

0538. MOZART TO HIS FATHER, SALZBURG

À / Monsieur / Monsieur Leopold Mozart / Maitre de la Chapelle de
S: A: R: / L'Archeveque de et à / Salzbourg.

Munic ce 15 de Novembre

Mon très cher Père!¹

1780.

[5] I have received your letter,² or rather the whole packet,³ entirely in order. Many thanks for the money order – so far I have not eaten at home even once – and therefore have no expenses except hairdresser, barber and washing woman – and breakfast. –

The *aria*⁴ is excellent in this form; – Now there is one further alteration, the blame for which rests with *Raaf*⁵ [10] – but he is quite right; – and if he were not – one would nevertheless have to do something to please his grey hairs. – He called on me yesterday – I showed him how to ride his first *aria*,⁶ and he was very satisfied with it; – Now – the man is old; in an *aria* such as the one in act two, *Fuor del mar hò un mare in seno etc.* he can at the moment no longer show himself – [15] so, because he has no *aria* in the third act anyway, he wishes for himself |: because his *aria* in the third act cannot be *cantabile* enough due to expressing the words :| that he might sing, after his last speech, *Ò Creta Fortunata! ò me Felice*, a pretty *aria*⁷ instead of the *quartet*, and this way an unnecessary piece drops out here as well⁸ – and the third act will now have a far better effect. [20] – Now – in the last scene in the second act *Idomeneo* has an *aria*, or rather a kind of *Cavatina*, between the choruses – here it will be better – to write a simple *recitative*⁹ during which the instruments can work well – for in this scene, which |: because of the acting and the groups in the way which we recently agreed with *Le Grand*¹⁰ :| will be the most beautiful in the whole *opera*, [25] there will be such noise and confusion on the stage that an *aria* would cut a poor figure at this point – and on top of this there is the thunderstorm – and this will probably not cease because of Herr *Raaf's aria*? – and the effect of a *recitative* between the choruses is incomparably better. – Lisel Wendling¹¹ has also already sung her two *arias*¹² through half a dozen times [30] – she is very satisfied. I heard from a third person that the 2 Wendlings¹³ greatly praised their *arias*. *Raaf* is my best, dearest friend anyway! –

¹ = “To Monsieur Leopold Mozart, music director to His Royal Highness the Archbishop of and in Salzburg. / Munich, this 15th day of November, 1780. My very dear father!”

² BD: No. 0536.

³ BD: It contained the fair copy and outline of the plot of the opera *Idomeneo*, prepared by the court chaplain Varesco in Salzburg. Abbate Giambattista Varesco (c. 1736-1805), court chaplain in Salzburg from 1766, wrote the texts for *Idomeneo* KV 366 and *L'oca del Cairo* KV 422. The latter was his response to Mozart's request for an opera buffa for Vienna.

⁴ BD: Changes had been proposed to one of the arias, cf. No. 0535/29 ff., and to the directions, cf. No. 0536/15.

⁵ BD: Anton Raaff (1714-1797), son of a shepherd, originally intended for the priesthood, appeared as a singer in Bonn, Vienna, Paris, Lisbon, Madrid and Naples before a longer period of service in Mannheim and Munich. Cf. No. 0120/54. He caused Mozart worries in *Idomeneo*, cf. No. 0570/8-10, with his lack of acting skills. Metastasio praised his singing, but saw him as a cold actor.

⁶ BD: “Vedrommi intorno”, No. 6.

⁷ BD: The aria No. 31, “Torna la pace al core”, was given a place here.

⁸ BD: The quartet was in fact retained.

⁹ BD: The aria was indeed replaced by a recitative, cf. line 22.

¹⁰ BD: The ballet master, cf. No. 0537/5.

¹¹ BD: Elisabeth Augusta Wendling (I) [“Lisl”], wife of violinist Franz Anton Wendling (1729-1786). Cf. Nos. 0057/2-6; 0555/64; 0824/28.

¹² BD: Elettra's arias Nos. 4 and 13: “Tutte nel cor vi sento” and “Idol mio, se ritroso”.

¹³ BD: “Ilia” was sung by Dorothea (I) Wendling, née Spurni, wife of the traverse flautist Johann Baptist Wendling, singer in the court music in Mannheim, later dedicated herself entirely to teaching. Cf. No. 0057/2-6.

But, with my *molto amato*¹⁴ *castrato del Prato*,¹⁵ I am having to teach him the whole opera. He does not have the ability to make up an *Eingang*¹⁶ of any meaning in an *aria*; [35] and an uneven voice! – His engagement is only for one year, and as soon as it is over, which will be during next September, Count Seeau will take another. There *Ceccarelli*¹⁷ could try his luck. *Serieusement*¹⁸ –

Now I almost forgot the best part: last Sunday, after Mass, Count Seeau presented me *en passant*¹⁹ to His Electoral Illustriousness the Elector,²⁰ [40] who was very gracious towards me. He said: I am very glad to see him here again.²¹ And when I said that I will strive to receive the applause of His Electoral Illustriousness – he slapped me across my shoulders and said: Oh, I have no doubt at all about that, it will all go well. – *à piano piano, si v`a lontano.*²²

[45] I beg you, do not forget to answer on all points relating to the opera, such as for example in the last letter regarding the translator. – I am meant to draw up a contract. –

By the devil! – Once again I cannot put down everything that I would like to write. *Raaf* was with me a moment ago. He sends his compliments, as do the entire [50] *Canabich*²³ household and the double Wendling households.²⁴

Ramm²⁵ too. Now may life go very well for you indeed, I kiss your hands a thousand times, the driver is just leaving – *Adieu*, I embrace my sister.

I am, sir, eternally your

obedient son,
Wolf Am: Mozart

[55] My sister should not be lazy, but practice dutifully. – People are already looking forward to her. –

My lodgings are in the Burggasse at *M:^{sr} Fiat* – but it is not at all necessary to put the address on it, [60] for they know me at the Post – and also know where I live.

Adieu:

¹⁴ = “much loved”.

¹⁵ BD: Vincenzo dal Prato (1756-1828), castrato. An unsatisfactory singer, appeared as Idamante in the première of *Idomeneo*.

¹⁶ A bridge passage between sections of an aria or movement. BD: Probably referring to his first aria, “Non ho colpa, e mi danni” (No. 2).

¹⁷ 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.

¹⁸ = “Seriously”.

¹⁹ = “in passing”.

²⁰ “S: Chuf: Durchlaut dem Churfürst”. 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.

²¹ BD: They had last met in Mannheim during November and December, 1777.

²² “Step-by-step one goes a long way”. BD: Mozart feels he is coming nearer to getting a post in Munich.

²³ BD: Family of (Johann) Christian (Innocenz Bonaventura) Cannabich (1731-1798). He 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. In 1777 Mozart dedicated the clavier sonata in C KV 309 (284b) to his daughter Rosa.

²⁴ BD: The families of the flautist Johann Baptist Wendling (1723-1797) and his brother, the violinist Franz Anton Wendling (1729-1786), both of whom met the Mozarts in 1763, cf. No. 0057/2-6. Their wives and daughters were also musicians and are mentioned several times in the correspondence up until 1790 (No. 1138/21-22). Both brothers came from Alsace and both died in Munich. For the various members of the family Mozart wrote KV 487a (295a), KV 307 (284d) and perhaps KV 368; he also wrote an instrumentation of a flute concerto by J.B. Wendling.

²⁵ BD: Friedrich Ramm (1744 – after 1808), oboist, joined the court music in Mannheim aged 14, was in Paris with Mozart, went to Munich with the court in 1778. Mozart met him in Mannheim in 1777 and wrote the oboe quartet KV 370 (368b) for him in 1781. Cf. No. 0363/18.

Eck and his son²⁶ and Beeckè²⁷ ask me to convey their compliments.

²⁶ BD: The horn player Georg Eck, 1766-1778 in Mannheim and then in Munich. Cf. No. 0485/47. His son, Johann Friedrich Eck (1766-c.1810), was a violinist. Cf. No. 0887/91-92.

²⁷ BD: Cf. No. 0333/20 etc. Johann Baptist Becké (1743-1817), flautist in the court music in Munich, kept the Mozarts informed about developments there.