

0392. LEOPOLD MOZART TO HIS SON, MANNHEIM; POSTSCRIPT TO HIS WIFE

*A Monsieur / Monsieur Wolfgang Amadé / Mozart Maître de Musique /
à / Man[n]heim at The Palatine / Court.*¹

Salzb., 18th Decemb.

*Mon très cher Fils!*²

1777

[5] The news which you give me in your letter of the 10th concerning that certain matter³ did not find me unprepared for this unfavourable outcome, since I had already foretold it to Herr Bullinger⁴ and your sister and had never imagined anything else to myself. You will also always have gathered it from my letters. That I would have preferred it: that is quite correct, [10] for you would nevertheless have been able to make all other journeys from time to time. You have furthermore found in all my letters that I had fixed my eye on Paris.⁵ Now I must speak to you in greater depth. You know how many years they tested our patience in Salzburg; you know how often you and I felt like leaving there. [15] It will also be possible for you to recall what objections I raised and which hindered us from leaving Salzburg all together. Now you have the proof of it – high daily costs on the journeys and not much, or at least not adequate, income to carry through such a thing with a whole family. Letting you travel alone was not possible at that time; you know you were not accustomed to taking care of everything on your own without someone else's help – one or two things for yourself [20] – that you had little familiarity with the currencies, but with the foreign ones none at all; that you did not have the least comprehension of packing and many things of that kind on journeys. I often pointed out to you that |: even if you stay in Salzb. until you are a couple of years over twenty :| you do not lose anything, [25] since, in the meantime, you would have time to look around a little at other useful fields of knowledge and, by reading good books in various languages, to continue forming the intellect and gain practice in languages. I furthermore pointed out to you that a young person, even if he has fallen from heaven or is a head taller than all his teachers, will still never win the deserved respect he has earned: [30] for that, a certain age is necessary, and as long as one is under 20, the envious, the enemies and persecutors know how to extract the material for their reproaches and their fault-finding from youth, lack of years, lack of reputation and experience. And do you really doubt that such things have been put forward to <the Elector⁶> on the subject of <teaching the children⁷>? [35] – I am moreover as little a lover of grovelling⁸ as you are, for you will recall that I wrote⁹ to you regarding Munich that you should not throw yourself away; and all those efforts to bring together a gathering of 10 persons¹⁰ to agree to enable you to stay there were, for me, too grovelling. But you

¹ “To Monsieur Wolfgang Amadé Mozart, Master of music in à / Man[n]heim at The Palatine / Court”. [An inn, ‘Im Pfälzischen Hof’].

² = “My very dear son!”

³ BD: Cf. No. 0388, in which Wolfgang says that there is nothing in the offing with the Elector [“Churfürsten”].

⁴ 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. Mozart called him “his best of all friends” (cf. No. 0459/1).

⁵ BD: Not entirely true. Leopold was initially very sceptical about the journey to Paris.

⁶ “Churfürsten”. 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.

⁷ BD: The natural children of the Elector, cf. No. 0363/88.

⁸ BD: Word used by Wolfgang in No. 0388/100-101.

⁹ BD: Cf. No. 0344/6-7.

¹⁰ BD: The landlord Albert in Munich had a scheme for supporting Wolfgang. Cf. No. 0339/36 ff.

were moved to it by the urging of [40] good-hearted and well-meaning friends: these are straw-fires which quickly burn down – and end up in smoke. That was well-meant! That I would have wished that you had a position now: that is quite true, but only a position such as in Munich or Mannheim, or also another one, N.B. where you would not be prevented from going on a journey from time to time. [45] Or even, as far as I am concerned, a position which is not permanent by decree. If you had a position like that for even only a couple of years, you would not have to do without the journeys to France and Italy. With the years and with the title which one has as composer to an Elector etc., one acquires greater reputation and respect etc. You know that yourself. That, now, is also what I think regarding Munich: [50] as soon as one is only looking for a position for a time, this is certainly not grovelling, because one is only seeking in this an opportunity to show one's skills and one's insight, since there are people at every court who attempt to hinder, as time and opportunity is required in order to show oneself properly. – Now let us come to your Paris journey. – [55] I would have wished that you were already in Paris: that was precisely what I was concerned about because of that stay of such fatal length in Mannheim. It is quite natural that the gentlemen¹¹ with whom you are due to travel to Paris do not want to release you: they need a fourth person, and where will they get such a fourth person as you? That Herr Wendling¹² is your friend, that he means well, that he knows Paris, [60] that he will take all possible care of you – I do not cast doubts on any of that – he will also make efforts to make sure you find accommodation in Mannheim until in March: I have no doubt of that either – he also attaches importance to having you in his travelling party: all friendship has its cause. If this Dutch gentleman gives you 200 florins, you can hold out in Mannheim, especially if you go to Herr Wendling's for meals. [65] Let me suppose that Mama spends 3 florins on food, that comes to 12 florins per month; or should she not perhaps receive her board at Herr Cannabich's¹³ or Herr Wendling's even for, let us say, 4 florins per week? Now, there would be 16 florins per month – and what can our room cost per month? – if you receive the 200 florins from the Dutch gentleman¹⁴ [70] and you use up 50 florins per month, that is then 100 florins in 2 months; if, now, you also get a couple of pupils, then there are still over 100 florins left, and how could you spend 50 florins per month if you have no costs? – In brief! I am in agreement with all of this, but your living with an esteemed Court Councillor¹⁵ – without name, with Mama having to live alone: that is the one thing that I do not want. [75] As long as Mama stays there, you should always stay with her. You should not and must not leave Mama to lament her sorrows alone in the hands of other people as long as she is with you and you with her.¹⁶ No matter how small the room is, there will be space for a bed for you – and why not quickly find a larger one? It will of course cost a couple of guildens¹⁷ more. [80] For the sake of a couple of months we

¹¹ BD: Various musicians from Mannheim. Cf. No. 0383/58 ff.

¹² BD: Johann Baptist Wendling, flautist to the Elector [Kurfürst] in Mannheim and then Munich. Wendling Franz Anton Wendling, younger brother of J. H. Wendling, violinist. Cf. No. 0056/27.

¹³ BD: (Johann) Christian (Innocenz Bonaventura) Cannabich (1731-1798). Joined the Mannheim court music at the age of 13. After the death of Toeschi (see above), he was sole music director to the Elector in Munich. The Cannabich family became particular friends of Mozart's in Mannheim in 1777/78. Cf. No. 0057/13.

¹⁴ BD: Cf. No. 0388/46. "M. de Jean" [Dechamps?], cf. No. 0398/11. Dittersdorf dedicated a work to a "Willem van Britten Dejong, amateur de musique". Mozart wrote two concertos and three quartets for him, cf. No. 0423/47; No. 0494/60-61 mentions only three quartets and a flute concerto. Possibilities are the quartets KV 285 (cf. No. 0393/88-90); KV 285a; Anh. 171 (285b); the concertos KV 313 (285c) and KV 314 (285d).

¹⁵ BD: Serrarius. Wolfgang and his mother moved into his house at the end of 1777. Cf. No. 0390/4 ff. His step-daughter, Therese Pierron, became Mozart's pupil (cf. No. 0390/7-8). He wrote for her the sonata for clavier and violin KV 296 (dated 11th March, 1778). This was in turn published, along with the sonatas KV 376 (374d), 377 (374e), 378 (317d), 379 (373c) and 380 (374f), as Op. II by Artaria & Co., Vienna, in 1781. This edition was dedicated to Josepha Auernhammer.

¹⁶ BD: Leopold takes up the theme of No. 0386/45 ff.

¹⁷ Guildens and florins are broadly equivalent.

should not care about that. No matter what it costs, it will surely hardly amount to half of what you are having to pay in the inn. If only you had done what I had already written to you about in Augsp.¹⁸ and on repeated occasions, namely that you should immediately look around for a private apartment in Mannheim,¹⁹ you would have saved a lot of money, since you would then also go to eat when you chose or could have made more convenient arrangements in this respect – especially since you both, or one of the two of you, often eat out. Yes – Who would have thought that we were to stay there so long? – Who? – I not only thought it, but knew it. If only you had taken Munich as your standard, and looked at the calendar, [90] you would have discovered, with a couple of words of enquiry, that it is not possible for you to be heard within less than a week, and that then, until one receives the present – until one can present one’s proposition |: which one already has in mind :| – until one receives the answer to it – then gets everything packed again – and then takes leave of the good friends and acquaintances one has made and finally gets away, 3 to 4 weeks have passed [95] without one’s knowing where they went. Accordingly, you would have been able to take an apartment by the week or even by the month, and even if you had paid a week more etc., you would have gained a lot in the process. Mama should think back to our travels. I was never in inns wherever I could reckon with a longer stay: [100] Paris, London, Vienna, etc., even Brno etc. are places where we know the inns either not at all or only as quarters immediately on arrival. That Mama cannot leave Mannheim on travels now will no doubt be clear to you: now the most intense cold is coming upon us, and then, only after that, I must ponder over how I can bring her back most easily and comfortably. [105] In the meantime, take care that you stay with her and look after her, so that she lacks nothing, just as she is concerned about you. If then, however, the 200 florins from the Indian²⁰ yet again turn out to be a straw-fire kindled in the first enthusiasm of friendship and where the last smoke has already dispersed, pack everything and go; but if it is all quite true, use the time to render your service to him soon, [110] and it would be a very good move to write a new large-scale Mass²¹ for the Elector. You must therefore utilise the time fully during these two months. <You can do nothing better than write²² to> Prince <Zeil²³> saying that <you do not in any way desire that the Elector should take you > by decree for life, but that <he could take you for only> couple of years, [115] simply to have the opportunity and the favour of <servicing him and to be able to give him evidence of your talent>. I will also write next post-day. But then you must also write to Herr von Grimm,²⁴ as I will too. Herr Bullinger etc. etc. and all good friends commend themselves. I and Nannerl kiss you both a million times and I am your attentive father Mzt

[120] We commend ourselves to the entire Cannabich and Wendling households.

POSTSCRIPT TO HIS WIFE:

My dear wife!

¹⁸ Augsburg.

¹⁹ BD: Mentioned in No. 0359/98 ff.

²⁰ BD: The Dutch (West Indies) merchant mentioned in lines 63, 69.

²¹ BD: Mentioned in No. 0388/90.

²² BD: No. 0388/96 ff.

²³ “Fürst Zeil”. BD: Cf. No. 0261/6. Ferdinand Christoph, Count [Graf] Waldburg-Zeil (1719-1786), from 1772 Prince-Bishop [Fürst-Bischof] of Chiemsee, a life-long supporter of Mozart. Cf. No. 0138/48. The Mozarts wanted him to recommend Wolfgang to the Elector [Kurfürst] of Bavaria

²⁴ BD: Friedrich Melchior von Grimm (1723-1807), 1748 private secretary to the Saxon Count [Graf] Friese, with whom he moved to Paris. Various publications, one of which, in 1763, mentioned the Mozart children. He initially supported them, but his relationship with Mozart broke down in 1778 during the latter’s stay in Paris.

Regarding the main points of the journey to Paris with Herr Wendling, I have answered above. I wish you and Wolfg. to stay together if it is true about the 200 florins;²⁵ but if there is a delay in this and it is not certain enough, [125] you should both pack everything and immediately go to Maynz.²⁶ On your arrival in Mannheim, you should have looked around, with the help of the young Herr Danner²⁷ or someone else, for a private apartment. You should have done this without allowing anyone to raise objections. I said this so often in my letters and yet, to our detriment, [130] it did not happen. You write²⁸ that you had sent me Albert's²⁹ bill. Not a word! I saw from your letters that you always scribbled them down hastily in the evening, half in sleep and consequently only wrote down what occurred to you on the spur of the moment. So you do not know yourself what has been written, and I wager you have seldom read any letter which Wolfg. has written to me. [135] My God! You two are a rare breed!³⁰ – – That the living costs have also stayed more expensive since the expensive time: I am quite willing to believe it. But that post-charges always stay the same, and I had already made the calculation that you would spend a lot of money. In brief: If you had read my letters properly, you would also have known what to do [140] if you came to Maynz without a kreuzer of money. It is as it is! No-one had <worked harder against> Wolfg. than <Vogler³¹>. I had always said that beforehand to Herr Bullinger and Nannerl. If, now, it is really true that you are receiving the 200 florins from the Dutch gentleman, I must gather some thoughts about how you would come home,³² for it cannot be now, [145] it would be too cold for you now, since the cold usually becomes more severe around Christmas and Epiphany. And then how? In our chaise?³³ – – Completely on your own? – – Some thinking has to be done about that. If only you could be in Augsp.: do you really think that Wolfg. would then be more attentive to his business? – I hope he will have become accustomed to it and not always have his head full of notes. [150] Keep well, both of you. I am that same husband of yours,

Mzt

Two days ago, the miserable actors³⁴ from Vienna arrived. The watchmaker Beringer³⁵ has died suddenly.

²⁵ BD: The prospective payment for the compositions for the Dutch gentlemen. Cf. line 69.

²⁶ Mainz.

²⁷ BD: "The young Herr Danner" is Christian Franz, son of Johann Georg Danner (1722-1803), court musician (violinist) in Mannheim. Mentioned in No. 0360/23-24.

²⁸ BD: Cf. No. 0388/105-106.

²⁹ BD: Franz Joseph Albert (1728-1789), landlord of the inn "Zum Schwarzen Adler" ["The Black Eagle"], where the Mozarts had stayed on a number of occasions. The keyboard competition between Mozart and Ignaz von Beecke (cf. No. 0110/7) took place there in the winter of 1774/75. His idea for raising support for Mozart is outlined in No. 0339/36 ff.

³⁰ BD: Cf. No. 0375/162.

³¹ BD: Georg Joseph Vogler (1749-1814). After studying law and theology he became a court chaplain in Mannheim. He was sent to study in Italy for two years, returning to become spiritual adviser and deputy music director. Also active as teacher and theorist. Mozart usually spoke disparagingly of him.

³² BD: Leopold thinks that his wife would return to Salzburg, while Mozart went on to Paris.

³³ BD: Contrary to the original instruction (cf. No. 0375/120), it should not be sold in Mannheim (cf. No. 0385/131-132).

³⁴ BD: Their visit was announced in Nos. 0380/125 ff.; 0382/137 ff.

³⁵ BD: Joseph Anton Peringer, watchmaker in Salzburg.