

MOZART'S 'GRAN PARTITA' AND THE SUMMER OF 1781

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INTRODUCTION

It is still not known when or why Mozart composed the 'Gran Partita' (K361). Its proportions defy any norm – written as it was for thirteen instruments (pairs of oboes, clarinets, basset horns, horns in F, horns in B flat, bassoons and a double bass) at a time when six or eight would have been usual, and in as many as seven movements, including a slow introduction and second trios in both the minuet movements. Such proportions far exceed those of any other known piece of *Harmoniemusik* written until years after the composer's death. Alan Tyson's analysis of the manuscript papers used by Mozart established beyond reasonable doubt that the types of paper found in this autograph were available to the composer between 1781 and 1784.¹ Those who have offered the opinion that Mozart wrote the work during the latter part of the date range – notably Daniel Leeson² – refer among other things to stylistic similarities in the slow introduction of K361 and those of two works from 1784, the quintet for piano and wind K452 and the violin sonata K454, and of course to the only known performance during Mozart's lifetime, on 23 March 1784, when four of its seven movements were played in a concert given by Anton Stadler in the Burgtheater.³ The possibility that basset horns were not available in Vienna before 1783 was thought to be a potential hazard to any earlier date, since no other instrumental work featuring parts for basset horn is listed in the Köchel catalogue before K436.⁴

The first recorded appearance in Vienna of the clarinetist brothers Johann and Anton Stadler was in 1773,⁵ and their names appear occasionally thereafter in the theatre accounts as extra musicians. Eight years later they were on the point of leaving the city and seeking employment elsewhere. On 6 November 1781

I would like to thank Daniel Leeson for inviting me to write this paper (a provisional version of which appeared as Appendix 3 in his book *gran Partita* (Bloomington: Authorhouse, 2009)), Andrew Cook for his wise bibliographical advice, and David Archer, Heather Hewitt, Maria Mealey and Martin Weaver for so thoroughly checking the logic of my argument.

- 1 Alan Tyson, *Wasserzeichen-Katalog, Neue Mozart Ausgabe* (hereafter *NMA*), Supplement X/33/2 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1992).
- 2 Daniel N. Leeson, 'A Revisit: Mozart's Serenade for Thirteen Instruments, K361 (370a), the "Gran Partita"', *Mozart-Jahrbuch* (1997), 181–223.
- 3 *Wienerblättchen*, 23 March 1784; *Wiener Zeitung* 24, 24 March 1784, 617; Johann Friedrich Schink, *Litterarische Fragmente*, Band II (Graz, 1785), 286. The *Wienerblättchen* and Schink references are quoted in Otto Erich Deutsch, *Mozart: Die Dokumente seines Lebens*, *NMA*, Supplement X/34 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1961), 198 and 206 respectively.
- 4 Any conclusions drawn from the traditional dating of the Notturmi K436–439 as compositions of 1783 should perhaps be reviewed, since they were thought by Alan Tyson to have been written in 1787 or even later; Tyson, *Mozart: Studies of the Autograph Scores* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 33. It is, however, worth noting that there were basset horn parts in the aria 'Traurigkeit' from *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, first performed in July 1782, which, with no record in the theatre accounts of others being paid to do this work, would have been played by the orchestral clarinetists – the Stadler brothers. Autograph scores or parts of the five trios K439b, now generally accepted as having been written by Mozart for basset horns, at a date unknown, have never been found (see note 14).
- 5 The brothers performed in concerts of the Wiener Tonkünstler-Societät in the Kärntnertheater on 21 March 1773 and again on 19 December 1775: Vienna, Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv, Haydn Verein, A 1/3b.



they wrote to Captain Ignaz von Beecke, the music director at Öttingen Wallerstein.⁶ Among the options they offered him were trios for three basset horns with a colleague named Griessbacher, which, if one can accept the Stadlers' claims as true, is of peculiar significance in confirming that the instrument was already available in Vienna, and even that there may have been a market for basset-horn trios in Vienna as early as 1781.

When Mozart arrived in Vienna on 16 March 1781, less than four months had passed since the death of Empress Maria Theresa. Her son Joseph II, Emperor and Co-regent since 1765, was at last free to embark upon the reforms he had long desired. His plans for the opera house included taking into his employment the finest wind players in Vienna, who from 1 April 1782 would provide the personnel for both the emperor's *Harmonie* and the enlarged wind section in the Burgtheater orchestra.⁷ The Stadler brothers were persuaded to remain in Vienna as members of the new ensemble. Rumours of the planned *Harmonie* were evidently circulating the previous summer, but apparently not that it was to be an octet of oboes, clarinets, horns and bassoons. Thus Mozart, determined to impress those who had the ear of the emperor with his ability, wrote the Serenade in E flat major (K375) 'somewhat carefully' – but in the standard sextet combination of the time. It was probably first performed on 15 October 1781.⁸ His choice of clarinets rather than oboes as treble instruments suggests that he had already made the acquaintance of the Stadler brothers. He decided to rewrite the serenade the following summer as an octet, and in considerable haste, if the handwriting and short cuts taken are any guide.

THE PROPOSITION

The final nine bars of the first movement of the Serenade K375 – in its original form scored for pairs of clarinets, horns and bassoons – were written on paper that Mozart had used before. As was his practice with the latter movements of the 'Gran Partita' (K361), he had braced together the top eleven of its twelve staves. On the top line he had written and later crossed out what appear to be the bars before and after the double bar in the middle of a variation, for an unnamed instrument, possibly an oboe (see Figure 1). He added barlines consistent with this part throughout the system.⁹ The melodic line and the underlying chord structure offer intriguing suggestions of the variation movement of the 'Gran Partita', and are identical to it in tonality and metre.¹⁰ The differences in the implied harmonies, and the irreconcilable difficulties of collating the fragment (which must have had a missing leaf before it) with the autograph of the 'Gran Partita', seem significant enough to disqualify it from being part of an abandoned variation of the theme as finally composed. But it could be interpreted as the last bars of an earlier theme-with-variations movement abandoned by the composer before starting again using subtly different material. The evidence to support this proposition lies in the following demonstration that the bifolium comprising folios 5 and 6 in K375 may briefly have been used before as a bifolium following folio 31 in K361 (which is the one single leaf in the formation of the K361 manuscript), and then discarded from that work. The argument is supported by the particulars of the paper used, coupled with the way this fragment of music written on it is to be interpreted.

6 Josef Saam, *Das Bassetthorn, seine Erfindung und Weiterbildung* (Mainz: Schott, 1971), 63. A letter to this effect was discovered in Schloss Harburg.

7 Rudolf Payer von Thurn, *Joseph II als Theaterdirektor* (Vienna and Leipzig: L. Heidrich, 1920), letter 22, 24 April 1782; 13te und 14te k: k: *Theatral Hofdirections Cassae halbjährige Rechnung über Empfang und Ausgabe anno theatri 1782*, Vienna, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, 'Generalintendenz der Hoftheater', SR 19.

8 Mozart's letter to his father, 3 November 1781, in Wilhelm A. Bauer and Otto Erich Deutsch, *Mozart: Briefe und Aufzeichnungen* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1963), volume 3, 171. The event was noted in Deutsch, *Dokumente*, 175.

9 A transcription of the fragment appears in Daniel Leeson and Neal Zaslaw, *Divertimenti und Serenaden für Blasinstrumente*, Band 2, NMA, Serie VII/17/2 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1979), 242.

10 Robert Levin and Marius Flothuis are reportedly among those who suggested that the fragment may be part of a discarded variation from the sixth movement of K361, NMA VII/17/2, xiv, xv.



Figure 1 Folio 6 recto of K375, on which are written the final nine bars of the first movement, together with the deleted fragment



Figure 2 Specimens of staves as drawn by rastrum X, left ($\kappa 361$ folio 35 verso) and rastrum Y, right ($\kappa 361$ folio 28 verso). A characteristic distinction between the two is the concave pattern of the bottom staff as drawn by rastrum X, compared with the convex pattern left by rastrum Y. Also different are their total spans, that of rastrum X being recorded by Tyson as 189.5 millimetres, and of rastrum Y as 188.5 millimetres

of the $\kappa 361$ autograph.¹⁴ Secondly, the autograph was page-numbered later, in a system omitting the pages not written on by the composer. The gathering numbers were overwritten by these. Thirdly, folio numbers were added much later, and are the principal means of identification used here. The argument proposes that three leaves, which completed the 'No 2' gathering, followed folio 31 in an earlier state of the manuscript, and

14 One possibility is that the gatherings were intended for scores of the five basset-horn trios $\kappa 439b$. Such pieces could have been written down in short score (even directly into parts?) by the composer, with full scores being required in the event of publication. Thus each gathering was given a formal number, then progressed no further, only to be subsumed into the manuscript of $\kappa 361$ when the need arose. This could explain why scores of the trios have never been found, and opens the possibility that they were composed considerably earlier than their Köchel number suggests. An alternative view is that the gathering numbers were added posthumously as part of a procedure to collate the autograph, but the formal character of the writing suggests a permanent intent that renders this unlikely (see Figures 3 and 5). The first of these gathering numbers happens to coincide with the change from *NMA* 57 to *NMA* 56 paper and the start of the fifth movement, but there is no evidence that the fifth and sixth movements were ever separated from the others to require such collation. This is coincidentally supported by an ink blot on folio 27 recto, the first page of the fifth movement, carried over from a corrected bar-count number on folio 26 verso, the final page of the fourth movement. Such bar counts were typically part of the immediate process of copying parts from a score.



Table 1

folio number	watermark/ rastrum combination	watermark quadrant and twin	comments
1–26	57/Z		movements 1 to 4. Formed of six gatherings, each of four leaves, with an extra bifolium (folios 21 and 22) inserted for the end of the third movement. Folio 22 verso is blank and not page-numbered.
27	56/Y	2a	start of fifth movement (recto)
28	56/Y	1a	
29	56/Y	4a	
30	56/Y	3a	
31	56/Y	3b	end of fifth movement (verso)
'32'	56/Y	4b	final bars of abandoned sixth movement (recto), 11-stave brace (verso) [later k375 folio 6]
'33'	56/Y	1b	recto and verso blank [later k375 folio 5]
'34'	56/Y	2b	start of abandoned sixth movement (recto and verso) – folio lost
32	56/X	1b	start of completed sixth movement (recto)
33	56/X	2b	
34	56/X	3b	
35	56/X	4b	end of variation 2 (recto) – verso blank, the page not numbered
36	56/X	1b	start of variation 3 (recto)
37	56/X	2b	
38	56/X	3b	
39	56/X	4b	
40	56/X	3b	
41	56/X	4b	end of sixth movement (verso)
42	56/X	1b	recto and verso blank, the pages not numbered
43	56/X	2b	recto and verso blank, the pages not numbered

k361



the notional 'folio 32', 'folio 33' and 'folio 34' are used as the means of identifying them. The folio numbers in Table 1 are grouped in their gatherings within the manuscript.¹⁵

PROPOSED SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

Note that the diagram on page 101 may assist in explaining the proposed sequence of events from 3 onwards.

- 1 Mozart, now resident in Vienna, has in his possession six gatherings of NMA 56 paper, each of eight pages, five of them numbered (in an unknown hand) 'No 1' to 'No 5' in the top right-hand corner of the front pages. Whatever the original purpose for this paper, it was never accomplished. Instead it would be absorbed into the manuscript of K361 from the start of the fifth movement, and the numbers 1 to 5 were later overwritten in another hand by page numbers 52, 60, 62, 69 and 77 of the K361 manuscript, as indicated in Table 1. Pages left blank by the composer were omitted from this numbering system.
- 2 Mozart starts composing K361 using watermark 57/Z paper (folios 1 to 26), continuing with the 'No 1' gathering to begin the fifth movement (folios 27 to 30, on 56/Y paper).
- 3 Mozart requires new paper to complete the fifth movement: he takes up the 'No 2' gathering of watermark 56/Y paper (see Figure 3), and concludes the movement on folio 31 (watermark quadrant 3).
- 4 For whatever reason, the inner bifolium of the 'No 2' gathering is at some point removed from the outer, so separating the bifolium with watermark quadrants 4 and 1 from that with 3 and 2. Mozart begins the sixth movement, his first attempt at a theme and variations, on 'folio 34' (watermark quadrant 2), still conjugate with folio 31. Starting on the recto, the theme, probably sixteen to twenty bars long, would have been concluded on the verso, together with the first four bars of the first variation.
- 5 Mozart takes up the now separate inner bifolium of the 'No 2' gathering (watermark quadrants 4 and 1), adds an eleven-stave brace and writes bars 5 to 12 of the first oboe part of the first variation on 'folio 32' recto (see Figure 4). He adds barlines for all the other instruments on this page, including the conventional double-bar repeat sign between sections in the eighth bar. He draws an eleven-stave brace for the continuation on 'folio 32' verso, but abandons the composition at this point, leaving 'folio 33' (watermark quadrant 1) conjugate but unused. He sets aside, but does not dispose of, this paper.
- 6 Mozart detaches the now redundant 'folio 34', retaining what has now become a single leaf, folio 31, with the end of the fifth movement.
- 7 Mozart starts the sixth movement of K361 again (see Figure 5), the theme and variations as we know it, continuing to the conclusion of the work on watermark 56/X (folios 32 to 47, the gatherings numbered 3, 4 and 5 and the unnumbered one), and finally 57/Z papers (folios 48 and 49).
- 8 Mozart starts the K375 sextet using watermark 56/X paper (folios 1 to 4).
- 9 To conclude the first movement, Mozart takes up the bifolium of paper with watermark 56/Y quadrants 4 and 1, on which were written the last bars of the abandoned sixth movement discarded from K361 ('folio

15 The collation of the autograph manuscript of the 'Gran Partita' (The Library of Congress, The Gertrude Clarke Whittall Foundation Collection, Washington, D. C., ML96.W56M97.Case) was examined by the author in 1974, and that of the Serenade in E flat major, K375, in its sextet form (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Musikabteilung mit Mendelssohn-Archiv, Mus. ms. W. A. Mozart 375) in 1976. The analysis of all but the notional leaves is corroborated by that of Alan Tyson, to be found among his working papers, now in Special Collections, Bodleian Library, Oxford. A copy of Neal Zaslaw's independent but identical analysis of the collation of K361 is also present among the Tyson papers. This formed part of an unpublished paper, 'Mozart's Serenade in B♭ major, K361 (370a)', written for but not used as the introduction to *Gran Partita, K.361, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. A Facsimile of the Holograph in the Whittall Foundation Collection. With an Introduction by Alfred Einstein* (Washington D. C.: The Library of Congress, 1976).



<p>quadrant 1</p> <p>K361 'folio 33' recto K375 folio 5 recto</p> <p>K361/6 unused K375/1 bars 190-206</p>	<p>quadrant 4</p> <p>K361 'folio 32' verso K375 folio 6 verso</p> <p>K361/6 11-stave brace K375/1 unused</p>
<p>K361 'folio 34' verso</p> <p>K361/6 end of theme + variation 1 bars 1-4</p> <p>quadrant 2</p>	<p>K361 folio 31 recto</p> <p>'No 2'</p> <p>K361/5 start of coda</p> <p>quadrant 3</p>

<p>quadrant 2</p> <p>K361 'folio 34' recto</p> <p>K361/6 start of theme</p>	<p>quadrant 3</p> <p>K361 folio 31 verso</p> <p>K361/5 end</p>
<p>K361 'folio 33' verso K375 folio 5 verso</p> <p>K361/6 unused K375/1 bars 207-229</p> <p>quadrant 1</p>	<p>K361 'folio 32' recto K375 folio 6 recto</p> <p>K361/6 variation 1 bars 5-12 K375/1 end – bars 230-238</p> <p>quadrant 4</p>

In order to use this diagram to follow what may have happened to the complete 'No 2' sheet of paper, the two sides should first be attached back to back so that K361 folio 31 recto opposes 31 verso, and so forth. Then, holding K361 folio 31 recto always in front in the bottom right position, the sheet is to be folded back along the long axis, then the short, then slit along the long fold, to result in a gathering with K361 folios in the sequence 31, '32', '33', '34'. The diagram is available online at <<http://journals.cambridge.org/ecm>>

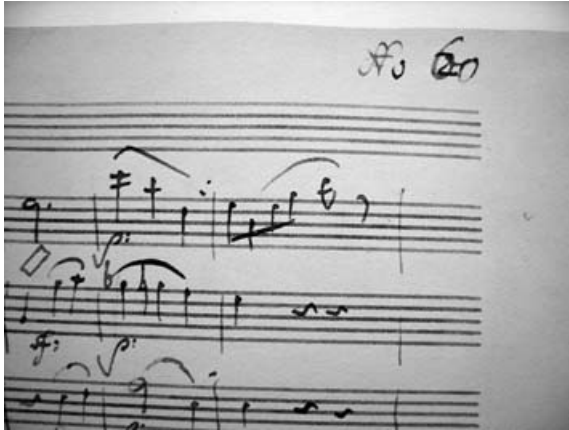


Figure 3 A section of folio 31 recto of $\kappa 361$, the penultimate page of the fifth movement, showing 'No 2' overwritten with page number 60. This is the only single leaf in the $\kappa 361$ manuscript

32' and 'folio 33'). In order to begin on unused paper, he turns the bifolium inside out, so that watermark quadrant 1 precedes 4. He writes on the now leading recto and verso to continue the first movement of $\kappa 375$ (folio 5).

- 10 Mozart still has nine bars to write to complete the movement. He continues on folio 6 recto (watermark quadrant 4), crossing out the $\kappa 361$ oboe line and replacing the double bar repeat sign on the second staff down, but otherwise using the $\kappa 361$ barring already present, including the space for the anacrusis. He adds top and bottom markers defining the five-stave system required for the sextet and confirms the instrumentation (refer to Figure 1). Folio 6 verso, carrying only the $\kappa 361$ brace, remains unused.
- 11 Mozart continues to the end of the serenade $\kappa 375$ using 56/X paper (folios 7 to 19).
- 12 $\kappa 375$ was performed, probably for the first time, on 15 October 1781.

OTHER INDICATORS THAT THE DISCARDED FRAGMENT HAD FORMED PART OF $\kappa 361$

- 1 Mozart braced the upper eleven staves – as in the final two movements of $\kappa 361$. In the first four movements he had braced the lower eleven, but for the fifth he required and braced only the centre ten staves – hence perhaps the discontinuity.
- 2 The written line is eminently suited to an oboe, and seems to be an elaboration of a theme.
- 3 The double-facing double bar is wholly characteristic of the centre point of a variation movement, with the arrival of the music in the dominant key F major, then immediately moving away towards flatter keys.
- 4 The underlying structure of the music has characteristics similar to the final version of the theme in $\kappa 361$, with the same B flat major tonality (no key signature, but indicated by the unmarked B flats, and the naturalized E to approach F major), the same simple duple metre, the same quaver anacrusis and a chord sequence with intriguing similarities.
- 5 The two sides of the lost leaf that without question would once have been attached to folio 31 in $\kappa 361$ are fully capable of accommodating a theme of sixteen, even twenty bars in length, in addition to the first four bars of a first variation.

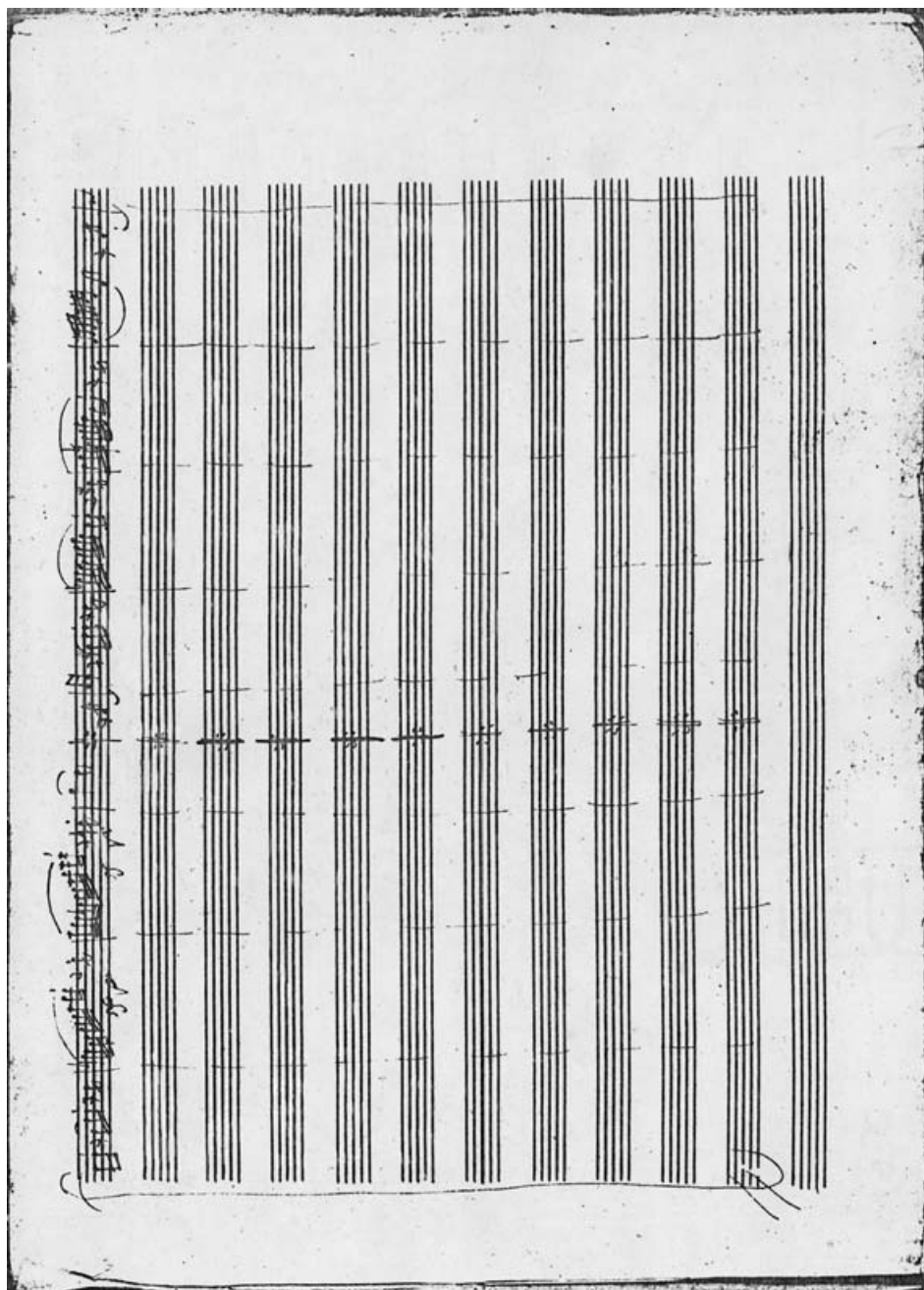


Figure 4 Folio 6 recto of K375, reconstructed to show what Mozart had written before the addition of the music of K375. In the second and third bars some demisemi-quaver beams were obscured by the subsequent deletions, and a few seem to be lacking in any case. In the seventh bar Mozart omitted a cautionary accidental to the fourth note c^{\flat} , which he then added above. The omission of instrumentation and key signature was his normal practice on pages after the first of a movement



Figure 5 A section of folio 32 recto of $\kappa 361$, the first page of the sixth movement in its final form, showing 'No 3' overwritten with page number 62

- 6 A single leaf, which, as Alan Tyson observed, is uncommon,¹⁶ would be vulnerable loose in a large manuscript, and it is unlikely that Mozart would have reduced folio 31 to that form if the remainder of the bifolium was unused.
- 7 Clearly three leaves following folio 31 in $\kappa 361$ are now missing from the second of the five gatherings of NMA 56 paper numbered 'No 1' to 'No 5'. It may not be mere coincidence that this is precisely the point in the manuscript where, if this proposition be correct, there were once the three leaves containing the start of an abandoned theme and variations movement as described here.

CONCLUSION

Unless the leaf containing the start of an abandoned sixth movement were ever to be found, it is impossible to prove conclusively that the discarded fragment formed part of $\kappa 361$, though the evidence leads strongly to the possibility. But one undeniable property of this fragment is that there is no other known work of Mozart with which it could reasonably be connected. It was intended either as part of $\kappa 361$, or of some other wholly unrecorded composition. And if of the 'Gran Partita', the evidence presented here points to its possible composition in the summer months of 1781 for an event of which there is currently no record.

16 Tyson, 'New Dating Methods', 52, and *Mozart: Studies of the Autograph Scores*, 9.