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Press Release 23th March 2012

UNKNOWN PIANO PIECE BY MOZART DISCOVERED IN THE TYROL

The musicologist Univ.-Doz. Mag.art. Dr.phil. Hildegard Herrmann-Schneider came upon a handwritten music book from around 1780 during her every day work in the Tyrol. This volume contains, among other pieces, a previously unknown piano piece, which is unequivocally attributed to the junior “Wolfgango Mozart”.

The Stiftung Mozarteum Salzburg will present this piano piece to the public at 11 AM on March 23rd, 2012 in the Tanzmeistersaal of the Mozart Residence in Salzburg. Florian Birsak will play it on Mozart’s original piano forte.

Listen to the first recording of the new Mozart piece on Saturday 24/3/2012 played by Florian Birsak on Mozart’s original fortepiano on iTunes. More information please find here:
<http://allegro.mozarteum.at/>

The Discovery

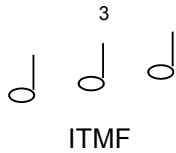
In the Tyrolean Lech Valley, the attic of a private house had recently been cleared. Out of the inventory, the long-forgotten music collection from the estate of a Tyrolean brass band leader, church choir director, organist and school principal emerged in the Ausserfern.

In order to shed light on its contents, Hildegard Herrmann-Schneider of the Institut fuer Tiroler Musikforschung (Institute for Tyrolean Music Research) in Innsbruck, was called in. She is an internationally renowned expert on many special issues regarding historical music collections. Hildegard Herrmann-Schneider has verified a very interesting group of several hundred music manuscripts and printed music of various genres of music, dating from the late 18th century to the mid-20th century. She immediately noticed a hand-written music book for piano with over 160 pages; the front bearing the date “Sterzing 1780”.

The Scientific Ascertainment of the Manuscript for RISM

As part of her work in the Tyrol, South Tyrol and the Franciscan Province Austria for the RISM (Répertoire International des Sources Musicales/International Inventory of Musical Sources), Hildegard Herrmann-Schneider began pursuing the scholarly cataloguing of the piano book “Sterzing 1780”. During this work, 130 piano pieces were broken down in detail, and each has been individually catalogued according to academic criteria. That means, for example, that a given author will be checked for their validity with methodical exactness. For each anonymous piece, at least an attempt is made at identifying the composer. Even these two steps often bring surprising results.

It quickly became apparent that the piano book “Sterzing 1780” has as a main focus works by renowned contemporary composers from the Salzburg and Vienna area, from northern Italy, the Tyrol and Bavaria. An unusually large number of pieces are primary evidence. Striking among several is the



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data of the composers, not merely because of the name, but also by a tag referring to the professional function of the respective authors, and each time this is right on.

The Allegro molto “Del Signore Giovane Wolfgango Mozart”

On pp. 12-14 there is a piece with the tempo mark “Allegro molto” and authorship “Del Signore Giovane Wolfgango Mozart”.

It is not registered in the Koechel catalogue, the standard directory of Mozart's works, nor mentioned as a piece by Mozart anywhere else thus far.

It is known that especially during the second half of the 18th century, there have been numerous false author accreditations, hand-written and printed, for different reasons. In the procedure of scholarly cataloguing and acquisition of knowledge it was necessary therefore to investigate whether the claim, written simultaneously with the piece, “by the junior Mr. Wolfgang Mozart”, is justifiable or not.

Pieces by Leopold Mozart in the Manuscript

Immediately after the Allegro molto KV deest and still later in the collective manuscript are undoubtedly genuine pieces by Wolfgang Amadé's father Leopold. In them the author is presented consistently as “Del Signore Mozart”.

Thus conclusion #1 can be drawn: If in the same source the father is always properly described as “Signore Mozart”, then why should the son, who appears only once here as is the case, not be appropriately differentiated with the attribute Junior (“giovane”)?

The form of the name “Wolfgango” Mozart

The version of the name “Wolfgango Mozart” stands out in particular.

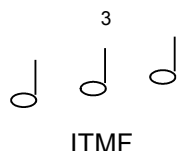
Leopold Mozart used the form “Wolfgango” himself personally when he wrote about the authorship of Wolfgang Amadé's Minuets KV 4 and K 6 (1762, Salzburg) and KV 7 (1763 Paris) or on the title page of the London Sketchbook in 1764. Even the Andantino KV 15b, and an Allegro in C-major KV deest, both in a piano book around 1765 from the associated area around the Kapellhaus Salzburg, and thus in any case stands in close relationship to Leopold Mozart, are labelled as author statement “Wolfgango Mozart”.

Out of this results conclusion #2: If “Wolfgango Mozart” can be found up to now consistently and accurately in sources which are derived from Leopold Mozart himself, or at least out of his nearest surroundings, the formulation should not, analogous to other proper notation, have been chosen by coincidence in the newly discovered piano book either.

The Provenance of the Manuscript

On the back of the cover sheet of the manuscript, in a long Latin notation, its copyist has immortalized himself with an attached name and dating: Johannes Reiserer, Sterzing (South Tyrol), 1780. Now it needed to be clarified: Who was this copyist? Is it possible, through his personality and his sphere of influence, that he could have actually written down or copied a genuine piece by Wolfgang Amadé? A technically more elaborate research path through archives in Sterzing (Vipiteno) and Bozen (Bolzano) ultimately led to Salzburg and Munich.

The summary of the extensive investigations by Hildegard Herrmann-Schneider: Johannes Reiserer was born 1765 in Rattenberg/Tyrol, as son of a doctor. He visited the Universitaetsgymnasium (high school) in Salzburg and was also a choir boy in Salzburg from 1778 to 1780. He must have taken the manuscript with him to Sterzing as a vade mecum, after having written it to a large extent during the course of intensive music instruction at the Kapellhaus, and thereby in close proximity to Leopold Mozart.



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Thus it is to be indicated as conclusion #3: The scribe, still a high school student, copied the piece under strict scholarly supervision in Salzburg, possibly even by Leopold Mozart himself. He most certainly could not afford any false or incorrect statement, therefore the naming of Mozart “junior” as the composer must be credible.

The Piece

Mozart frequently selected a C-major key, and the Allegro molto has a sonata form with a length of 84 measures. Its ambitus is tailored to the clavichord. The Allegro molto could be a first major attempt by Wolfgang Amadé to assert himself in the area of the sonata form. This is suggested by the relatively high level of compositional technique. The date of origin could be around 1767, when Mozart was about 11 years of age. It is the period which echoes the London Sketchbook (1764, with various drafts in piano notation KV 15a-15ss), and after which followed the first Piano Sonata KV 279 hardly a decade later (Munich 1775). The prelude-like beginning of the Allegro molto is strongly reminiscent of the first bars of the Piano Sonata KV 279. Bars 1 and 2 of the Allegro molto are (transposed) identical to one plausibly ascribed as Mozart’s Allegro in G-major by Ulrich Leisinger from the Nannerl’s Music Book. Throughout the Allegro molto, thematic formation, compositional setting and harmony have a number of components that are found repeated in other Mozart piano works. Hardly a compositional detail points to a contradiction with the general characteristics of Mozart’s consummate musical composition. According to current scholarly knowledge, it must therefore be regarded as an authentic sonata movement by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

The New Location of the Manuscript

The entire former private music collection from the Tyrolean Lech Valley in 2011 was purchased by the Museum *Gruenes Haus* in Reutte/Tyrol, where regionally specific cultural assets are held in safekeeping. Made possible through funding by the Cultural Department of the Provincial Government of Tyrol. In the RISM database, the piano book “Sterzing 1780” has already been completely recorded. The bibliographic records are generally accessible in the RISM-OPAC: www.rism.info (Library code: A-RTgh).

For details see article in the Mozart-Jahrbuch (Mozart Yearbook), 2012 by Hildegard-Herrmann Schneider, published by Stiftung Mozarteum Salzburg, in print. Release date expected September 2012.

More Informations:

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