

Amadeus Sketch 1760

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This short sketch is based on a fictional encounter with young Amadeus Mozart in the year 1760, when he was only four years old.

The sketch begins with a question addressed to the audience (without reacting to any response). The following monologue is directed at three composers of that era.

It gains more resonance when performed in a local dialect, and it may be played with any polyphonic instrument. The opening question should be adapted to the instrument — for instance, when using a hand organ:

“Can anyone explain to me the difference between the right and the left side of the keyboard?”

After the spoken part, a short piano piece follows, consisting of two connected sections, with a total length of about one minute and thirty seconds:

– Part 1: An original composition representing what the young Amadeus might have been capable of at the time.

– Part 2: Based on Mozart’s first documented composition (K. 1, 1761), adapted to fit Part 1 and thus altered in various ways.

Performance

(Sitting behind the piano, looking at the audience)

“Can anyone tell me the difference between the white and the black keys?”

(Do not react to the audience – make a short dramatic pause.)

(Looking to the left)

Perhaps Mr. Johann Sebastian Bach could explain it to me? No? – You’d rather go and have a coffee and then compose a Coffee Cantata? How fitting...

(Thinking, looking straight ahead)

Maybe Mr. Haydn can explain it to me? Hmm... no, no, no! I don’t want to hear anything from you – you, with at least four spelling mistakes in your name! That doesn’t inspire much confidence in me.

(Turning suddenly to the right)

Ah – good day, Mr. Salieri! I didn't see you come in. How nice to have you here. I've just returned from the Mozart family, where one of the children kindly played an improvised piano piece for me.

(Short pause)

No, not Maria Anna, but her younger brother Amadeus, five years her junior. He's only four years old now, but soon to be five. He asked if he could play something for me – of course I said yes. I asked how long he'd been playing the piano. He said, "Since I was three."

Then he sat down at the keyboard. At first, he played rather hesitantly – I could still follow that easily. But soon he grew more confident; his tiny hands flew across the keys! Throughout the whole performance, he kept looking at me and smiling mischievously.

You'll surely meet him one day – he seems to be a remarkable talent.

Mr. Salieri, if you allow me, I'll try to play the first few bars from memory.

(Short pause)

Ah, thank you for your approval. But now I must take my leave – I still have much to do and must depart immediately after the performance. Thank you kindly for listening.

(Begin to play, occasionally glancing at the audience with a grin.)