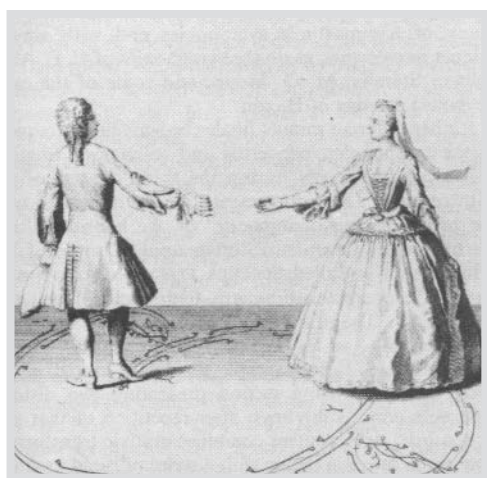


The Classical Minuet in Various Forms

The most popular social dance in 18th-century Europe was the **minuet**. Many **keyboard minuets** were used for actual dancing while others were **stylized**; they had characteristics of the dance, but were not intended for dancing.

Books of **choreographic notation** were published in the early 18th century describing the court dances. In the minuet, a couple moved through an elaborate floor pattern along an imaginary letter Z.⁸ When they passed in the middle, they presented right hands, turned and moved to opposite corners. Next, they presented left hands, and concluded with both hands.



*Presentation of the right hand in a minuet.
Engraving from Kellom Tomlinson's
The Art of Dancing (18th century)*

*"Z" pattern of the minuet,
showing pattern for dancers with
verbal instructions for steps.⁹*



It could take months to make these patterns appear effortless. Those who could not perform in a graceful, dignified way were considered social failures. Originally danced by only one couple, at a later time, couples danced it simultaneously, circling each other holding right hands, then left, and finally the man led with both hands.

Most minuets were 16–32 measures in length. However, according to descriptions of the time, it took 100 measures to complete the dance. Accompanying **musicians repeated sections, improvised variations, or performed several minuets in succession.**

Professional Women Musicians in the 18th Century

By the late 18th century, professional female musicians were **singing** in operas and court ballets, **appearing as instrumentalists** and **teaching music** to the nobility. Their most popular instruments were piano, violin, harp and guitar. A few women composed, and others were involved in music publishing and piano manufacturing.

⁸The “Z” was adapted by dancing masters from its original “S” (the sign for the Sun King, Louis XIV).

⁹Pierre Rameau, 1725.

Elisabetta de Gambarini was known in London primarily as a professional singer who performed in many of George Frideric Handel's (1685–1759) oratorios. She was also an organist, orchestral conductor and composer. This minuet is from her sixth *Sonata for Harpsichord*.



Minuet form: binary or two-part

Sections: \parallel : A $\mathrel{\mathop:} \parallel$: B $\mathrel{\mathop:} \parallel$
I V I I

(In binary form, the first section cadences on a V chord.)

Minuet in F Major

Allegretto

SECTION A

Elisabetta de Gambarini
(1731–1765)

5

f

5

5

3

5

3

4 2

3 1

5 3

4 2 1

1 2 3

9

SECTION B

mp

mf

3

13

f

3

3

3

tr

3 2 1 5

4 2 1

(a) Throughout this book, the editor suggests that all notes not marked with a slur be played nonlegato, with a slight separation. See the Foreword (page 3) for further details on 18th-century articulation.

Musical Austria

The German **Habsburgs** were the most powerful royal family of Europe, controlling vast territories of land acquired through battles and shrewd marriages. During the 13th century, they gained control of Austria and ruled until the end of World War I (1918).

- **Leopold I** (1640–1705) married a Spanish princess. His daughter, **Maria Theresa** (1717–1780) married the French Duke of Lorraine (1708–1765) and they had 16 children. A son, **Joseph II** (1741–1790), married an Italian princess, and daughter **Marie-Antoinette** (1755–1793) married Louis XVI (1754–1793) of France.
- Also **patrons of the arts**, the Habsburgs imported Italian operas as well as other foreign artists, composers and performers. Many were **accomplished musicians** themselves with Leopold I a highly skilled composer, conductor and performer.



Photo: Kunsthistorisches Museum

Emperor Joseph II of Austria with two of his sisters. He was a good singer, viola, cello and keyboard player, and often accompanied performances at Court.



 The Austrian Empire around 1780

 Austria Today

- The size of the **Austrian Empire** helped it develop a unique musical style during the Classical period. It became the **melting pot** for the Germanic culture of central Europe, the music and vocal style of Northern Italy, the cultural and folk elements of Hungary and the Slavs, and the brilliant wind playing of Bohemia (today's Czech Republic) with touches of French and Spanish ingredients.

²⁶Richard Rickett, *A Brief Survey of Austrian History* (Vienna: Georg Prachner Verlag, 1966), 27.

Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf's father was a costumer at the Imperial Court in Vienna. Having grown up in that environment, Carl was privileged with an excellent education. He composed all forms of music and his over 100 symphonies have been compared to Haydn's. He wrote **20 English dances** for keyboard.

English Dance

Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf
(1739–1799)

Allegretto

Measures 1-5: *mf*

Measures 6-10: *f*

Measures 11-14: *mf*

Measures 15-19: *mp dolce*

Measures 20-24: *mp*

(a) The editor suggests that the appoggiatura be played before the beat.

*“I tell you before God, as an honest man,
that your son is the greatest composer I know,
either personally or by repute.”*

Franz Joseph Haydn in a letter to Leopold Mozart²⁹

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

- Mozart was a genius from birth, playing keyboard melodies at age 3, performing publicly and composing by age 5. At age 6, he was taken on his first concert tour where he performed with his older sister, **Nannerl** (1751–1829).
- A report of a performance at age 7 tells he *“could play in an adult manner, improvise in various styles, accompany at sight, play with a cloth covering the keyboard, add a bass to a given theme, and name any note that was sounded.”*³⁰
- By age 8 he had performed at the Courts in Bavaria and Salzburg, for Maria Theresa in Vienna, Louis XV (1710–1744) at Versailles, and for George III (1738–1820) in London. In 1770, he was honored by Pope Clement XIV (1705–1774) in Rome. He was able to assimilate everything from his extensive travels to France, Italy and England into his compositions.



*A 1763 engraving of Mozart at the keyboard
with his father, Leopold (1719–1787), playing
the violin and his sister, Nannerl, singing.*

- At a program in Italy (prepared by professional musicians) he performed as soloist in a piano concerto followed by a solo sonata, both of which he read at sight. He then added variations and transposed the sonata. Next he was given words for an aria that he instantly composed and sang while accompanying himself. He was given a theme and improvised both a sonata and fugue on it. He also played violin in a trio and conducted one of his symphonies. Mozart was 14.
- He and Franz Joseph Haydn became friends, and although Mozart was much younger, the two exchanged ideas and influenced each other in their musical compositions.

²⁹Crofton & Fraser, *Musical Quotations*, 97.

³⁰*New Grove Dictionary*, s.v. “Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus,” vol. 12, 681.

Composed while on tour in Zurich when Mozart was 10 years old, he never gave this piece a title. On that trip, he also performed in Amsterdam, Brussels, Paris and Munich.

Klavierstücke in F Major

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756–1791)

K. 33B

Allegro

5 1 5

6

dim.

p

11

p

16

mp

f

21

dim.

mp

1 5