

0616. MOZART TO HIS FATHER, SALZBURG

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

Mon très cher Père!

Vienne ce 8 d'août 1781<sup>1</sup>

I must write fast, for I have just this moment finished the Jannisaries' chorus,<sup>2</sup> [5] and it is now already past 12 o'clock, and I have promised to drive with the Auerhammers<sup>3</sup> and Cavallieri<sup>4</sup> to Mingendorf<sup>5</sup> by Laxenburg, where the camp<sup>6</sup> is now, on the dot of 2 o'clock. – Adamberger,<sup>7</sup> Cavallieri and Fischer<sup>8</sup> are exceptionally satisfied with their *arias*. – Yesterday I ate at Countess Thun's,<sup>9</sup> and will eat with her again tomorrow. [10] – I let her hear what is finished.<sup>10</sup> – At the end she said to me that she would wager her life that what I have written so far will certainly be well received. – In this regard I do not attach weight to any person's praise or censure – as long as such people have not heard and seen everything as a whole, [15] but quite simply follow my own feelings – but you may simply see from this how very content she must have been with it to say something like that. –

Precisely because I have nothing of any importance to write about, I will simply share with you a horrible story – perhaps it is already familiar to you; here they call it the Tyrolean Story. – [20] It interests me all the more because I know the man whom it unfortunately concerns very well from Munich, and he also now calls on us daily. – This is Herr von Wiedmer,<sup>11</sup> a nobleman. This man, whether by bad luck or a natural inclination towards the theatre, started to set up a troupe some months ago, with which he went to Inspruck.<sup>12</sup> – [25] One Sunday, at 12 noon, this good man is walking quite peacefully along the street, and there are some *court gentlemen* following him, but one of them, by the name of *Baron Buffa*, rails at the *impresario* uninterruptedly, namely: The *bully* should teach his ballerina to

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<sup>1</sup> = “To Monsieur Leopold Mozart, Music Director to His Royal Diners the Archbishop of and in Salzburg / My very dear father! / Vienna, this 8<sup>th</sup> day of August, 1781.”

<sup>2</sup> BD: For *The Abduction from the Seraglio*.

<sup>3</sup> BD: Johann Michael von Auernhammer (†1782); Josepha, his daughter, wished to be a professional musician.

<sup>4</sup> BD: Catarina Cavalieri (1755 in Vienna – 1801 in Vienna), trained by Salieri, active in German and Italian opera troupes in Vienna 1778-1793, sang *Konstanze* in the première of the *Abduction, Donna Elvira* in the Vienna première of *Don Giovanni*, *Demoiselle Silberklang* in the *Schauspieldirektor*, and the *Gräfin* in the Vienna performance of *Figaro* on 28<sup>th</sup> August, 1789; Mozart wrote for her KV 469 No. 8; KV 540c.

<sup>5</sup> BD: Münchendorf, south-west of Laxenburg.

<sup>6</sup> BD: The summer residence of the Imperial court.

<sup>7</sup> BD: Josef Valentin Adamberger (1740-1804), sang in Germany, Italy and then in Vienna, where he was well paid. Sung in many of Mozart's works. Freemason.

<sup>8</sup> BD: Johann Ignaz Ludwig Fischer, pupil of Raaff, distinguished singer. Mozart wrote at least one “*scena*” for him. He sang Mozart's *Scena “Alcandro...”* KV 512 in Vienna on 21<sup>st</sup> March, 1787.

<sup>9</sup> “Gräfin thun”. BD: Mozart's patroness, Marie Wilhelmina, Countess [Gräfin] Thun-Hohenstein (1747-1800), wife of Johann Joseph Anton, Count [Graf] Thun (1711-1788), Imperial Chamberlain [kaiserlicher Kämmerer], Freemason, husband of. Mozart described him as “strange”, probably because of his inclination to the mystical and magical, as in his admiration for Franz Anton Mesmer. It was in their house that Mozart and his wife lodged returning from Salzburg in 1783, on which occasion Mozart wrote the Linz Symphony KV 425. Cf. Nos. 0766/16; 0863/8.

<sup>10</sup> BD: Cf. No. 0615/28 and note.

<sup>11</sup> BD: Research by Walter Senn suggests that this may be a “Herr von Wibmer”, a member (not founder) of an Augsburg theatre troupe under the direction of a merchant named “Herr von Very”; he also took over a troupe in Augsburg directed by F.H. Buffa and Chr.L. Seipp. “Wiedner” therefore cannot have been the founder of a troupe which he brought to Innsbruck: Mozart's information is inaccurate. No sources for the theatre history of Innsbruck mention a “Wiedmer”, although there is a “Wibmer”, was presumably the same person. He is never mentioned again in the letters, so it is unclear whether his “daily visits” to Mozart or their acquaintanceship since “Munich” were real.

<sup>12</sup> Innsbruck.

walk before putting her on stage – and with all kinds of nicknames – [30] Herr von Wiedmer, naturally, after he had listened for a long time, finally looks round. *Buffa* then asks him, Why is he looking at him? – the man answers very well: – Well, you are looking at me too, of course; the street is free, one can of course look around as one wishes. – and goes on his way again. – But *Baron Buffa* goes on railing continuously; in the end it becomes too much for the honest man, [35] and he asks him for whom this is intended? – For you, wretch, with a box on the ears, was the answer; but Herr von Wiedmer gave him the same back, along with yet more unpleasantnesses besides. – Neither had a sword with them, otherwise he would certainly not have paid him back like for like. – The first goes home very quietly to have his hair put back in order a little, [40] |: for *Baron Buffa* also got hold of him by the hair |: and wanted to take the matter to the president<sup>13</sup> |: Count Wolkenstein |: – But his whole house was already full of guards, and they took him to the main guard-house; – he could say what he liked, it was to no avail, he was to get his 25 on the backside. Finally he said: I am a nobleman, [45] I am not going to let myself be beaten when innocent, I would rather become a *soldier* in order to be able to take *revenge* myself. – For in Innsbruck the stupid Tyrolean custom must be that no one can strike a *court gentleman*, no matter how justified he might be in doing so. – at that they took him to the penitentiary, and there he had to hold out not 25, but 50. – [50] Before he lay down on the bench, he said openly: I am innocent, and I now *appeal* publicly to the Emperor.<sup>14</sup> But the *corporal* answered him mockingly. – If the gentleman would just hold out his 50 strokes first, afterwards the gentleman can *appeal*. In 2 hours the whole thing was over – namely at 2 o'clock. At the 5<sup>th</sup> stroke, his leggings were already in shreds. – It does in fact amaze me that he could hold it out. [55] – and he really was unconscious when they carried him away – he lay for 3 weeks. As soon as he had *recovered*, he went straight to Vienna, where he is now eagerly awaiting the arrival of the Emperor, who has already been *informed* of the whole matter, both from here and from Innsbruck, from his sister the Archduchess *Elisabeth*.<sup>15</sup> – Wiedmer himself has a letter from her to the Emperor. – The day before this happened, the *president* had received the *ordre*<sup>16</sup> not to punish anyone, whoever or whatever it might concern, without previously submitting a report. That makes the matter even worse. – the president must indeed be a truly stupid and malevolent ox. – but – where can this man obtain adequate *satisfaction*? – [65] he has had the strokes for all time – if I were Wiedmer, I would demand the following *satisfaction* from the Emperor: – he would have to hold out 50 in the same place, and I would have to be present – and then he would furthermore have to give me 6000 ducats.<sup>17</sup> – And if I could not obtain *satisfaction*, I would not wish for any at all, but would thrust a sword through his heart at the next and best opportunity. [70] N.B. they had already offered him 3000 ducats if he did not go to Vienna and kept quiet about the matter. The people in Innsbruck say of Herr von Wiedmer: The one who has been scourged for us will also redeem us. – Not a soul likes him. – The President's house has been under guard the whole time. – Here a *gospel* has been published about him. [75] – There is no talk of anything except this matter. – I feel most sorry for the poor man, for he has never truly in good health. He has a constant headache, and complains greatly about his chest.

Now I wish you well in every way, I kiss your hands 1000 times, and I embrace my dear sister from my heart and am, sir, eternally your

[80]

most obedient son,

<sup>13</sup> BD: Paris Ignaz, Count [Graf] Wolkenstein und Trostburg, president of the Upper Austrian Government.

<sup>14</sup> BD: Joseph II (1741-1790), Holy Roman Emperor [Kaiser] 1765-1790. Son of Maria Theresia. Ruler of the Habsburg lands from 1780.

<sup>15</sup> “Erzherzogin”. BD: Maria Elisabeth (1743-1808, cf. note on No. 0121/32), daughter of Maria Theresia and abbess of the Imperial and Royal Nunnery in Innsbruck.

<sup>16</sup> = “Order”.

<sup>17</sup> BD: 26,000 florins.

My *compliments* to the *Duschecks*,<sup>18</sup>  
and I hope to see them here.  
Adieu.

W. A: Mzt

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<sup>18</sup> BD: Franz Xaver Duschek (1731-1799), pianist and composer in Prague. His wife Josepha (1753-1824) was a singer. They met the Mozarts in 1777. Mozart wrote two works for Josepha: KV 272 (cf. No. 0337/84); KV 528 (cf. No. 1070/809). Mozart stayed at their country house during work on *Don Giovanni* in 1787. They were obviously visiting Salzburg again; cf. note on No. 0336b; No. 0615/6-7.