

0515.<sup>1</sup> LEOPOLD MOZART TO HIS SON, MUNICH

*À Monsieur / Monsieur Wolfg: Amadé / Mozart maitre de Musique /  
à / Munic*<sup>2</sup>

My dear son!

Salzb., 31<sup>st</sup> Decb.,  
For the last time in 1778

[5] I was very dismayed to read the letters<sup>3</sup> from you and *Msr. Becke*.<sup>4</sup> If your tears, your grief and the anxiety of your heart have no ground other than that you doubt my love and tenderness towards you, you can sleep peacefully, – eat and drink peacefully and travel here even more peacefully. I see clearly you do not entirely know your father. [10] It seems from our friend’s letter as if this were the main substance of your sadness: oh, I hope that it is nothing else! For you have no reason to fear either being received without tenderness or spending unpleasant days with me and your sister. Have we not even postponed our autumn entertainment, which we make out of our airgun club *cashbox*,<sup>5</sup> until you arrive? [15] And we are still waiting for your arrival; do you then not believe that I recognise myself what kind of life you are getting here in exchange for what you presently have, – and have I not always allowed you every possible entertainment here –, obtained it? – and you believe I will now do less of this? – And is it not necessary for me to seek for myself [20] entertainment and the highest spirits possible so as to lengthen my life and make it pleasant? – the main thing which arouses fears in me and must make me anxious is the length of time you have been staying away. For as it is already 4 months since the *interim decree*<sup>6</sup> came into my hands, – as people knew that you set off from Paris on 26<sup>th</sup> Sept.,<sup>7</sup> – since people knew that I have always written to you saying you should come; [25] – – as people thought you would quite certainly be here for my name-day<sup>8</sup> – then for Christmas – and finally for New Year: tell me, then, that people will not say straight to my face that you are making a fool of the Prince<sup>9</sup> – and, what is worse, of your father, and that I would have to put up with it if the Prince withdrew his *decree*, [30] since I now truly know that he is impatient about it and finally must believe that I deliberately wanted to make a fool of him, – when I in fact I only did it because I know for a certainty that until you are a couple of years older there are no better prospects to be hoped for N.B. under all our present circumstances. Accordingly, you are making the matter not better by your long staying away, but worse. [35] One leads people around by the nose with promises and hopeful assurances until, in the end, nothing comes of it, or at most an unacceptable proposition emerges: meanwhile, when one is snapping at the shadow,<sup>10</sup> one loses the real piece of meat out of one’s mouth. Yes, if it only concerned you, – [40] you could equally well be content like a horse which allows itself to be ridden and obediently pulls the wagon as often as it is

<sup>1</sup> This letter contains passages in "family code"; these are marked with angle brackets < >.

<sup>2</sup> = “To Monsieur Wolfg. Amadé Mozart, music director in Munich”.

<sup>3</sup> BD: Nos. 0513, 0514.

<sup>4</sup> BD: Johann Baptist Becké (1743-1817), flautist in the court music in Munich, kept the Mozarts informed about developments there.

<sup>5</sup> BD: 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 all food and drinks consumed during the meeting. Cf. No. 0330/5.

<sup>6</sup> BD: For Wolfgang entering the service of the Prince-Archbishop once again.

<sup>7</sup> BD: Mentioned by Leopold in No. 0493/10-11 as the date of Wolfgang’s departure from Strasbourg.

<sup>8</sup> BD: 15<sup>th</sup> November.

<sup>9</sup> “Fürst”. BD: Hieronymus Joseph Franz de Paula, Count [Graf] Colloredo (1732-1812), Prince-Archbishop [Fürst-Erzbischof] of Salzburg from 1772. Employer of Leopold and, for two periods, of Wolfgang. Cf. No. 0263/9. At one point he dismissed both Leopold and Wolfgang, although Leopold was later reinstated. Cf. No. 0328.

<sup>10</sup> BD: A reference to one of Aesop’s fables.

harnessed as long as it simply has its stall and its fodder, – horses of this kind are all those who think themselves content if they only have board and lodging and then do orderly work for it or, which is worse, laze around. Fine! I will give you the same! [45] and then your father will no doubt receive preference after all? – you have been in Munich since the evening of the 25<sup>th</sup>, – you write to me on the 29<sup>th</sup>,<sup>11</sup> and have not yet presented the sonatas.<sup>12</sup> Now, of course, you will not have been able to have them bound because of the feast days. In the meantime, everything will now have been done. You write that I should comfort you. – and I write to you: you must come and comfort me, [50] I will embrace you with joy. – I am almost going out of my mind while writing this, for it is New Year’s Eve and, although the door is closed, the bell is always ringing, Pimperl<sup>13</sup> is barking, *Ceccarelli*<sup>14</sup> is shouting and chatting, and people’s wishes are making me deaf, although they see that I am writing and hurrying because the post is leaving soon and I am already burning the candle, [55] for it is 5 o’clock. – At just this moment the *calcant* has come in and says that *Cusetti*<sup>15</sup> has apparently received a letter in which someone tells them that you will not come until next week, now the whole town will tell me that again tomorrow, for he will spread the news everywhere. Regarding what you write about a Mass,<sup>16</sup> I thought you had been working on it bit by bit during your stay in Strasburg, Manheim, Kaysersheim<sup>17</sup> [60] – for I expected an idea of that kind so you would come to Munich equipped with everything. But now it is too late – – composing – copying etc.: God forbid! and in the end a present of which Count Seau<sup>18</sup> <keeps half>. In short! I am on the point of becoming well and truly depressed, for the business is going too far. – [65] no sure, good, sensible prospects – even less a permanent one in Munich. Here is the sure and permanent one – as long as one wishes –, just let *Msr. Becke* read the letter which I enclosed for you with my letter to him of the 28<sup>th</sup>, or read to him whichever part of it you wish, I hope he may find my opinion thorough. *Mss<sup>e</sup> Mellin*<sup>19</sup> left this morning for Munich in one of their own carriages, [70] a 2-seater *Schwimmer*<sup>20</sup> with windows; the coachman will bring a letter<sup>21</sup> from me. He can wait a couple of days if you would rather travel with him in this very comfortable *Schwimmer* than with the bumpy *diligence*<sup>22</sup> coach; whether you leave on the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> is all the same, since with the *diligence* you must additionally travel the whole night. [75] We will seek as much entertainment as possible, since there is theatre and then

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<sup>11</sup> BD: No. 0513.

<sup>12</sup> BD: The clavier/violin sonatas KV 301 (293a); 302 (293b); 303 (293c); 304 (300c); 305 (293d); 306 (300l) dedicated to the Palatine Electress, Elizabeth Maria Aloysia Auguste (1721-1794). Published in Paris by J.G. Sieber. The intention was to present them to the Electress in Munich.

<sup>13</sup> BD: The family dog in Salzburg. Cf. No. 0291/37.

<sup>14</sup> BD: Francesco Ceccarelli (1752-1814), castrato, employed in Salzburg and then, from 1795, in Dresden; often a guest in the Mozarts’ house. Mozart wrote for him KV 374, cf. No. 0587/19; he also sang in Mozart’s concert in Frankfurt in 1790. Cf. No. 0357/22, 42.

<sup>15</sup> BD: Count [Graf] Giovanni Battista Gussetti (1744-1789), materials supplier in Salzburg, music lover, amateur violinist and horn player, member of Czernin’s amateur orchestra. Cf. Nos. 0379/60; 0446/37.

<sup>16</sup> BD: Mentioned in Wolfgang’s No. 0513/24.

<sup>17</sup> BD: = Kaisheim by Donauwörth.

<sup>18</sup> 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.

<sup>19</sup> BD: Cf. No. 0041/50. Probably one of the daughters of Lorenz Joseph Polis von Moulin (c. 1720-1794), merchant, later Royal Chamber Councillor/Mining Councillor [Hofkammerrat/Bergwerkrat] to the Archbishop of Salzburg. Related by his two marriages to the Salzburg families Agliardi(s) and Robinig von Rottenfeld, by his daughters’ marriages to the families Zezi, von Amann, and Berchtold zu Sonnenburg. Polis was later placed in confinement, as was his wife after his death in 1794.

<sup>20</sup> = “Swimmer” BD: (dialect): a half-covered travelling coach with opening rear section.

<sup>21</sup> BD: No. 0514a; cf. No. 0516/48 ff.

<sup>22</sup> BD: Large coach used on scheduled mail routes and also for passengers.

the *balls* start: and I wish and hope to go to Italy<sup>23</sup> in one year, since *Ceccarelli* is also aiming for that. Now I must finish, otherwise the post is gone! If you love your father and your sister, you must also believe that they will make every effort to provide all the pleasures for you. [80] We wholeheartedly wish you a blessed New Year – oh, if only you were already here, how peacefully I would sleep: May God give you a happy journey, we kiss you a million times in the hope of telling you soon that I am your father who loves you deeply,

Mzt

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<sup>23</sup> BD: A hope voiced several times, cf. No. 0506/43, but which was never to be fulfilled.