

*À Madame / Madame de Sonnenbourg née de Mozart / à / Salzburg /*  
To be delivered to the Tanzmeisterhaus<sup>2</sup>

Vienna, 14<sup>th</sup> February, 1785<sup>3</sup>

We left Munich at 8 o'clock on the morning of the 7<sup>th</sup> and drove as far as Altenötting,<sup>4</sup> [5] left there on the morning of the 8<sup>th</sup> between 5 and half past, in Braunau had our *baggage inspected*, actually only opening the *cases* and closing them again, because the customs officer knew my name, then we immediately took our midday meal, and drove as far as Ried, where it was only half past 4, we therefore took a third horse in harness because they said we will hardly get through the snow with 3 horses. [10] It would lead too far to describe this night journey from Ried to Haag. Briefly, we really did think we would have to let the coach stand in the snow and sleep in it, which would not however have been so inconvenient since we were sitting very warmly, but the post-coachman would have had to go on a long search with the horses to a very distant farmhouse. [15] In brief, at one point, when I and Heinrich<sup>5</sup> stood up to the waist in snow on climbing out because the coach was standing in a ditch, the post-coachman then pulled us out, and after we had been forced to seek out other routes across the fields and the horses had almost worked themselves to death, we arrived in Haag after 4 hours. [20] The next morning we could not leave until 9 o'clock, because the labourers first had to dig out the road from Haag to Lambach<sup>6</sup> a little. Just outside Haag, 2 gentlemen met us, coming towards us on foot and bathed in sweat, behind them they had left their coach and horses to work their way out of the snow. When we reached the first road labourers, we took 2 with us who waded along beside the coach to restrain it in the snow – until we came to another group of labourers, where we took another 2, and in this way we finally reached Lambach, with much effort, at half past 1, continued at 2 o'clock without a mid-day meal as far as Enns. The next day as far as Persdling, and on Friday at 1 o'clock we were in the Schullerstrasse, No. 846, on the first floor. [30] The road was thoroughly abominable with snow, ice and holes, and road labourers everywhere.

That your brother has a fine lodging with all the embellishment appropriate to the house: you can deduce that from the fact that he is paying 460 florins<sup>7</sup> house rent. On the evening of the same Friday, we drove to his first *subscription concert*<sup>8</sup> at 6 o'clock, where there was a great gathering of prominent people. [35] For the 6 Lent *concerts* one pays a *souvrin d'or*<sup>9</sup> or 3 ducats. It is in the Mehlgrube;<sup>10</sup> for the room he pays only a half souvrin

<sup>1</sup> BD: Maria Anna Walburga Ignatia (“Nannerl”), née Mozart, (1751-1829). After her marriage in 1784 her name was Maria Anna von Berchtold zu Sonnenburg. In all letters to Nannerl after her marriage Leopold refers to her as “Frau Tochter” [madam daughter] and to his son-in-law as “Herr Sohn” [esteemed son].

<sup>2</sup> “The dancing-master’s house”: BD: The nickname of the house on the Hannibalplatz where the Mozart family had lived since 1773 and where Leopold now finds himself alone after Nannerl’s marriage.

<sup>3</sup> Date from DME.

<sup>4</sup> BD: A Monday. The journey thus had the following stages. Monday: Munich-Altötting. / Tuesday: Altötting-Braunau-Ried-Haag. / Wednesday: Haag-Lambach-Enns. / Thursday: Enns-Perschling. / Perschling-Vienna.

<sup>5</sup> BD: Heinrich Marchand, son of the theatre director Theobald Marchand, who had board, lodging and teaching in keyboard, violin and composition in the Mozarts’ home for three years. His sister Maria Margarethe (“Gretl”) joined him in February, 1782. They left in September, 1784.

<sup>6</sup> BD: Mozart had also stayed there in 1769 and 1773, 1783; cf. No. 0766/7. The monastery contains manuscripts of works by Mozart and his father.

<sup>7</sup> Corrected according to BD VIII, p. 92. This is presumably the rent per year. In his previous apartment, in Trattner’s house, Mozart was to pay 75 florins (actually only 65 florins) for six months.

<sup>8</sup> BD: Cf. No. 0840/16. The concerts took place on 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> February and 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> March, 1785.

<sup>9</sup> BD: *Souverain d’or* [gold sovereign]: a coin minted in the Spanish and Austrian Netherlands between roughly 1612 and 1790. Value 13½ florins or 3 ducats.

<sup>10</sup> BD: An inn on the Mehlplatz (“Flour Square”).

*d'or* each time. The *concert* was beyond compare, the *orchestra* excellent, besides the *symphonies* a woman from the Italian theatre sang 2 *arias*. Then there was a new, outstanding *clavier concerto*<sup>11</sup> by Wolfgang, from which the *copyist* was still working as we arrived, [40] and your brother did not even have time to play through the *rondeau* because he had to supervise the *copying*. Now, as you can easily imagine, I met many acquaintances, and everyone ran up to me; but with the others I was presented formally. On Saturday evening Herr Joseph Haydn and the 2 *Barons Tindi*<sup>12</sup> called on us, the new quartets were played, [45] but only the 3 new ones<sup>13</sup> which he wrote to go with the other 3 which we have, they are a little easier, but outstandingly *composed*: Herr Haydn said to me: I say to you before God, as an honest man, your son is the greatest composer that I know in both person and name: he has taste, and beyond that the greatest knowledge of composition. [50] On Sunday evening there was the *concert* given by the Italian singer *Laschi* in the theatre,<sup>14</sup> who is now leaving for Italy. She sang 2 *arias*, there was a *violoncello concerto*, a *tenor* and *bass* sang one *aria* each, and your brother played a magnificent concerto which he had written for *Paradis*<sup>15</sup> in Paris. I was at the back beside the very beautiful Princess of Württemberg,<sup>16</sup> only 2 *boxes* away from her, and had the pleasure of hearing all the alternations of the instruments so outstandingly that tears came to my eyes for pleasure.

As your brother was leaving, the Emperor<sup>17</sup> *bowed* to him with his hat in his hand, and called down to him, *Bravo, Mozart.* – when he came out to play, there was applause for him anyway. – Yesterday<sup>18</sup> we were not at the theatre, – [60] for there is a *concert* every day.<sup>19</sup> It was only now that the effects on us of the cold of the journey were felt. I had already drunk elderflower tea on Sunday evening before the *concert*, wrapped myself up very warmly, on Monday<sup>20</sup> again took the tea in bed, stayed in bed until 10 o'clock, tea again in the afternoon, and the same again this morning: – then a *doctor*, whom my daughter-in-law had sent for secretly, [65] came to the bed, felt my pulse, and said I had a good pulse, in addition prescribed the same as I had been doing anyway. This evening<sup>21</sup> there is again a *concert*<sup>22</sup> in the theatre, – your brother is playing a *concerto* once more. I now feel much better and will again drink a good portion of elderflower tea. I will bring various new pieces by your brother with me. [70] Little *Carl*<sup>23</sup> looks very like your brother. I found him to be in very good health – but occasionally children run into problems with their teeth, – so yesterday he was not

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<sup>11</sup> BD: Mozart played the concerto in D minor KV 466 in the presence of his father on the 11<sup>th</sup> February, 1785, in the first of his Friday concerts in the municipal casino “Zur Mehlgrube” and again in the singer Elisabeth Distler’s concert in the Burgtheater on 15<sup>th</sup> February. It was played in Prague in the presence of Constanze Mozart on 7<sup>th</sup> February, 1794, by Johann Wittasek at a memorial concert in honour of Mozart.

<sup>12</sup> “2 Barons Tindi”: BD: Anton and Bartholomäus, both Baron [Freiherr] von Tinti; between 1785 and 1792 Anton was the resident minister representing Salzburg at the imperial court in Vienna.

<sup>13</sup> BD: KV 458, 464, 465, dedicated to Haydn.

<sup>14</sup> BD: Luisa (Aloisia) Laschi (\* c. 1766 in Florence), singer, engaged at the Italian opera in Vienna between 1784 and 1790. Sang the *Contessa* in the première of *Figaro* (1<sup>st</sup> May, 1786). Nothing is known of the programme.

<sup>15</sup> BD: Maria Theresia von Paradies (1759-1824), daughter of the prominent civil servant Joseph Anton von Paradies (1739-1808), went blind aged three, became a distinguished pianist and also sang. In 1783 went on a successful concert tour with her mother in Central Europe, France, England and Belgium, returning to Vienna via Prague in 1786. Set up a respected music school. Mozart wrote a piano concerto for her, probably KV 456.

<sup>16</sup> BD: Elisabeth Wilhelmine Louise, Princess of Württemberg (1787-1790), promised to the Emperor’s nephew.

<sup>17</sup> BD: Joseph II (1741-1790), Holy Roman Emperor [Kaiser] 1765-1790. Son of Maria Theresia. Ruler of the Habsburg lands from 1780.

<sup>18</sup> BD: 14<sup>th</sup> February, 1785.

<sup>19</sup> BD: In Lent, 1785, there were concerts in the Burgtheater on all but seven days.

<sup>20</sup> BD: 14<sup>th</sup> February, 1785.

<sup>21</sup> BD: 15<sup>th</sup> February, 1785.

<sup>22</sup> BD: See line 75.

<sup>23</sup> BD: Mozart’s second child, Carl Thomas, was born on 21<sup>st</sup> September, 1784. He was the longest-lived member of the family, dying in Milan on 31<sup>st</sup> October, 1858.

completely well, – but today better again. The child is, by the way, very pleasant, for he is uncommonly friendly, and laughs every time one speaks to him: only one single time have I heard him crying a little, but immediately at that moment I saw him laughing again. [75] – now his teeth are again hurting greatly. – Yesterday, the 15<sup>th</sup>, there was again a *concert* in the theatre for a girl<sup>24</sup> who sings *charmingly*, your brother played the new grand *concerto in D*.<sup>25</sup> *Magnifique* etc. Today we are going to a house *concert* given by the Salzburg *agent von Plöyer*<sup>26</sup> – What about this: If the Emperor did an exchange of territory with the Elector of Bavaria [80] and exchanged Bavaria for the Netherlands?<sup>27</sup> The Dutch would keep the Schelde closed: the Netherlands and the Palatinate would be closer together; while Bavaria is better joined onto Austria. France then no longer has such a dangerous neighbour in the Netherlands; Holland remains a place in the middle and good neighbour when France needs money etc. Your brother, sister-in-law, [85] I and Marchand<sup>28</sup> kiss you both a million times and I am eternally your sincere father,

Mozart mp<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> BD: Elisabeth Distler († 1790, aged about 20). One of her brothers studied with Haydn, then became music director and we are, the other was an actor in the Burgtheater. She joined the German opera ensemble in 1785. Sang in the performance of *Davidde penitente* KV 469 on 13<sup>th</sup> March, 1785.

<sup>25</sup> BD: D minor, KV 466.

<sup>26</sup> BD: Gottfried Ignaz (*von* from 1780 on) Ployer, a high official. For his daughter, Barbara Ployer, Mozart composed the concertos KV 449 and 453 and played with her in numerous private concerts.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. comprehensive note BD VI, p. 218. The idea of an exchange of land was not new, the first plan was presented in 1778 and discussed in numerous letters from Leopold. The actions of Frederick II of Prussia in July, 1785, made the plan redundant.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. line 15.

<sup>29</sup> mp = “*manu propria*” = “in his own hand”.