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# MOZART

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QUARTET  
for 2 Violins, Viola and Violoncello  
D minor/d-Moll/Ré mineur  
K 421



Eulenburg

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WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

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# PREFACE

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Mozart composed 23 string quartets altogether. The first, K80 (73<sup>f</sup>), was written in 1770, during the first of Mozart's Italian journeys. The next group of quartets, K155–60 (134<sup>a/b</sup>, 157–9, 159<sup>a</sup>), were also probably composed in Italy, during his final visit at the end of 1772 and the beginning of 1773; and the group K168–73 followed in August and September 1773, written during Mozart's stay in Vienna – and patently influenced by the quartets he encountered there, in particular those of Haydn's Op.20.

Nearly a decade elapsed before Mozart returned to the string quartet. It was again under the stimulus of Viennese musical life and Haydn's quartets that he did so; the next six quartets were in fact dedicated to Haydn. They were composed over a period of three years: K387 in G was completed on 31 December 1782, K421 (417<sup>b</sup>) in D minor on 17 June 1783, K428 (421<sup>b</sup>) in E flat in June or July 1783, K458 in B flat on 9 November 1784, K464 in A on 10 January 1785, and K465 in C on 14 January 1785. In the original edition K458 preceded K428.

This group of works was published in September 1785 under the title: *SEI / QUARTETTI / PER DUE VIOLINI, VIOLA, E VIOLONCELLO. / Composti e Dedicati / al Signor / GIUSEPPE HAYDN / Maestro di Cappella di S. A. / il Principe d'Esterhazy & / dal Suo Amico / W. A. MOZART / Opera X. / in Vienna presso Artaria Comp.* [plate number, 59]. A dedication follows:

Al mio caro Amico Haydn

Un Padre, avendo risolto di mandare i suoi figlj nel gran Mondo, stimo doverli affidare alla protezione, e condotta d'un Uomo molto celebre in allora, il quale per buona sorte, era di piu il suo migliore Amico. – Eccoti dunque del pari, Uom celebre, ed Amico mio carissimo i sei miei figlj. – Essi sono, e vero il frutto di una lunga, e laboriosa fatica, pur la speranza fattami da piu Amici di vederla almeno in parte compensata, m'incoraggisce, e mi lusinga, che questi parti siano per essermi un giorno di qualche consolazione. – Tu stesso Amico carissimo, nell'ultimo tuo Soggiorno in questa Capitale, me ne dimostrasti la tua soddisfa-

zione. – Questo tuo suffragio mi anima sopra tutto, perche Jo te li raccomandi, e mi fa sperare, che non ti sembreranno del tutto indegni del tuo favore. – Piacciati dunque accoglierli benignamente; ed esser loro Padre, Guida, ed Amico! Da questo momento, Jo ti cedo i miei diritti sopra di essi: ti supplico pero di guardare con indulgenza i difetti, che l'occhio parziale di Padre mi puo aver celati, e di continuar loro malgrado, la generosa tua Amicizia a chi tanto l'apprezza, mentre sono di tutto Cuore.

Amico Carissimo

Vienna il p.mo Settembre 1785.

Il tuo Sincer[i]ssimo Amico

W. A. Mozart.

To my dear friend Haydn,

A father who had resolved to send his children out into the great world took it to be his duty to confide them to the protection and guidance of a very celebrated Man, especially when the latter by good fortune was at the same time his best Friend. Here they are then, O great Man and dearest Friend, these six children of mine. They are, it is true, the fruit of a long and laborious endeavor, yet the hope inspired in me by several Friends that it may be at least partly compensated encourages me, and I flatter myself that this offspring will serve to afford me solace one day. You, yourself, dearest friend, told me of your satisfaction with them during your last Visit to this Capital. It is this indulgence above all which urges me to commend them to you and encourages me to hope that they will not seem to you altogether unworthy of your favour. May it therefore please you to receive them kindly and to be their Father, Guide and Friend! From this moment I resign to you all my rights in them, begging you however to look indulgently upon the defects which the partiality of a Father's eye may have concealed from me, and in spite of them to continue in your generous Friendship for him who so greatly values it, in expectation of which I am, with all of my Heart, my dearest Friend, your most Sincere Friend,

W.A.Mozart

(Translation quoted from Otto Erich Deutsch: *Mozart. A Documentary Biography* (Stanford, CA, 1965), 250)

Mozart's remark on Haydn's expressed approval of the quartets no doubt refers to the