	1st violin	E, F	dot	dot	dot	dot
	16	1st violin	pair(C), pair(B)	dot	dash	dot	dot
	16	2nd violin	pair(A), pair(G)	dot	dash	dot	dot
	17	1st violin	pair(A)	dot	dash	dot	dot
	32-33	1st violin	all	dot	dash	dot	dot
B	34	1st violin	B	none	dash	dot	dash

	34	2nd violin	G	dash	dash	dot	dash
	35	1st violin	all	dash	dash	dot	dash
	36	1st violin	first A	dash	dash	dot	dash
	36	1st violin	4 consec. A's	dot	dash	dot	dot
	37	1st violin	A	dash	dash	none	dash
C	38	1st violin	first A	dot	dash	dot	dash
	38	1st violin	4 consec. A's	dot	dash	dot	dot
	41	1st violin	last B	dash	dash	dot	dash
	41	2nd violin	F,G,A	dot	dot	dot	dot
	41	2nd violin	last G	dash	dash	dot	dash
D	42	both violins	all untied notes	none	dash	dot	none
D	43	1st violin	first A	dash	none	none	dash
E	44	1st violin	first A	none	dash	dot	dash
E	44	1st violin	last 4 A's	none	none	dot	dot
E	45	1st violin	A	?	dash	dot	dash
E	46	1st violin	first A	none	none	dot	dash
E	46	1st violin	last 4 A's	none	none	dot	dot
B	49	1st violin	last B	none	dash	dot	dash
	49	2nd violin	F,G,A	dot	dot	dot	dot
	49	2nd violin	last G	dash	dash	dot	dash
D-prime	50	both violins	all untied notes	none	none	dot	none
	51	both violins	pair(D)	none	none	dot	none
	60	1st violin	G	dash	dash	none	dash
E	61	1st violin	second G	none	none	dot	dash
E	61	1st violin	last 4 G's	none	none	dot	dot
E	62	1st violin	second G	none	none	none	dash
E	63	1st violin	second G	none	none	none	dash
E	63	1st violin	last 4 G's	none	none	none	dot
E	64	1st violin	second G	none	none	none	dash
E	65	1st violin	second G	none	none	none	dash
E	65	1st violin	last 4 G's	none	none	none	dot
E	66	1st violin	second A	none	none	none	dash
E	67	1st violin	second F	none	none	none	dash
E	67	1st violin	last 4 F's	none	none	none	dot
E	68	1st violin	Eb	none	none	none	dash
E	69	1st violin	second C	none	none	none	dash
E	69	1st violin	last 4 C's	none	none	none	dot
	74	2nd violin	pair(D), pair(C)	dot	dash	dot	dot
	75	2nd violin	pair(B), B,A	dot	dash	dot	dot
	80	1st violin	last G	(dash)	dash	dot	dash
	81	1st violin	last F	(dash)	dash	dot	dash
	82	1st violin	last G	(dash)	dash	dot	dash
	83	1st violin	last F	(dash)	dash	dot	dash
	84	1st violin	first pair G's	(dot)	dash	dot	dot
A	84	1st violin	second pair G's	(none)	dot	none	dot

A	85	1st violin	first pair B's	(none)	none	none	dot
	88	1st violin	E, F	(dot)	dash	dot	dot
	91	1st violin	pair(C), pair(B)	(dot)	dash	dot	dot
	91	2nd violin	pair(A), pair(G)	(dot)	dash	dot	dot
	92	1st violin	pair(A)	(dot)	dot	dot	dot
	99	1st violin	all	dot	dash	dot	dot
	105	1st violin	three D's	?	dash	dot	dot
F	105	1st violin	last 4 D's	none	none	none	dot
F	106	1st violin	first 4 D's	none	none	none	dot
	107	1st violin	E	dash	dash	dot	dash
D	107	1st violin	last F	none	dash	dot	none
G	107	2nd violin	first untied C	none	none	dot	dash
			second untied				
H, D	107	2nd violin	C	none	none	dot	none
	108	1st violin	D	dash	dash	dot	dash
E	109	1st violin	first untied D	dot	dash	dot	dash
	109	1st violin	last 4 D's	dot	dash	dot	dot
	110	1st violin	middle D	dash	dash	dot	dash
E	111	1st violin	first untied D	none	none	dot	dash
E	111	1st violin	last 4 D's	none	none	dot	dot
	114	1st violin	last E	dash	none	dot	dash
	114	2nd violin	B,C,D	dot	dash	dot	dot
	114	2nd violin	last C	dash	dash	dot	dash
		both	all untied				
D-prime	115	violins	notes	none	none	dot	none
	116	1st violin	first D	dash	dash	dot	dash
E	117	1st violin	first untied D	none	none	none	dash
E	117	1st violin	last 4 D's	none	none	none	dot
E	118	1st violin	middle D	dot	none	dot	dash
E	119	1st violin	first untied D	none	none	none	dash
E	119	1st violin	last 4 D's	none	none	none	dot
	122	1st violin	last E	dash	dash	dot	dash
I	122	2nd violin	B,C,D	?	dash	dot	dot
I	122	2nd violin	last C	?	dash	dot	dash
	123	1st violin	D,G,B,F	dot	dash	dot	dot
	123	1st violin	last B,A	none	none	dot	none
	123	2nd violin	B,D,G,B	dot	dash	dot	dot
J	123	2nd violin	last G,F	dash on F	dash	dot	none

*Below are notes on each section, preceded by matching labels on sections of measures.*

- A. The twentieth century editions add staccato dots here to reflect the first pair of G's at measure 9. These two-bar motives imitate the first; thus, they should be articulated in the same way.
- B. A dash is added to reflect the articulation of the parallel phrase of the second violin.
- C. It looks as if Mozart made a dash look too much like a dot. The other A's in the same part of the corresponding motives of the last three measures are clearly dashes; thus, this must be a dash as well.

- D. This is clear evidence that Breitkopf & Härtel had André's edition (and not the autograph) as a source. They indicate staccato markings where none exist in the autograph. *D-prime*: the staccatos in measures 50 and 115 were probably added to reflect the articulation in the corresponding motive of measure 42, which was placed in the André edition.
- E. The motives in measures 43-46 (and later 61-69, 108-111, and 116-119) imitate those of measures 35-38; hence, they should use the same articulation.
- F. NMA adds staccatos here to continue the articulation of the first three D's in measure 105.
- G. This is to match with the articulation of the corresponding E in the first violin.
- H. The B&H edition added a dot to match the articulation of the corresponding F in the first violin, which had a dash in the André edition (but not in the autograph!).
- I. The motive here imitates that of measure 49.
- J. There seems to be a thin diagonal dash near the last F, which André interpreted as intended dashes on both the G and the F. The editors of NMA apparently decided that this mark was insignificant and not intended as a musical marking.

## The Missing Movement

The most interesting discrepancy of *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* is mentioned in all editions: Mozart apparently wrote a now-missing minuet and trio for the second movement. As mentioned above, Mozart's own thematic catalog has the following entry:

*den 10ten August [1787]*

*Eine kleine Nacht Musick, bestehend in einem Allegro, Menuett und Trio.– Romance. Menuett und Trio, und finale. – 2 Violini, Viola e Baßi.*

Musicologists take this to indicate Mozart planned a minuet and trio between the Allegro and Romanze. In addition, the autograph itself consists of seven leaves, folded and numbered 1 through 8, but missing number 3.

Alfred Einstein, who wrote the preface to the third edition of the Köchel thematic catalog of Mozart, made the following statement on this topic:

*My guess is that the Minuet of the half-apocryphal Clavier Sonata K. Anh. 136, originally doubtless a quartet movement, should be transposed back to G major and interpolated in the Serenade; we would then surely have the Serenade once more in its original form (Einstein, 207).*

The clavier sonata K.498a (a.k.a. K. Anh. 136a) first appeared in the French *magazine de musik* in 1805 as a piece by an A.E. Müller, but at least two of its four movements are known to be piano arrangements of Mozart string compositions (Köchel, 635). The sonata is divided into Allegro, Andante, Minuet and Trio, and Rondo. The Andante is an abridged arrangement of K.450, and the Rondo consists of elements of K.450, K.456, and K.595 (Koechel, 635). The other movements, however, are thematically unaccounted for. Einstein's deduction contains a few inconsistencies. First, while K. 450, and K.456, and K.595 are all in B<sup>b</sup> (as is the sonata), *EKN* is in G. Following the pattern of the other arrangements, if the minuet and trio was derived from a Mozart composition, it would then come from a B<sup>b</sup> movement as well. Second, if the low F in measure 24 of the minuet were transposed down to a D, it would be impossible for a cello to play the note. If this were taken from *EKN*, Müller would have had to change the voice leading of the cello part. Neither of these observations negates the possibility of Einstein's scenario, but both violate the invariants that Müller had seemed to set when arranging the Andante and Rondo. Nevertheless, Einstein has only made a guess to the solution of this puzzle, and nothing more.

I propose that Mozart only planned four movements. The fact that he separates "Menuett

und Trio” and “Romance” with a mysterious dot and dash instead of a comma draws uncertainty to the number of intended movements. Instead of conceiving of the Romanze and first minuet and trio as separate movements, he may have intended to have a Romanze in the form of a minuet and trio. This seems to be the case in K. 525a, a fragment written five years earlier for string quartet, but only with music written for the first violin. The heading reads “Kleine Nachtmusik”, and musicologists agree that this was a preliminary design for the Romanze (Köchel, 666). While the harmonic movement of this piece parallels that of the Romanze of K.525, the  $\frac{3}{4}$  time indicates a possible conception for a minuet and trio! The fact that the Romanze in its final conception was *not* a minuet and trio suggests that Mozart changed his mind about the style of the movement. It is possible that the missing third leaf contained a minuet and trio realization of K.525a, which may have turned out to be too vivacious for the feeling Mozart wanted for a languid Romanze (note that he had indicated “Larghetto” for K.525a). This may have dissatisfied Mozart so much that he wrote an alternate Romanze in cut time, which conveyed the serene mood he desired in *EKN*, which is—after all—a reflection of nocturnal quietude, if only in this movement. Alfred Einstein points out that the first slow movement of K.248 (written in June 1776) “foreshadows the Romanze of the *Kleine Nachtmusik*” (Einstein, 198). Upon investigation, I found a similarity between the second halves of their opening themes. This connection, coupled with the similarity between the Romanze and that of K.525a, conjures up an image of Mozart digging through his past material to find inspiration for the Romanze. In contrast, his other movements have no such connections to previous compositions.

Mozart began his handwritten thematic catalog of his compositions in February 1784 and continued it until his death. There is no way to conclude exactly when he made the entry for *EKN*. He may well have made his catalogue entry in the midst of composition, when he still

intended the Romanze to be a minuet and trio. Then, after writing the catalog entry, Mozart may have decided to remove the first minuet and trio from the piece altogether. At this point, the minuet and trio would be vestigial to Mozart, and he would have disposed of the page, but Mozart would conjecturally forgot to modify his already-written catalogue entry for *EKN*, leaving a mysterious arrow to a minuet and trio disowned by its creator.

## Influence by Leopold Mozart

I believe that the death of Mozart’s father influenced the composition of *EKN*. Historians continue to write entire books on the relationship between W. A. Mozart and his father Leopold because of the severity of their conflict, which is expressed in numerous letters. Leopold Mozart, a violinist and author of the most important 18<sup>th</sup> century treatise on violin technique, was a product of Salzburg’s outdated and conservative ideals. This was a town that had expelled non-Catholics prior to the thirty-years war, and the University of Salzburg (which Leopold had attended) instilled Catholic principles in its students (Schroeder, 43). As a teacher, Leopold frowned upon virtuosity for its own sake and upheld humility and a well-balanced knowledge of the arts (Biancolli, 11). As a father, he treated his children as his ultimate pupils. Mozart began taking music lessons at the age of three, and he began composing at the age of five, all under the supervision of his father. When his indications of genius were evident, Leopold made sure to take every step in facilitating his growth, arguably to the point of exploitation. It is not too difficult to imagine a revolt against such an overbearing father, especially for one who spent his years of growth performing for aristocrats throughout Europe as ‘Leopold Mozart’s genius son’. In 1777 when Wolfgang was 21 years old, he left Salzburg with his mother for Munich, Augsburg, Mannheim, and Paris, and over the next sixteen months Leopold wrote seventy letters covering a wide range of topics

(Schroeder, 73). Soon the letters were mostly comprised of advice about composing to the taste of certain populations, and when Mozart and his mother reached Augsburg, letters began to arrive addressed only to Wolfgang. These letters contained advice on a vast range of topics, and much of the advice became repetitive, obvious, and reflective of Leopold's conservatism. For example, one letter written in 1778 begins as follows: "My son! You are hot-tempered and impulsive in all your ways!" (Biancolli, 132). Eventually it was apparent this advice fell on deaf ears, as Mozart rarely wrote back. Leopold even acknowledged this in a letter he wrote to Wolfgang (which also epitomizes his repetitive writing style):

*Many of my questions remain unanswered; and, you will observe that I reply to all of yours. Why? Because when I have written important matters to you, I then place your letter in front of me –read it through, and, whenever anything arises, I then answer it. Furthermore, I always keep a piece of paper on my table; whenever anything occurs to me, which I want to write to you about, I note it down in a few words. Then when I start writing, I cannot forget anything. (Schroeder, 69)*

Leopold Mozart would pass away from illness almost a decade later. Wolfgang was aware of his father's illness and prepared for it during the last few months of Leopold's life. In early 1787 (before knowing of his father's latest illness) he had written *Der Salzburger Lump in Wien*, K. 509b ("The Salzburg Scoundrel in Vienna"). Mozart described the first act as follows: "Herr Stachelschwein reads a letter that he has just received from his mother, informing him of the death of his father. He expresses grief over his loss, but at the same time rejoices over his inheritance" (Solomon, 411). In a letter written on April 4, 1787, he wrote to Leopold and mentioned his illness, of which he had probably been informed by his sister Nannerl (Halliwell, 539-540). While Wolfgang claimed to his father that he expected to hear news of recovery, he

added that he was "prepared in all affairs of life for the worst." He even went on to say that "death is the *key* which unlocks the door to our true happiness" (Anderson, 907). This was the last account of direct communication between them before Leopold's death.

*EKN* was one of the first compositions Mozart wrote after his father's death. Leopold died on May 28, and Mozart learned of it the next day, when he mentioned it in a letter to Gottfried Von Jacquin: "I inform you that on returning home today I received the sad news of my most beloved father's death. You can imagine the state I am in" (Anderson, 908). On June 2, he wrote an emotionally removed letter to his sister, concerned more about their father's estate than the man himself. It was widely known that Wolfgang's relationship to his sister was quite distant, and he was not known to express his deep feelings to her during their adult lives (Hildesheimer, 211). On June 4, his pet bird of three years passed away, and in response he wrote a light-hearted poem (Hildesheimer, 206). The fact that he would write a poem in response to his dead bird suggests that a creative response to his father's death was underway. It is difficult to imagine Mozart responding more to his bird than his father when both passed away within a week of each other. While his relationship to his father was somewhat estranged, the death of the man who had shaped Mozart's life and set musical goals for him to achieve would surely demand a posthumous response from Wolfgang.

On June 14, Mozart completed his *Musikalischer Spass*, a "musical joke" that mocked other contemporary musicians. Hildesheimer suggests that since Mozart carries compositions in his head weeks before writing them down, he probably conceived this before his father's death (Hildesheimer, 208-209). In addition, Alan Tyson examined the autograph scores and verified Franz Giegling's 1959 discovery in an earlier autograph of an attempt at the start of the last movement of the *Musikalischer Spass* (Tyson, 244). This fragment is now categorized as K.522a. A

second attempt at this piece after the death of his overbearing conservative father seems too poetic to be a coincidence, especially since no known commission for it exists. The foreword to the *Phillips Complete Mozart Edition* suggests that “it was Wolfgang’s way of paying tribute to his father, who was at least as intolerant as Wolfgang was of his lesser contemporaries, and who may have suggested to Wolfgang that he write a piece to ridicule them” (Golding, 19-20). Perhaps Mozart, who had begun such an idea over a year before, went back to his older autographs to find the fragment K.522a. He then wrote K.522 based on the idea he had in writing K.522a. Tyson notes that K.522a was written in the same type of ink as K.525a, the early fragment of *EKN* (Tyson, 136). Perhaps these fragments were written in close proximity to one other, so that when Mozart found K.522a, he happened to come across K.525a as well. That would explain the second attempt of *EKN* a month and a half later (August 10), again, with no commission.

Mozart was known to write serenades only for commission, and this was the last serenade he wrote. Einstein suggested that it “served as a corrective counterpart to the *Musikalischer Spass*” because it resolved the musical rules that had been broken with the previous piece (Einstein, 207). However, both pieces stemmed from previously written musical ideas, so we know that a conception of *EKN* had already begun before the musical joke was completed. Furthermore, if Mozart was inspired by the death of his father to revisit a piece that had been possibly suggested by him, perhaps the influence of his father remained with Mozart as he revisited *EKN*. The serenade in strings reflects on the style of music from Leopold’s time, and boasts of a majestic sound that had been absent in recent pieces. The violin melodies could even symbolize his father, the violinist. Furthermore, Mozart may have desired a more mature closure on his relationship with his father than an inside joke (pun intended), especially if he had secretly breathed a sigh of relief by announcing the freedom from his father with *Ein Musikalischer*

*Spass*. The question still remains as to why Mozart did not offer to sell this piece, especially since it answered the public criticisms of the previous two quintets. One possible explanation is that Leopold’s influence over the composition was so powerful that it made Wolfgang feel guilty about selling the serenade. This would especially be the case if Wolfgang viewed *EKN* as a departing gift to his father.

## Conclusion

Mozart’s *EKN* is clearly a classical masterpiece, but it is not conceptually immaculate. Since its publication it has been plagued by mystery and ambiguity. Recent CD projects by groups such as Phillips attempt to cover all the major known works of Mozart, and in doing so they include *two* separate recordings of this piece: one for orchestra and one for string quartet and bass. Even the articulation of notes depends largely on the edition used for performance.

When I began researching this piece, I was unaware of its close relation to the *Musikalischer Spass*. Thus, a more thorough investigation of the serenade will not be possible without a corresponding analysis of the musical joke. In addition, my argument for the serenade’s relation to Leopold would be stronger with references to musical context. Continued research on this topic will require a search for specific thematic and stylistic similarities between the serenade and compositions by Leopold Mozart. The preliminary search I had conducted uncovered no such correspondences.

Einstein concluded that “all the riddles presented by this work would be solved by the assumption that Mozart wrote it for himself, to satisfy an inner need” (Einstein, 207). I believe that the work was the result of both internal and external needs, but in the end the internal needs were too powerful for Mozart to sell the piece. Ironically, the posthumous popularity of *EKN* suggests that the piece might have revived Mozart’s popularity during the last few years of his life. If he had financially benefited from the

piece and returned to better living conditions, he may have even avoided his fatal fever and early death. If all of this is true (and granted, there are many ifs along the way), then the negative karma accumulated by Mozart's neglect of his father in his later years ultimately returned to prevent the escape from Wolfgang's ultimate demise.

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