

*À Monsieur / Monsieur Leopold Mozart / maitre de la Chapelle de  
S: A: R: / l'archeveque de et à / Salzbourg.*

*Mon très cher Père!*

*vienne ce 16 de Juin 1781.*<sup>1</sup>

Tomorrow the *portrait*<sup>2</sup> and the ribbons<sup>3</sup> for my sisters will set sail. [5] I do not know if the ribbons will be to her *gusto*.<sup>4</sup> – but I can assure her that they are according to the true mode. If she wants more, or some unpainted ones, she need only let me know; and quite generally, if she would like to have anything that she believes might be more beautiful in the shops in Vienna, she should simply write to me. [10] I hope she has not paid anything for the apron,<sup>5</sup> for it has already been paid for; I forgot to write telling you, because I always had to write concerning the miserable *affaire*. – I will transfer the money as you described to me. –

Now I can at last write to you with something about Vienna again; until now I have had to fill up my letters with the pigswill story.<sup>6</sup> – [15] God be praised that it is over. – The present *season* is the worst one for anyone who wants to earn money; you know that anyway; the most distinguished households are in the country, therefore there is nothing else to do but to prepare for the winter, when one has less time. – As soon as the *sonatas* are finished, I will look for a little Italian *cantata* and set it; [20] I will then put it on stage in *Advent*, for my *profit*, needless to say; – there is a little cunning in this: this way I can put it on twice with the same profit, because I will play something on a *piano forte* when I put it on the second time. – At the moment I have only a single pupil, who is Countess *Rumbeck*,<sup>7</sup> the cousin of Kobenzl,<sup>8</sup> I could of course have more of them [25] if I were willing to lower my price. – But as soon as one does this, one loses one's *reputation* – my price is 6 ducats<sup>9</sup> for 12 *lessons*, and at the same time I let them know that I am doing it as a favour. – I would rather have 3 *teaching* opportunities which pay me well than 6 which pay me badly. – I can keep my head above water with this one single pupil, [30] and for the meantime that suffices me; – I am only telling you this so that you do not think I would perhaps send you no more than 30 ducats<sup>10</sup> out of self-interest – rest assured that I would give my last penny, if I only had it! – But it will certainly come. One must never let people know one's true position.

[35] Now regarding the theatre. I recently<sup>11</sup> wrote to you, I believe, that on his departure Count Rosenberg<sup>12</sup> gave Schröder<sup>13</sup> the *commission* to search for a libretto for me. This is

<sup>1</sup> = “From Vienna. To Monsieur Leopold Mozart, music director to His Royal Highness the Archbishop of and in Salzburg / My very dear father! / Vienna, this 16<sup>th</sup> day of June, 1781.”

<sup>2</sup> BD: Diplomatic skills were apparently required to coax the artist into parting with this family portrait. Cf. Nos. 0537/87; 0585/96; 0599/66; 0608/5 ff.

<sup>3</sup> BD: Cf. Nos. 0604/81; 0610/3 ff.

<sup>4</sup> = “Taste, style”.

<sup>5</sup> BD: Cf. No. 0591/24.

<sup>6</sup> BD: The acrimonious dealings with the Archbishop mentioned in recent letters.

<sup>7</sup> “gräfin”. BD: Marie Karoline, Countess [Gräfin] Thiennes de Rumbeke, cousin of Count [Graf] Johann Philipp Cobenzl and Mozart's first pupil in Vienna.

<sup>8</sup> BD: Johann Philipp, Count [Graf] Cobenzl (1741-1810), nephew of the minister mentioned in No. 0069/3; from 1779 Vice-Court Chancellor and Vice-State Chancellor.

<sup>9</sup> BD: 27 florins. Cf. No. 0383/67.

<sup>10</sup> BD: = 135 florins. Cf. No. 0602/39.

<sup>11</sup> BD: 9<sup>th</sup> June, 1781. Cf. No. 0604/77 ff.

<sup>12</sup> BD: Franz Xaver Wolf, Count [Graf] (later Prince [Fürst]) Orsini-Rosenberg (1723-1796), administrator in Vienna, later “General Director of Spectacles” there. Cf. No. 0173/7.

<sup>13</sup> BD: (Johann) Gottlieb Stephanie (1741-1800), (“the Younger”), studied law, became a soldier, was an amateur actor with Johann Anton Mesmer in 1768, became member of the Burgtheater company, Vienna, in 1769. At least 32 of his stage works were put on there in 393 performances between 1776 and 1846. Collaborated with Mozart on the libretto of the *Abduction*.

now indeed there already, and Stephani<sup>14</sup> |: the Younger :| as *supervisor* of the *Opera*, has it in his hands; Bergobzoomer,<sup>15</sup> as a true friend to Schröder and to me, immediately let me know. – [40] I therefore went to him straight away, *en forme de visite*.<sup>16</sup> – We thought he might perhaps deal falsely with me out of *partiality* towards Umlauf,<sup>17</sup> but the suspicion was unfounded, for I heard afterwards that he had sent someone to tell me I should come to him, he had something to discuss with me; and the moment I came in, he said, Oh, you come just when you're needed. [45] – But the *opera* has 4 acts, and as he says, the first act is incomparable, but then it declines greatly. If Schröder allows it to be tailored as one wishes, a good libretto could come of it. – He would not like to give it to the *management* as it is before he has spoken to him, because he knows in advance that it will be rejected anyway. [50] These two can therefore arrange it between themselves. – After what Stephani had told me about it, I did not even ask to read it, for if it were not to my liking I would still have to say Yes to it, otherwise I would be the one put on the spot, and I do not want to lose Schröder's favour, since he has the greatest respect for me. – This way I can still offer the excuse that I had not read it. [55]

Now I must explain to you why we had suspicions about Stephani. This person, I am very sorry to say, has the worst *renomée*<sup>18</sup> in the whole of Vienna, as a coarse, false, libellous man who does people the greatest injustices. – But with that I do not get involved. [60] It may be true, since everyone decries it – otherwise he is everything in the emperor's eyes,<sup>19</sup> and towards me he was very amicable the first time, and said: We are old friends already,<sup>20</sup> and I would greatly welcome it if there is any matter in which I can be of service to you. – I believe, and I would wish it too, that he himself will write an opera for me. [65] Well, he may have written his plays alone or with help; well, he may steal or create himself – in short, he understands the theatre, and his plays are always liked. – I have only seen 2 new pieces by him, which are certainly extremely good: first, The Hole in the Door,<sup>21</sup> and the second, The Magistrate and the Soldiers.<sup>22</sup> – Meanwhile I will write the *cantata*, [70] for if I really had a libretto already, I would still not put pen to paper because Count Rosenberg is not here – if he in the end did not find the libretto good, I would have had the honour of writing for nothing. And I will elegantly keep myself out of that. – As far as its *reception* is concerned, I do not have any worries as long as the libretto is good. – Do you then believe I will write an *opera comique* in the same way as an *opera seria*? [75] Just as there must be little triviality in an *opera seria* and so much that is learned and rational, there should be equally little that is learned in an *opera buffa*, and all the more that is trivial and funny.

That people want to have comical music in an *opera seria* as well – I cannot help that; – here, however, they draw a distinction very well in this matter.

[80] I do in fact find that *Hanswurst*<sup>23</sup> has not yet been stamped out in music, and in this case the French are right. –

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<sup>14</sup> BD: The actor Friedrich Ludwig Schröder (1744-1816); from 1781 employed at the Burgtheater in Vienna with a salary of 2500 florins. Cf. Nos. 0604/78; 0771/18.

<sup>15</sup> BD: Johann Baptist Bergopzoomer, acted at the Burgtheater in Vienna from 1774-1782 and 1791-1804. His wife was the actress Katharina Schindler, related to the first wife of Joseph Lange, who married Aloisia Weber. Cf. No. 0563/39.

<sup>16</sup> = “In the form of a visit”.

<sup>17</sup> BD: Ignaz Umlauf (1746-1796), established as composer, viola player and music director in Vienna.

<sup>18</sup> = “Reputation”.

<sup>19</sup> BD: Joseph II (1741-1790), Holy Roman Emperor [Kaiser] 1765-1790. Son of Maria Theresia. Ruler of the Habsburg lands from 1780.

<sup>20</sup> BD: They met in 1773.

<sup>21</sup> “Das Loch in der Thüre”.

<sup>22</sup> “Der oberamtman und die Soldaten” [or The Judge of Zalamea], after the Spanish of Calderon. Umlauf composed a serenade for this production.

<sup>23</sup> BD: The character *Hanswurst* is roughly equivalent to *Pantalone*, but his continued presence on stage had been a subject of dispute in the Viennese theatre world. The battle opened with the writer Gottsched (1700-1766)

So I hope to receive my clothes correctly with the next post-coach. I do not know when the post-coach is leaving, yet I believe this letter will still reach you before that; I therefore ask you to do me a favour of keeping the stick. – [85] They use sticks here, but for what? – to go strolling, and for that any stick is good enough, so support yourself on it in my place, and carry it with you, if possible, at all times – who knows whether it may be able to take its revenge on Arco,<sup>24</sup> its former owner, at your hand – yet that *accidentaliter* or by chance, needless to say; – That hungry donkey<sup>25</sup> shall not be spared [90] my bare-handed *discours*,<sup>26</sup> even if it should be in twenty years – for seeing him and my foot in his arse are certainly one and the same; I need only to have the misfortune to see him for the first time in a sacred place. – Now *adieu*; may life go very well for you; I kiss your hands 1000 times and embrace my sister with my whole heart and am, sir, eternally your

most obedient son,

[95] My *compliments* everywhere.

W: A: Mzt

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versus the actor Stranitzky (1878-1726), who created “Hanswurst” as a figure in Salzburg regional costume. The theatre director Friederike Neuber (1697-1760) supported Gottsched. Cf. BD VI, p. 71.

<sup>24</sup> BD: See the participants in amateur theatricals described in No. 0564/50.

<sup>25</sup> BD: Karl Joseph Felix, Count [Graf] Arco (1743-1830), son of Count [Graf] Georg Anton Felix Arco, held various offices in Salzburg, including High Master of the Kitchen [Oberstküchenmeister]. Played a role in the dismissal of Mozart as described in No. 0604/4 ff.

<sup>26</sup> = “Discourse”.