

0464. LEOPOLD MOZART TO HIS WIFE AND SON, PARIS

*A Monsieur / Monsieur le chevalier Wolfgang / Amadé Mozart Maître
de Musique / à / Paris / Rue Gros chenet / vis à vis celle du / Croissant à
l'hôtel / des 4 Fils emont¹*

My dear wife and my dear son!

Salzb., 13th July, 1778

[5] In order not to miss your name-day,² my dear wife, I am already writing under the date above, with which it is sure to arrive even some days beforehand. I congratulate you a million times on seeing this day again, and beg Almighty God to allow you to see this day in good health for many years to come and, as far as is possible in the changeable theatre of this world, in contentment. [10] I am completely convinced that the absence of your husband and your daughter robs you of true contentment. God will direct everything as is best for us according to his unsearchable Counsel and most holy Providence. Would you have believed it possible a year ago that you would be spending your next name-day in Paris? – – [15] Unbelievable as it might have appeared then |: although not to us, of course :| – it is just as possible, with the help of God, that we shall all be together again sooner than we expect: for it is this alone that weighs on my heart – being separated from you both – living far, and indeed so far, from you; otherwise we are well, God be praised! [20] We both kiss you and Wolfgang a million times, and above all beg you both to be take care of your health. – Now the curtain has finally been opened for the war!³ It will already be known in Paris that on the 5th inst. the King in Prussia⁴ pushed forward from Glaz⁵ via Nachod⁶ towards Königgrätz⁷ in Bohemia. The one certain thing is that war has to break out, since neither power [25] can now withdraw its armies without compromising its honour. On the Austrian side, they have been trying for some weeks now, with marches and counter-marches here and there, to leave room and opportunity for making an incursion and launching an attack, only the King did not consider it good to undertake anything. Now, the Emperor⁸ had had a very mighty fake arms magazine [30] set up near Nachod and this had persuaded the King to invade. The magazine was fake, however, and containing nothing except decoys. One has to take this risk, no matter how it may turn out, since Austria could not and did not wish to be the attacking party, but the Croats, as advanced posts |: which is the only thing which they can really be used for :, [35] could hardly be restrained any longer, because these people always hope and wish to plunder something and also for this reason happily take the field. The Saxon troops have united with the Prussians, and it is probably true that they will join Prince Heinrich's⁹ corps, and will probably undertake something around Eger and the Upper Palatinate. [40] The next post will no doubt bring more precise news: this came on the 11th with the Austrian post. This war will become one

¹ = “To Monsieur Wolfgang Amadé Mozart, knight, music director in Paris, Rue Gros Chenet opposite the house of the crescent at the hotel of the 4 sons of Aymon”.

² BD: 26th July (Anna).

³ BD: On 5th July, 1778, Frederick II of Prussia suddenly moved into Nachod in Bohemia. The first shots were exchanged on 7th July. The Prussian army outnumbered the Austrian by 40,000. Maria Theresia wrote to the Imperial ambassador in Paris that what she had feared was now happening, a war in which nothing is to be one and everything to be lost.

⁴ “König in Preussen”. BD: Frederick II (“the Great”) (1712-1786), r. 1740-1786.

⁵ BD: Glatz in Silesia.

⁶ BD: Between Glatz and Königgrätz.

⁷ BD: Königgrätz.

⁸ “Kayser”. BD: Joseph II (1741-1790), Holy Roman Emperor [Kaiser] 1765-1790.

⁹ “des Prinz Heinrichs”. BD: Cf. No. 0036/69. Heinrich (1726-1802), brother of Frederick II (the Great) of Prussia. Successful military leader in the Seven Years' War.

of the bloodiest of wars,¹⁰ the King will die gloriously, and the Emperor will want to begin his warrior life with glory. I wrote the preceding yesterday, the 12th. This morning, the 13th, at this very moment, before 10 o'clock, I received your distressing letter of 3rd July.¹¹ [45] You can easily imagine the state of both our hearts. We had such a time of weeping together that we could hardly read the letter. – And your sister! – Great, merciful God! Thy most holy will be done! My dear son! Despite my surrendering in every possible way to the Divine Will, you will yet consider it entirely human and natural [50] that I am almost being prevented from writing by tears. What kind of conclusion can I finally draw – ? None other than that now, as I write this, she will either probably be dead – or else she must be better, for you write on the 3rd, and today is already the 13th. You write that she was well after having blood let, but some days afterwards she complained of shivering and feverishness. [55] The last letter¹² from you both was dated 12th June, and there she wrote:¹³ – Yesterday I had my blood let: so that was on the 11th. – and why then on a Saturday – on a fast-day? – – She will surely have eaten some meat? She waited too long with the bloodletting. I reminded her about it because I know her, how she likes to put everything off until tomorrow, especially in foreign places [60] where she first needs to enquire about a surgeon. Now, things are as they are – and cannot be changed anymore – since I have complete trust that in your filial love you have taken all humanly possible care of your certainly good mother and, if God grants her to us for a further time, will continue to do so: for your good mother, for whom you were the apple of her eye, and who has loved you quite extraordinarily [65] – who was utterly proud of you and who |: I know this better than you :| lived entirely for you. But if all our hopes should now be in vain! If we should have lost her! – Almighty God! Therefore you need friends, honest friends! Otherwise your whole venture could be lost. Funeral costs! &c. My God! Some costs you have never heard of, [70] where they try to defraud – take advantage of – trick – a foreigner, causing unnecessary costs and take his last penny, if one has no honest friends: you understand nothing. If, then, this misfortune has occurred, ask esteemed *Baron von Grimm*¹⁴ if you can bring all your mother's things to him for keeping so that you do not need to devote attention to so very many things, [75] or lock everything away very thoroughly, for if you are often not at home for entire days they can break into your room and rob you of everything. May God grant that all these precautionary thoughts of mine are unnecessary, but by these you know your father. My dear wife! my dear son! – Since she became ill some days after letting blood, she must already have been ill by the 16th or 17th of June. [80] You both waited, I must say, too long – she simply believed it would become better by resting in bed – by diets – by your own remedies; I know how such things go, one hopes and puts off from today to tomorrow: only, my dear Wolfg., with laxatives during fever one needs a *medicus* at every moment in order to know if one should dissipate the heat or allow it to continue, since the cooling agents [85] increase the laxative effect even more, and if one initiates the evacuation at the wrong time, the *materia peccans*¹⁵ develops into a gangrene. – God! We leave everything to you.

¹⁰ BD: The War of the Bavarian Succession was mocked as the “Potato War” because both sides avoided a decisive battle.

¹¹ BD: No. 0458.

¹² BD: No. 0453.

¹³ BD: Cf. No. 0453/5.

¹⁴ “H: Baron v Grimm”. BD: Friedrich Melchior von Grimm (1723-1807), 1748 private secretary to the Saxon Count [Graf] Friese, with whom he moved to Paris, where he was in contact with the Encyclopaedists.

Various publications, one of which, in 1763, mentioned the Mozart children. His relationship with Mozart broke down in 1778 during the latter's stay in Paris.

¹⁵ BD: In the sense of infected parts of the body.

I congratulate you on achieving such success with your *symphony*¹⁶ in the *Concert Spirituel*.¹⁷ I picture your fears to myself – your resolve¹⁸ to rush into the orchestra if it did not go well was no doubt a spur-of-the-moment thought. [90] God forbid, you must reject these and all similar ideas; they are ill-considered, a move of this kind would cost you your life, and no reasonable person risks that for a *symphony*. An affront of this kind – and furthermore a public affront – would and must be avenged not only by a Frenchman, but by any other person who values his honour, with a sword in the hand. [95] An Italian would wait silently and shoot you dead in a corner as you pass by. – From Munich I have certain reliable information that Count Seeau¹⁹ has been confirmed as *Music Superintendent*²⁰ for Munich and Man[n]heim; that the *Musique Status*²¹ has been sent to Manheim; that the two bodies of musicians have been merged together and the best selected; that Herr Woschitka²² [100] with other personal chamber servants have been retired on pensions of 400 florins, which surprises me; that Dr. Sanftl²³ had the audacity to demand 3000 florins for the treatment, and was thereupon entirely deprived of his title and salary; and finally that they have hopes in Munich that they will see the Elector and the Electress,²⁴ his spouse, in Munich again, along with the whole court, as early as 10th *Augusti*.²⁵ [105] – I wrote my congratulations at the beginning of the letter – and Nannerl wanted to close the letter with her congratulations. But |: as you can easily imagine :| she cannot put to paper at all, the matter makes itself felt now when she ought to write, – every time she wants to put pen to paper it forces tears into her eyes. [110] You, her dear brother, must represent her – if representing, as we hope and wish, is still possible.

Yet not so! You can no longer do it – she has passed on! – You are taking too much trouble to console me, one does not do this so very assiduously unless one is driven to it quite naturally by the loss of all human hopes or by the event itself. [115] Now I am going for my midday meal, but I shall have no²⁶ appetite for it.

I am writing this at half past 4 in the afternoon. I now know that my dear wife is in heaven. I write it with tears in my eyes, but in complete surrender to the Divine Will! [120] Since yesterday was the Patronal Feast at Holy Trinity, our usual airgun-shooting²⁷ was put

¹⁶ BD: KV 297 (300a); cf. No. 0458/41 ff.

¹⁷ BD: The *Concert spirituel*, the first commercial concert series in Paris, was founded by Anne Danican-Philidor in 1725. It featured a chorus and orchestra performing in *Les Tuileries*.

¹⁸ BD: Cf. No. 0458/52 ff., where Wolfgang described his fears after the poor rehearsal.

¹⁹ “Graf Seeau”. BD: Josef Anton, Count [Graf] Seeau († 1799), from 1753 supervisor of the Palace Theatre [Residenztheater] in Munich. One of his relatives, Ferdinand, Count [Graf] Seeau, († 1768) was Senior Stable Master [Oberstallmeister] in Salzburg.

²⁰ “Musique Intendant”.

²¹ BD: The index of the court musicians in Munich.

²² BD: Franz Xaver Wo(t)schitka (c. 1727-1796), Electoral Valet and Chamber Virtuoso [Churfürstlicher Kammerdiener, Kammervirtuos] in Munich, cf. Nos. 0399/106; 0464/99. He had introduced Mozart to Elector Maximilian Joseph III on 30th September, 1777 (cf. No. 0339/77 ff.).

²³ BD: Cf. No. 0399/84. Dr. Joseph Johann von Gott von Sänfftel, personal physician to the Elector of Bavaria. Qualified in 1728, ennobled 1772. He was considered to have made major errors in treating Maximilian II Emanuel during his final illness.

²⁴ “den Churfürsten ... die Churfürstin”. BD: Karl Theodor (1724-1799). Studied in Leyden and Leuven. From 1742 Elector [Kurfürst] of the Palatinate, where he encouraged the arts in Mannheim, and from 30th December, 1777, Elector of Bavaria. Cf. No. 0363/30. When he succeeded the childless Maximilian III Joseph of Bavaria in December, 1777, the lands of Bavaria and the Palatinate were re-united for the first time since the Treaty of Pavia in 1329. “Churfürstin”: Elizabeth Maria Aloysia Auguste (1721-1794). Married Karl Theodor, her cousin, in 1742. The clavier/violin sonatas KV 301 (293a); 302 (293b); 303 (293c); 304 (300c); 305 (293d); 306 (300l) are dedicated to her. Cf. No. 0363/84-85.

²⁵ BD: He did not in fact arrive in Munich until 9th October, 1778 (cf. No. 0500/42-43).

²⁶ BD: Leopold obviously forgot the word “keinen” (“no”).

²⁷ BD: Cf. No. 0330/5. The shooting of airguns at humorously decorated targets was practised in the apartments of the members of the “marksmen’s company” or club. A member would donate the first prize and pay for food and drink consumed during the meeting.

off until today. I was unable, and did not wish, to cancel it at such a late stage because of the Sorrowfull Letter. We ate little, but Nannerl, since she had wept abundantly before the meal, had to vomit, developed an astonishing headache, and afterwards took to her bed. [125] Herr Bullinger²⁸ found us, as did all the others who encountered us, in the most sorry situation. Without saying a word, I gave him your letter to read, and he played his role outstandingly and asked me what I thought about it. I answered him that I firmly believed that my dear wife was already dead: he said that in fact he almost suspected the same, then he spoke words of comfort to me and said to me, as a true friend, [130] everything that I had already said to myself. I made efforts to put myself in order, to continue in surrender to the most holy Divine Will, we finished all our shooting, everyone left in sadness, Herr Bullinger remained with me and then asked me, without giving anything away, what my opinion was, whether there was still hope in view of the circumstances of the illness described in the letter. [135] I answered him that I not only believed that she was now dead, but that she was already dead on the day on which your letter was written; that I surrender to the will of God and must bear in mind that I have 2 children who will hopefully love me in the measure that I live for them alone: that I believe it so assuredly that I have even written to you with memories and with worries concerning the next step etc. [140] Thereupon he said to me, Yes, she is dead. And in that moment the veil fell from my vision, the veil that these rapid events held before my eyes and which prevented my seeing ahead, since I would otherwise quickly have come to suspect, as soon as I had read your letter, that you had secretly written the truth to Herr Bullinger. [145] But your letter really had stupefied me – I was too crushed in the first moment to be able to reflect a little. Now I do not know what to write! As far as I am concerned, you can rest assured that my actions will be those of a man. Reflect on what a mother you had, so gentle in her love for you – only now will you be able to appreciate her care – [150] just as in your mature years you will still love me after my death. – If you love me – of which I have absolutely no doubt – pay attention to your health – it is on your life that my life and the future maintenance of your sister, who loves you sincerely from her heart, depend. That it is incomprehensibly painful when death tears a good, blessed marriage apart: – it is only when one experiences this that one can know it. – [155] Write to me with every detail; perhaps too little blood was let? – – What is most certain is that she trusted too much in herself and called the doctor too late: in the meantime, the gangrene had gained the upper hand *in intestinis*.²⁹ Pay attention to your health! Do not make us all sorry! Nannerl does not yet know anything about Bullinger's letter, [160] but I have already prepared her to the extent that she believes that the best of all mothers is dead. Write to me soon – with everything – when she was buried – where? – – Almighty God! I have to search in Paris for the grave³⁰ of my dear wife! Both of us kiss you from the heart; I must finish, the post is leaving.

Your sincere, most deeply saddened father,

[165]

Mozart

Take care that you lose none of your things.

²⁸ BD: Abbé Franz Joseph Johann Nepomuk Bullinger (1744-1810), Jesuit, private tutor, friend of the Mozart family in Salzburg, where he seems to have arrived between 1774 and 1776. House tutor to Count [Graf] Leopold Ferdinand Arco, later to Count [Graf] Sigmund ("Sigerl") Lodron. Amateur viola player. Mozart called him "his best of all friends" (cf. Nos. 0331/5; 0459/1).

²⁹ = "in the intestines".

³⁰ BD: Cf. No. 0473/21 and note for more details of the burial.