



# IMAGO MUSICAE

XXIX

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### EDITORES

### INSTRUCTIONS

## A NEW READING OF THE 'MOZART FAMILY PORTRAIT'

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**ABSTRACT:** One of the most iconic images of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart is found in the 'Mozart Family Portrait,' attributed to the Tyrolean artist Johann Nepomuk Della Croce. The portrait was painted between the summer of 1780 and the beginning of 1781, just prior to Mozart's departure to Vienna. It features Mozart and his sister playing a four-hand piece, while Leopold Mozart leans on the keyboard. This paper presents a new reading of the family portrait, identifying the piece the siblings perform as the Sonata in D Major K. 381 based on an examination of the placement of their hands at the keyboard and the discovery of notes on the manuscript. This study also proposes that the painter captured Leopold's humanist self-concept in the figure of Apollo, a detail that was altered in a subsequent engraving by Eduard Leybold.

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Between the summer of 1780 and early 1781, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, his father Leopold and sister Maria Anne ('Nannerl') sat for a family portrait (fig. 1).<sup>1</sup> Displayed in the Mozart Residence Museum in Salzburg, the 'Mozart Family Portrait' has been attributed to Johann Nepomuk Della Croce (1736–1819).<sup>2</sup> Scholars describe it to be "by far the most authentic representation of Mozart, both on account of its known history and also because of its artistic excellence."<sup>3</sup> Not by chance, the painter Barbara Kraft, when creating a Mozart likeness for the portrait collection of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna, wanted "to take her copy from the family portrait [...]," as we learn from Nannerl's detailed letter of 2 July 1819 to Joseph Sonnleithner.<sup>4</sup> It inspired

\* I wish to thank Clifford Eisen, Zdravko Blažeković and Björn R. Tammen for their suggestions to this paper.

1 There is some debate about whether Constanze might have owned an oil copy of the family portrait. Nerina Medici di Marignano, who compiled the Vincent and Mary Novello travel diaries (1955: 78), believes that the version seen by Vincent Novello during his visit with Constanze is an engraving, while Zenger & Deutsch (1961: xxiv) argue that Constanze owned her own copy.

2 Mozart Residence Museum, inv. F 000.291. Della Croce's authorship has been questioned because the painting was ascribed to him long after his death, by Blasius Höfel in 1856. For more information see Kobbé 1910, Zenger & Deutsch 1961, Goerge 1995 and 1998, and Großpietsch 2013. Della Croce was a prolific Austrian painter, who studied in Italy and purportedly finished over 5,000 portraits. He also completed a portrait of Francesco Ceccarelli (1752–1814), an accomplished singer who collaborated with the Mozart family, see Brumana 2014.

3 Speyer 1919: 179.

4 Deutsch 1966: 520–1. Cf. *Mozart: Briefe und Aufzeichnungen* 1962 IV: 456 (no. 1391): "sie will also die copie von dem Familien Gemählte nehmen, und nur die linien von dem kleinen bild hinein bringen, wodurch er etwas älter aussieht, als in grossen bild." Sonnleithner's representative in Salzburg was Wilhelm von Droßdick, the husband of Therese Malfatti von Rohrenbach. Droßdick, who had lived in Salzburg since 1816, negotiated with Nannerl (Maria Anna von Berchtold zu Sonnenburg) which of the three portraits Kraft should copy.





fig. 1: Johann Nepomuk Della Croce, *Mozart Family Portrait* (oil painting, 55 x 65").  
Stiftung Mozarteum Salzburg – Mozart Residence Museum, inv. F 000.291.

Foto: © AKG Images

subsequent painters, engravers, and lithographers,<sup>5</sup> and promoted a representation of Mozart that remains, together with Joseph Lange's unfinished Mozart at the piano, one of the most iconic of the composer. A comprehensive examination of its history and iconography has not yet been undertaken. This article will present a new reading, providing evidence for identifying the music displayed on the piano, and reassessing Leopold's self-concept.

The scene takes place in a home and consists of clearly articulated foreground and background planes. The foreground is inhabited by members of the family who were still alive; the background features an oval portrait of Anna Maria, who had died in Paris in 1778, and a sculpture of Apollo playing a lyre. A curtain, pulled open, demarcates the two planes. The painter has situated the figures in the form a triangle at the top of which sits Mozart's mother, accompanied by her family in the lower corners of the triangle. The keyboard, a single-manual fortepiano, provides a central point of referral for the protagonists, as the siblings play on the instrument, while the father leans on it, a violin in his hand.

It has been suggested by Rosemary Hughes, in a note to the English translation of the diaries of Vincent and Mary Novello, that "The instrument, now in the Mozart Museum in Salzburg, is probably the one at which Mozart and his sister are seated in della Croce's portrait of the Mozart family, as this also has black keys for the naturals and white ones for the sharps. It was made by Anton Walter of Vienna."<sup>6</sup> Vincent Novello,

5 George 1998: 22: "the model for countless subsequent representations as copper and steel engravings."  
6 Deutsch 1966: 520–1, n. 72. This instrument currently resides in the Mozart Residence Museum.



who describes the painting during the visit to Nannerl in Salzburg in 1829, particularly comments on the keyboard:<sup>7</sup>

In the middle of the room stood the instrument on which she had often played duets with her brother. It was a kind of clavichord [sic!], with black keys for the naturals and white ones for the sharps like on old English cathedral organs. The compass was from [A, two octaves below middle C] to [F, two octaves above middle C] and had evidently been constructed before the additional keys were invented. [...] the tone was soft and some of the bass notes, especially those of the lowest octave Cs, were of good quality.

Mozart's demeanor—at that time being 24 years old—is that of a confident musician. Like the rest of his family, he gazes knowingly at the painter, and his back is straight. The fingers of his left hand are particularly curved when touching the keyboard, as was common for playing the fortepiano, while his right hand is draped over his sister's right hand. Mozart's hands appear larger than his sister's, and disproportionately larger in relation to the rest of his body. He leans his shoulder comfortably against his sister.<sup>8</sup>

It appears that Della Croce used the same general outline for the faces of Mozart's mother and her son, producing a kind of overarching symmetry between the two characters: their features, the shape of their noses and eyes, are quite similar, only Mozart's mother wears a blue dress, while her son sports a red coat.<sup>9</sup> Most likely Della Croce worked from—or essentially copied—a previously completed portrait of Madame Mozart.<sup>10</sup>

The painter has produced a similar symmetry in the portrayal of Nannerl and Leopold, whose faces appear slimmer and less fleshy than those of their counterparts, perhaps because of their recent illnesses. The 'pairings' of Madame Mozart with Wolfgang on the one side, of Nannerl with Leopold on the other are further emphasized by

7 Medici di Marignano 1955: 90. Brackets indicate staff notation contained therein.

8 Mozart Residence Museum, inv. F 000.233 and F 001.050, respectively. On Nannerl see Düll & Neumaier 2001. It is the last portrait of her at the keyboard. Two subsequent images of her, both anonymous and dated 1785 and 1800 with the heading "Maria Anna Freifrau von Berchtold zu Sonnenburg, ge.[borene] Mozart," depict her as a distinguished married woman holding a fan rather than engaging in music making.

9 We read about Mozart's preference for this garment in letters to Baroness von Waldstädten, the first one dating Vienna, 28 September 1782, "As for the beautiful red coat, which attracts me enormously, please, please let me know where it is to be had and how much it costs—for that I have completely forgotten, as I was so captivated by its splendor that I did not take note of its price." Anderson 1966 II: 823. Cf. *Mozart: Briefe und Aufzeichnungen* 1962 III: 232–3 (no. 696): "wegen dem schönen rothen frok welcher mich ganz grausam im herzen kitzelt, bittete ich halt recht sehr mir recht sagen zu lassen wo man ihn bekommt, und wie theuer, denn daß habe ich ganz vergessen, weil ich nur die schönheit davon in betrachtung gezogen, und nicht den Preis." Later he writes, Vienna, 2 October 1782, "I committed a terrible blunder yesterday! I felt all the time that I had something more to say and yet I could cudgel nothing out of my stupid skull. But it was to thank your Ladyship for having at once taken so much trouble about the beautiful coat, and for your goodness in promising to give me one like it." Anderson 1966 II: 823–4. Cf. *Mozart: Briefe und Aufzeichnungen* 1962 III: 233–4 (no. 697): "Ich habe gestern einen großen Bock geschossen! – es war mir immer als hätte ich noch etwas zu sagen – allein meinen dummen Schädel wollte es nicht einfallen! und das war mich zu bedanken daß sich Euer Gnaden gleich so viel Mühe wegen dem schönen Frack gegeben – und für die Gnade mir solch einen zu versprechen! – allein mir fiel es nicht ein...."). For the styles of dress and hair in the 'Mozart Family Portrait' see Knispel 2009: 88–89.

10 Mozart Residence Museum, inv. F 000.228. The oil painting of Anna Maria Mozart, née Pertl (1720–78), is by Maria Rosa Hagenauer-Barducci, Salzburg about 1775.

the choice of colors: vibrant primary blue and red for Madame Mozart and Wolfgang as opposed to the muted purple and rose for Nannerl and black and white for Leopold. One could even argue that these visual pairings reflect the affinities found in the Mozart household. Heinz Gärtner suggests that in his adulthood Mozart felt a stronger, more natural bond to his mother, while Nannerl resided in Leopold's camp especially after Mozart left Salzburg, during the rift that ensued between father and son regarding Wolfgang's choice of Constanze for his wife.<sup>11</sup>

### 1. Documentary evidence

The painting's history may be pieced together from family letters. Eight letters, exchanged in late 1780 and early 1781 between Mozart and his father (except for the last one, which Nannerl wrote to her brother), refer to the painting.<sup>12</sup> Nannerl subsequently describes it in four letters to Breitkopf & Härtel between 1803 and 1804 and once again in an 1819 letter to Joseph Sonnleithner.<sup>13</sup> Constanze mentions the 'Family Portrait' in a 1829 letter to Maria Spontini (wife of the composer). Vincent and Mary Novello refer to it in some detail in their diary of the same year.<sup>14</sup> The portrait, believed to be the original owned by Nannerl, was first exhibited in Salzburg in 1856. Its whereabouts between the year of Nannerl's death in 1829 and 1856 are not documented.

The first reference is in a letter dated 13 November 1780, from Mozart, who was in Munich, to his father in Salzburg. Mozart asks, "What about the family portrait? Is it a good likeness of you? Has the painter started on my sister yet?"<sup>15</sup> In her collection of translated letters, Emily Anderson suggests that Mozart might have already sat for the portrait in the summer of 1780—although she provides no evidence for this claim.<sup>16</sup> Anderson might have arrived at this conclusion because the children were on tour at the beginning of September, after which Nannerl was sick for most of the fall and Mozart, as we will examine in greater detail, left Salzburg for Munich to complete *Idomeneo*. One could envision the sequence of events as follows: Leopold contacted Della Croce to ask that a portrait be made. The family posed together once, with the portrait of his mother, Anna Maria, hanging in the background. Subsequently the portrait was completed in shifts, most likely, Leopold painted first, followed by Nannerl, and lastly Mozart.

The 'Mozart Family Portrait' was painted during a period when Leopold and his son engaged in extended and frequent correspondence. Leopold kept an eye on his son's

11 Gärtner 1986: 101–5.

12 These letters written before Mozart's death are dated 13 November 1780, 20 November 1780, 22 November 1780, 4 December 1780, 13 December 1780, 15 December 1780, 30 December 1780, and 8 January 1781.

13 These letters written by Nannerl are dated 29 May 1803, 7 September 1803, 12 October 1803, 4 January 1804, and 2 July 1819.

14 Portions of these letters and the Novello diaries are reproduced in Zenger & Deutsch (1961: xx–xxv). For more about the 12 October 1803 letter see Angermüller 1984.

15 Anderson 1966 II: 663. Cf. Mozart: *Briefe und Aufzeichnungen* 1962 III: 19 (no. 537; incipits of the three lines added by a later hand): "[Wie wird da]s fammiliengemälde? – – / [Sind sie gut] getroffen? – / [Ist meine Sch]wester auch schon angefangen? –"

16 Anderson 1966 II: 663, n. 2.

music for the opera *Idomeneo*, commissioned by the Elector Karl Theodor in Munich for the 1781 carnival season, and the letters describe the many frustrations Mozart experienced both with his singers and the librettist Giambattista Varesco (1735–1805). Mary Hunter notes that we have more information about the evolution of this opera than any other by Mozart because Varesco lived in Salzburg and was presumably in constant contact with Leopold.<sup>17</sup> Wolfgang sent his scores to Leopold, and Leopold and Varesco made further suggestions. In particular, the letters show that Mozart wished to cut the recitatives, but Leopold insisted that they remain, as they are necessary for the drama. Leopold addressed the 'Family Portrait' responding to his son's query on 20 November 1780, writing, "You ask how the family portrait is turning out? So far nothing more has been done to it. Either I have had no time to sit, or the painter could not arrange a sitting, and now your sister is laid up with a cold and cannot leave the house."<sup>18</sup> On 22 November 1780, Mozart once again asks his father, "How is the family portrait getting on?"<sup>19</sup> In a playful manner, Leopold next mentions the painting on 4 December 1780:<sup>20</sup>

Whereupon she [Madame Maresquille] turned her left cheek and I had to kiss that one too. I looked at myself at once in the mirror, for I felt as bashful as I did in my youth when I kissed a woman for the first time, or when after the ball in Amsterdam the women forced me to kiss them. I think it would be a good idea to have her in the room when my portrait is being painted, for my colour would be far more vivid.

And Mozart again inquires, writing from Munich, 13 December 1780, "I suppose that your part of the portrait is now begun, and doubtless my sister's also? What is it like?"<sup>21</sup> Leopold quickly responds on 15 December 1780, "No further progress has been made with the family portrait, the reason being that when the days were long and bright, your sister was ill and that I myself had a heavy cold and rather bad rheumatism at that time.

17 Hunter 2008: 58; see also Everson 1995: 369–71. Varesco also collaborated with Mozart on the abandoned *L'oca del Cairo* (1783), a comedy, as well as *Andromeda e Perseo* by Michael Haydn (1787). Daniel Heartz asserts that Mozart at the time had scorn for both French and German language opera, preferring Italian (1978: 229), and that the primary attraction for *Idomeneo* was the strain and sacrifice between father and son in the opera (*ibid.*, 230). He also writes of a scene of reconciliation in which Wolfgang, Nannerl, Leopold and (presumably) Constanze sing a quartet from the opera in 1783 (*ibid.*, 231).

18 Anderson 1966 II: 668. Cf. Mozart: *Briefe und Aufzeichnungen* 1962 III: 26 (no. 540): "Du fragst wie das Familiengemälde ausfällt? – – noch ist nichts weiter daran gemacht worden. Ich hatte nicht zeit zu sitzen, und manchmahl der Mahler nicht; und itzt darf deine Schwester nicht aus dem Hause gehen."

19 Anderson 1966 II: 669. Cf. Mozart: *Briefe und Aufzeichnungen* 1962 III: 28 (no. 541): "wie steht es denn mit dem Familiengemälde?"

20 Anderson 1966 II: 681. According to Solomon 1995: 233, Madame Maresquille was an actress in Schikenader's acting company. Cf. Mozart: *Briefe und Aufzeichnungen* 1962 III: 46 (no. 553): "[...] und ich merkte, daß ich die Gnade genießen sollte, sie [sc. Madame Maresquille] darauf zu küssen, ich thats unter der grössten verlegenheit, und im Augenblicke wand sie auch den Lincken her, da musst ich nun auch diesen Kissen. geschwind sahe ich mich im spiegel, dann ich empfands, daß ich mich so schämte, so, wie ich mich schämte als ich in meiner Jugend einem Frauenzimmer den ersten Kuß gab, oder wie mich die Frauen in Amsterdamm nach dem Ball zum Küssen zwangen. Ich glaube es wird nicht übel seyn sie zu ruffen, wenn ich mich mahlen lasse; dan werde ich doch eine Lebhaftere Farbe haben."

21 Anderson 1966 II: 686. Cf. Mozart: *Briefe und Aufzeichnungen* 1962 III: 54 (no. 559): "Nun werden sie Ja doch schon im Bilde angefangen seyn? – und meine schwester schon gar zu gewis! – wie fällte es aus?"

I did not tell you about it as I did not want to make you anxious. Besides as you are aware, I always look after myself.”<sup>22</sup>

A 30 December 1780 letter from Nannerl to Mozart signals the first time she sat, apparently uncomfortably, for the painter. “I am writing to you with an erection on my head and I am very much afraid of burning my hair. The reason why the M $\ddot{o}$ lk’s (milk) maid has dressed my hair is that tomorrow for the first time I am sitting for the painter.”<sup>23</sup> Nannerl arrived in Munich on 26 January 1781 for the premier of *Idomeneo*, followed by Carnival, after which the Mozarts traveled to Augsburg, where Wolfgang and Nannerl performed together again for a brief spell. According to Jane Glover, this was the last flourish of Nannerl’s performing career, and, while the siblings corresponded frequently, their relationship would forever be strained because of Mozart’s move to Vienna.<sup>24</sup> Nannerl would marry the wealthy magistrate Johann Baptist Franz von Berchtold zu Sonnenburg in 1783, taking care of his five children and giving birth to three more. She devoted herself to her family and to giving keyboard lessons.

The final letter written regarding the painting while Mozart was still alive is from Leopold, dated 8 January 1781, and reads, “Instead of going to the ball we went yesterday to Herr Hagenauer’s. They all send you their greetings. Your sister has sat twice for the painter. It’s a good likeness and, if it is not spoilt in the painting, the head will be charming.”<sup>25</sup> The mention of the Hagenauers is of some importance. The Hagenauer family members were close friends of the Mozarts.<sup>26</sup> Leopold rented an apartment from the Hagenauers, and they provided financial support to the early Mozart family travels. Furthermore, the Hagenauers collected Mozart memorabilia. Johann Baptist Hagenauer (1732–1811) crafted many of the neo-Classical sculptures in the Schönbrunn Gardens in Vienna.<sup>27</sup> The Mozarts were keenly familiar with his work; Leopold wrote to his wife from Bologna, 27 March 1770, “We have been at the *Instituto* and have admired the fine statues of our Court Statuarius.”<sup>28</sup>

22 Anderson 1966 II: 688. Cf. *Mozart: Briefe und Aufzeichnungen* 1962 III: 57 (no. 562): “an dem Familien gemähle ist nichts weiter gemacht worden, Ursache: weil, anfangs, da die t $\ddot{a}$ ge noch l $\ddot{a}$ nger und heiter waren deine schwester Kranck, und dann auch ich an einem Schweren Catharr und Revmatismus durch alle  $\ddot{a}$ usserlichen Theile des Leibes stark krank war: ich schrieb dirs nicht, um dich nicht zu beunruhigen...”

23 Anderson 1966 II: 701. Cf. *Mozart: Briefe und Aufzeichnungen* 1962 III: 76 (no. 572): “ich schreibe dir mit einem aufsatz auf den Kopf, das ich sehr in Sorgen bin meine Haar zu verbrennen: und warum mich das M $\ddot{o}$ lk stuben m $\ddot{a}$ dl frisirt hat, ist die ursache, weil ich morgen das erstmahl dem Mahler sitze.”

24 Glover 2005: 93–4.

25 Anderson 1966 II: 705–6. Cf. *Mozart: Briefe und Aufzeichnungen* 1962 III: 83 (no. 576): “Gestern waren wir, statt des Balls, bey H: Hagenauer. alle empfehlen sich. Deine Schwester war nun 2 mahl beym Maler. Sie ist gut getroffen, und wenn beym ausmahlen kein fehler vorbeygeht; so wird es ein Charmanter Kopf.”

26 Eisen 2009 has compiled excellent evidence illuminating the intimate relationship between the two families.

27 Johann Baptist was either unrelated to or a distant relative of Lorenz Hagenauer who ‘discovered’ him and whose education as a sculptor he financed (Kurz 1968: 325).

28 Anderson 1966 II: 124. Cf. *Mozart: Briefe und Aufzeichnungen* 1962 I: 328 (no. 171): “Wir sind in dem *Instituto* gewesen, und haben des H: HofStatuarii sch $\ddot{o}$ ne Statuam gesehen.”

## 2. Identifying the keyboard music

Mozart and Nannerl performed keyboard music during their many outings together.<sup>29</sup> However, evidence provided in letters and announcements does not always specify whether the siblings performed four-hand repertoire at the same piano or on two separate pianos, or even whether they played the same piano at different times. For instance, scholars debate the identity of the piece Mozart and sister performed in London in 1765. A notice in the *Public Advertiser* of 11 July 1765 reads, "The two children will play upon the same harpsichord, and put upon it a handkerchief, without seeing the keys."<sup>30</sup> This event would take place in a room which Leopold rented at the Swan & Hoop (a tavern in Cornhill) for three hours. Further, an unauthenticated letter written by Leopold and published in Georg Nicolaus von Nissen's biography reads, "In London our Wolfgang wrote his first piece for four hands. Up till then, no one had written a four-handed sonata."<sup>31</sup> Howard Ferguson believes that in London the siblings performed the K. 19d four-hand piece, a copy of which was discovered in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris in 1921, and speculates that J. C. Bach might have introduced Mozart to the genre while the boy was in London.<sup>32</sup> The attribution to Mozart of K. 19d has been disputed. Cliff Eisen provides evidence that Mozart did not compose that piece.<sup>33</sup> "It seems likely, however, that Mozart and his sister did not perform four-hand sonatas but four-hand concertos, and that K19a [sic!] is not by Mozart at all."<sup>34</sup> Robert Levin writes that K. 19d appears to have been composed for a two-manual instrument—presumably the harpsichord—which explains the occasional collisions between the *primo* and *secondo* parts.<sup>35</sup>

The performance of the four-hand genre was seen as a 'novelty act' in Mozart's time, and the painting of the siblings playing four hands might have been intended to capture the new burgeoning genre.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, the first printed examples of four-hand piano pieces, called "Sonatas and Duets," were composed by Dr. Charles Burney in 1777.<sup>37</sup> We also know from Leopold that the early four-hand sonatas were suited for playing

29 As is well documented, Nannerl performed with her brother on and off until the time Mozart left for Vienna to eventually marry Constanze, establishing her reputation as a gifted musician. With her brother, she played before kings and queens and met J. C. Bach in London, and Goethe. We read the first mention of her playing with her brother in Nannerl's *Lebenslauf*, in an entry dated 12 January 1762, when the children were in Munich at the home of the music-loving Elector Maximilian Joseph II for three weeks (A. M. Mozart 1998: ix–x). A diary entry of 1 December 1763 contains the following comments from Melchior Grimm, regarding Nannerl's marvelous playing, "His [sc. Leopold's] eleven-year-old daughter, touches the clavien in a brilliant manner; she executes the most grand and difficult pieces with great precision" (ibid., xiv). With the passing of time, her brother's fame overshadowed hers, and Leopold decided to advance his son's musicianship and humanist education, rather than hers, not taking her on the three long tours the two male Mozarts completed in Italy. One can only imagine what Nannerl could have achieved had she been given the same opportunities.

30 Ferguson 1946/47: 36–7.

31 This letter of 9 July 1765 from The Hague appears in Nissen 1964: 102.

32 Ferguson 1946/47: 36–7 also writes that the four-hand genre originated in England with the works of Nicholas Carleton and Thomas Thomkins.

33 Eisen 1998: 91–9.

34 Eisen, quoted in Abert 2007: 44.

35 Leisinger, Seidlhofer & Levin 2005: xii.

36 Miller 1943: 438.

37 Burney 1988.



with students. Leopold writes to Mozart in Mannheim on 8 December 1777, “If you stay on in Mannheim, I shall send you the two sonatas *a quattro mani* copied out on small paper for your two pupils.”<sup>38</sup> On 17 January 1778 Mozart insists that Leopold send the sonatas, writing, “For I could make good use of them in Paris.”<sup>39</sup> Leopold indicates that he mailed Mozart and his mother the four-hand sonatas in a letter dated 5 February 1778, which Mozart acknowledges receiving on 7 February 1778.<sup>40</sup>

Which piece of music are the Mozart siblings performing in the ‘Family Portrait’? A new reading of the hand positions on the keyboard provides many important clues. The pinkie finger of Nannerl’s left hand is clearly positioned on the pitch ‘D’. Mozart’s notes are more difficult to decipher because Della Croce only painted four fingers of his left hand; Mozart’s pinkie is blocked from view. The left hand appears to be playing ‘A’ and ‘D,’ the first pitches of a D major second inversion chord (*fig. 2*). Because of the hand crossing, it is difficult to ascertain where the siblings’ right hands are placed on the keyboard. In addition, the thumb of Nannerl’s right hand is hidden from view.



fig. 2: Della Croce, *Mozart Family Portrait*, detail of hands (see *fig. 1*).  
Foto: © AKG Images

Recently John Irving has suggested, almost in passing, that the siblings are performing the K. 19d because the piece has a passage that includes voice crossing.<sup>41</sup> This hypothesis does not seem convincing given that Mozart would have been 24 years old during the completion of the portrait (Nannerl would have been 29), and probably not have wanted to be represented playing a piece he had composed at the age of nine for performance in London. Moreover, Eisen, as was mentioned, argues that K. 19d is not by Mozart at all, thus assigning new significance to the K. 381 four-

hand sonata: “In so far as the sources, letters, and documentary evidence are concerned, then, Mozart’s first *sonata* for keyboard is K. 381.”<sup>42</sup>

Incredibly, the D Major Sonata K. 381 does include a brief, hitherto overlooked passage with voice crossing at measure 90, at the end of the first movement (*ex. 1*). The placement of Mozart’s right hand over his sister’s accurately captures the motion needed to play this passage:

38 Anderson 1966 II: 412. Cf. *Mozart: Briefe und Aufzeichnungen* 1962 II: 175–6 (no. 387): “Solltest du nun in Mannheim bleiben, so werde dir die 2 Sonaten à 4 Mani klein Copierter schicken für die 2 Scolarn.”

39 Anderson 1966 II: 448. Cf. *Mozart: Briefe und Aufzeichnungen* 1962 II: 227 (no. 405): “wissen sie um was ich sie bitten möchte? – daß sie mir nach gelegenheit, doch so bald möglich, so nach und nach, die 2 sonaten auf 4 hände, und die Variationen von fischer schicken möchten! – ich würde sie zu Paris gut brauchen können.”

40 Anderson 1966 I: 466 and 470, respectively.

41 Irving 2006: 472.

42 Eisen 1998: 97.



Example 1: W. A. Mozart, Sonata for Four Hands in D Major, K. 381 (Allegro, mm. 90-92).

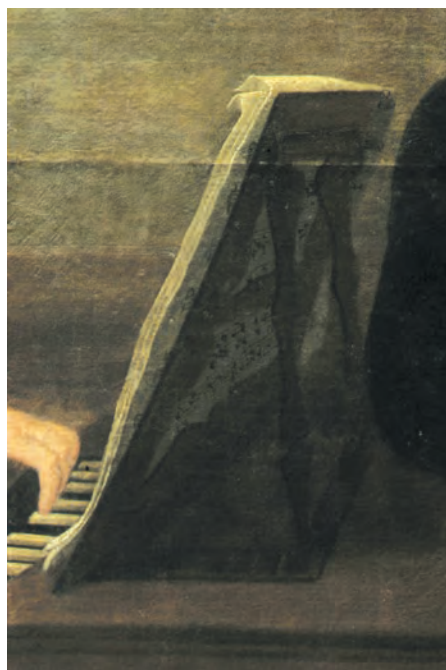


fig. 3: Della Croce, *Mozart Family Portrait*, detail of music on music stand (see fig. 1).  
Foto: © AKG Images



Example 2: Tentative transcription of notation found on the music manuscript (see fig. 3).

E.i

A close examination of the music on the keyboard stand reveals notation on the backside of the manuscript (*fig. 3*). It contains few notes, since most are blocked from view by the music stand itself. Some of the pitches are difficult to ascertain, and there are many marks, dots and blotches on the painting (for a tentative transcription of notes, their placement on the staff and their rhythms see *ex. 2*). The page contains six staves. The first five begin with a G clef, while the sixth staff is blocked from view. The presence of the G clefs indicates that we are looking at the Primo part. The notation appears to capture a general impression of pitches in a Primo part of a four-hand piece. The pitch 'G' seems to be the most prominent, though there is no indication of meter or key signature, and the rhythms are haphazardly rendered. Albeit the second movement of the K. 381 piano sonata is in G Major, or the subdominant, the pitches in the painting do not coincide.





fig. 4: Autograph of the third movement of Mozart's Sonata for Four Hands in D Major, K. 381, Primo, mm. 60–140.  
New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, inv. Cary 336.  
Foto: © Pierpont Morgan Library

Remarkably, however, the manuscript layout as painted is basically the same as the layout found in the autograph pages of Mozart's K. 381 sonata. Two leaves of the seven-leaf autograph are extant: leaf 5 (sections of the second and third movements) is housed in the Staatsbibliothek Berlin, and leaf 6 (part of the third movement) in the Pierpont Morgan Library (fig. 4).<sup>43</sup> Each side of the page contains one part, as Peter Jost explains in the Henle Urtext edition, "the Secondo on the verso, the Primo on the recto."<sup>44</sup> This is different from later publications in score, with the Primo part notated above the Secondo part.<sup>45</sup> Therefore one can argue that the artist may have captured the general spirit of Mozart's handwriting in his representation of the score, a similar style seen in the Pierpont Morgan autograph with its fluid barred sixteenth notes, somewhat squiggly stems and ledger lines. (In addition, in both the painting and Mozart's autograph there is a certain amount of empty space on the page.) In this respect it should not go unnoticed that the autograph of K. 381 was in Nannerl's possession after Mozart's death, and an inscription on the copy owned by the Pierpont Morgan Library reads that she gave it to Baron de Tremont of St. Gilgen in 1801.<sup>46</sup> It seems very possible that Nannerl would have shown Della Croce the manuscript while the painting was in progress.

43 Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Musikabteilung mit Mendelssohn-Archiv, shelfmark Mus. Ms. Autograph. W. A. Mozart 381, and New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, Mary Flagler Cary Music Collection, shelfmark Cary 336. For a list of facsimiles of some of the lost pages of K. 381 see Jost 2011: 184. Scholars date K. 381 as composed in 1772 based on a study of the watermark (ibid.).

44 Ibid.

45 Ibid., viii.

46 See the inscription at <<http://www.themorgan.org/music/manuscript/115414>>, 12/19/2016.

Also indicative of the artist's approximation of a manuscript is the fact that in both the New York and the Berlin autograph pages, Mozart only included clefs, key and times signatures at the beginning of each movement, and, at times, after a double bar. Furthermore brackets are not found in the painting. Perhaps the G clefs are a decorative feature, more appealing to the artist as a visual detail. Most significantly they indicate that it is a Primo part, namely Nannerl's part—a detail she may have wanted to be depicted, given the concrete circumstances when the painting was being completed. Jost notes that "Clearly the purpose," of K. 381 and K. 358 "was performance with her [sc. Mozart's sister], whether in the family circle or in public."<sup>47</sup> The siblings played the K. 381 sonata in a concert tour in September of 1780—Nannerl's datebook confirms that the two played at court on three successive days beginning September 3<sup>rd</sup>; presumably in Mozart's hand we learn that they played the Sonata in D Major for four hands.<sup>48</sup> After the tour, Nannerl fell ill with a severe bronchial infection and spent much of her time at home, which delayed the completion of the picture.<sup>49</sup> Again, we know this from Leopold's letter of 20 November, referenced earlier.

Maynard Solomon notes that performances of Mozart's music were less common just prior to his move to Vienna, and it is possible that Leopold decided to have the portrait done to promote the image of the children playing again during relatively lean years.<sup>50</sup> Already in April 1764 Leopold had arranged for the children to sit for Louis Carmontelle in Paris. In a letter to Lorenz Hagenauer from Paris, dated 1 April 1764, Leopold explains that he is having an engraving made of the original, presumably to distribute while in London.<sup>51</sup> Leopold writes, "M. de Mechel, copper-engraver, is working himself to death to engrave our portraits, which M. de Carmontelle (an amateur) has painted excellently well."<sup>52</sup>

### 3. Leopold Mozart and the Concept of a Humanist Musician

The 'Mozart Family Portrait' also reveals important information regarding Leopold's self-concept. Leopold's legendary and arguably heavy-handed control of his family is evidenced in his pictorial demeanor—leaning over the piano in a commanding pose, holding a violin, but not performing.<sup>53</sup> He is portrayed as a sage humanist. His 1756

47 Jost 2011: viii.

48 M. A. Mozart 1998: 92.

49 Glover 2005: 91.

50 Solomon 1995: 225–26. Indeed the 'Mozart Family Portrait' was subsequently copied in many different media, including lithographs and engravings as we shall read.

51 The British Museum owns a copy of the 1764 etching (inv. 1864,0611.50) and provides the following entry: "Portrait of the Mozart family: Leopold playing violin, Wolfgang Amadeus playing harpsichord and Maria Anna singing, with landscape in the background." <[http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=1365809&partId=1&people=130028&peoA=130028-2-23&page=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1365809&partId=1&people=130028&peoA=130028-2-23&page=1)>, 12/19/2016.

52 Anderson 1966 II: 44. Cf. Mozart: *Briefe und Aufzeichnungen* 1962 I: 142 (no. 83): "M. de Mechel ein Kupferstecher arbeitet über Hals und Kopf unsere Portraits die H: v Carmontel |: ein Liebhaber |: sehr gut gemahlt hat, zu stechen." The original, done in pencil with watercolor on paper, is found in Paris, Musée Carnavalet, Cabinet des arts graphiques, inv. D 4496. For more on Carmontelle, see Gruyer 1902. Gustave Kobbe (1910: 24–5), the American opera critic, even owned a copy.

53 Solomon 1995: 21–33. For more on Leopold see Wegele & Egk 1969, and Valentin 1987.



fig. 5: Cornelis van Noorde, Portrait of Leopold Mozart. Frontispiece to *Versuch einer gründlichen Violinschule*, 1756 (fourth edition 1791). Foto: © Bildarchiv, ONB/Wien

*Treatise on the Fundamental Principles of Violin Playing* lies on the keyboard next to pens and an inkwell. His position to the right of the music stand suggests an opposition or a counterbalance to his children whom he has groomed to be famous musicians. In addition to the father/daughter and mother/son dualities mentioned earlier, the portrait juxtaposes Mozart, the son and performer, and Leopold, the father, theorist, and chapel master. In the 'Family Portrait' we find represented the age-old tension between practitioners of music and theorists of music. That Leopold was familiar with this duality is evidenced by the fact that his influential violin primer includes opening chapters in which he cites numerous music theorists, among them Zarlino,<sup>54</sup> who argued that music is of different types, theoretical and practical, and who ascribed to the Aristotelian notion that performing music should not be the profession of the educated man.<sup>55</sup> The frontispiece of Leopold's violin primer also promotes him as a learned musician (fig. 5) surrounded by some of his compositions, namely a Sinfonia, Divertimento, and March, and what looks to be an Offertory and Miserere, genres that capture both his compositional versatility and *gravitas*.

Furthermore Leopold's primer provides a literary source for the inclusion of the statue of Apollo in the 'Family Portrait.' In the primer, Leopold spends a considerable amount of text describing the disputed history of the violin and the lyre, its precursor.<sup>56</sup> In an expression of his scholarly approach to the instrument, Leopold begins with a short history of music, followed by a history of the violin. In his chapter "Of the Origin of Music, and Musical Instruments," Leopold cites classical sources in his argument concerning the creation of the lyre, the assumed precursor of the violin: "The parentage of the renowned lyre of old is still disputed. Diodorus says, 'Mercury, after the Flood, rediscovered the course of the stars, the harmonizing of song, and the ratio of numbers. He is also supposed to be the inventor of the three- and four-stringed lyre.'" Adopting a humanist tone, Leopold continues, "Homer and Lucian agree with this but Lactantius ascribes the invention of the lyre to Apollo, while Pliny has it that Amphion was the father of music-making." In this passage Leopold dutifully cites Zarlino's *Istituzioni harmoniche* for his history. He then asks, "And even if Mercury be hailed by the majority as the rightful inventor of the lyre (which after him came into the hands of Apollo and Orpheus), in what way can such instruments be compared with our own of today?" Furthermore he ponders, "can we in truth assume Mercury to be the creator of the violin family?"

Under Part 6 of the second section of his introduction, Leopold insists that indeed Mercury, rather than Apollo, is the "inventor of stringed instruments, until someone

54 L. Mozart 1948: 21.

55 Zarlino 1558: 8.

56 Quotations in this paragraph are from L. Mozart 1948: 19. Johann Quantz's *On Playing the Flute* (1752), a work often compared to Leopold's violin primer, includes a history of the instrument, but no history of music. Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach's *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments* (1753) almost exclusively addresses issues of performance on the keyboard.

else establishes a better right to the title.”<sup>57</sup> He then provides a fascinating description of the origin and evolution of the first string instrument based on his reading of Polidorus as transmitted to him in Robert Estienne’s *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* (1543).<sup>58</sup> According to legend, after the Nile flooded the whole of Egypt, Mercury found among the animals the dried nerves and sinews of a turtle. Mercury touched the parts and produced different tones, which “are supposed to have inspired Mercury to the invention of a similar instrument. And this was the so-called lyre of the ancients.” Leopold writes that this turtle instrument was called the *Chelys*, which “in Latin means violin.” However, Leopold is still not convinced that Mercury was the inventor of the violin, questioning whether that first strung instrument was played with a bow and relying on yet another source for his argument concerning the origin of the violin. Ultimately contradicting Zaccaria Tevo (1706), known to him through Ephraim Chambers’ *Cyclopaedia, or Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences* (1728), Leopold settles on Apollo as the inventor of the violin, “Yea, we even know the inventors of the violin and violin bow, for he [Tevo] says: ‘The violin was invented by Orpheus, the son of Apollo; and the poetess Sappho conceived the bow strung with horsehair, and was the first who fiddled in the present fashion.’ So that, according to this statement, we really have to thank Apollo for the invention of the violin; Sappho for the method of bowing it; but as regards the whole history of the matter, Mercury was responsible for the origin of all fiddle instruments.” In conclusion, then, we can be certain Leopold would have insisted that Apollo stand behind him in the scone to represent his thorough humanist education.

Interestingly the image of Apollo would be altered in Eduard Leybold’s later lithograph copy (fig. 6)—perhaps in a misreading of the subtle ‘humanist’ iconography.<sup>59</sup> There are numerous striking differences between the original painting and the Leybold lithograph. Mozart’s expression has been significantly altered. Leybold has made the face slimmer and the chin more pointed, in line with father and sister, rather than using the mother’s portrait as the primary inspiration for Mozart’s facial features. In addition Leopold does not seem to lean so heavily on the keyboard with his elbow, but is rather more balanced as he stands behind the instrument. Leopold’s book seems to be more prominently displayed on the keyboard, while it remains in the shadows in Della Croce’s original.



fig. 6: Eduard Leybold, *Familie Mozart*. *Erinnerungsblatt an das Mozart-Säkular-Fest 1856* (Salzburg: G. Baldi). Vienna, Austrian National Library, Bildarchiv, Pg 450:I(48a). Foto: © Bildarchiv, ÖNB/Wien

57 Quotations in this paragraph are from L. Mozart 1948: 19–24.

58 Leopold most likely was referring to a copy of this work by Roberti Stephani, in the Basle edition of 1740–43.

59 For the first time published in Nissen’s posthumous Mozart biography of 1828 (repr. 1964). Gustav Kobbé, an American opera critic and collector of images, claims that Della Croce himself was the lithographer of the version in his collection (Kobbé 1910: 25). A more likely composer is Eduard Leybold (1798–1879), whose lithographs contained within the Bildarchiv Austria date from as early as 1822, see <<http://www.bildarchiv.austria.at>>, 01/01/2017.

But perhaps the most notable difference concerns the figures in the background. Where Della Croce included an empty scone to the left of Mozart's head, Leybold added a seated male who appears to hold a shield in his right hand and a kind of standing box-harp in the left. The head of the seated figure is covered by the drape. Indeed his identity is rather unclear: one can posit that he must represent a classical figure, as Della Croce had done previously, and that it must be related to antiquity, a Greek god, perhaps Mercury with his shield? Turning our attention to the figure to the right scone, we note that in Leybold's lithography the figure has clearly been changed from a male to a female. She has breasts and is more rounded than her predecessor. She is pretty, her legs are fleshier and instead of the curly locks of Della Croce's Apollo, Leybold's figure sports long flowing hair. As in the case of the scone on the left the identity of this figure is difficult to ascertain. She could be Sappho who was often depicted with a lyre. Or perhaps, one of the Muses, Erato or Calliope—two Muses who traditionally hold musical instruments. The figure's arbitrary nature in a nineteenth-century *all'antico* decorative style is proof that Leopold's self-image and humanist ambitions were no longer understood a few decades later.



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- 2006 "Early Icons of the Holy Monastery of Saint Catherine at Sinai." *Holy Image*: 39–55.

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