

Vienne ce 6 de Dec.^{bre}
1783

*Mon tres cher Père!*¹ –

As I could not expect you to write to me in Vienna before I informed you of my arrival here, it was only today that I went to enquire about any letters at Peisser's² [5], where I then found your lines³ of the 21st *November*, which had already been lying there for 12 days. – You will hopefully have received my letter⁴ from here. – Now I must ask you for something. – You will remember that when you came to Munich as I was writing the grand *opera*,⁵ you remonstrated with me about the debt of 12 *louis d'or*⁶ which I had incurred with Herr Scherz⁷ in Strasbourg [10] – with the words: – I am simply vexed by the little trust you have in me – enough – now, in short, I have the honour of paying 12 *louis d'or*. – I travelled to Vienna; – you to Salzburg. – From your words I had to believe that I no longer needed to worry about it. – Moreover, if it had not been dealt with, [15] you would write informing me – and tell me in person when I was with you now. – Now imagine my embarrassment and astonishment when yesterday someone from the office of the esteemed *banker* Öchser came to me and brought me a letter; – the letter was from Herr Hafner⁸ in Salzburg, with an enclosure from Herr Scherz. – because it was fully 5 years ago, they have in fact demanded the *interest* too, [20] to which I however said quite straight out that nothing will come of that; – adding the remark that legally I was not even obliged to pay a *kreuzer*, since it was an exchange agreement valid for only 6 weeks, therefore an expired agreement. – Nevertheless, in consideration of Herr Scherz's friendship I will pay the *capital*. – [25] no interest was agreed at all, therefore I do not owe any – I do not demand anything from you, dearest father, other than that you should be so kind as to settle it on my behalf with Herr Hafner, or rather Triendl,⁹ for a month. – you, sir, as a man of experience, can easily imagine that it is very inconvenient for me to reveal my situation at just this moment. [30] Herr Öchser's clerk could not say that I was wrong, and said he would inform Herr Hafner. – The most unpleasant thing for me in the whole matter is that Herr Scherz will not have the best opinion of me. – Proof that chance, events, circumstances, misunderstandings, and whatever else you can think of, can often rob an innocent man of his honour! – [35] why did Herr Scherz not let us hear anything more from him this whole long time? – after all, my name is not being kept so secret! – The performance of my *opera*¹⁰ in Strasbourg must at least have caused him to suspect that I was in Vienna? – and then his *correspondence* with Hafner in Salzburg? – – if he had got in touch in the first year, I would have paid him on the spot and with pleasure; – [40] I will do the same now too – but am not in a position to do it on the spot; – or did he perhaps think he was dealing with a blockhead who would pay what he does not owe? – in that case he can put the blockhead on his own shoulders. – Now to something else. 3 *arias*¹¹ are still needed, then the first *act* of my

¹ = “Vienna, this 6th day of December, 1783 / My very dear father!”

² BD: Franz Xaver Peisser, banker in Vienna, correspondent of the Salzburg firm Hagenauer and known to the Mozarts since 1762.

³ BD: No. 0768, lost.

⁴ BD: No. 0769, lost.

⁵ BD: *Idomeneo*.

⁶ BD: = 132 florins. In the relevant letters (Nos. 0503/35; 0505/60, 72), only 8 *louis d'or* are mentioned. Perhaps Mozart had “taken out” another 4 *louis d'or* for some reason without mentioning it in the letters.

⁷ BD: Mozart stopped in Strasbourg in the second half of October, 1778, on the way back from Paris. On the basis of a letter of credit organised by Leopold, he drew the sum of 8 *louis d'or* from Herr Scherz (Nos. 0503/35; 0505/60, 72).

⁸ BD: Siegmund Haffner the Younger (1756-1787), a son of the Salzburg merchant family.

⁹ BD: Anton Triendl, brother-in-law of Siegmund Haffner the Younger (1756-1787).

¹⁰ BD: Probably *The Abduction*. Cf. No. 0728/15.

¹¹ BD: Probably those for Chichibio (No. 3), Caladrino (Scene IV) and Biondello (Scene XI).

*opera*¹² is finished. – the *aria buffa* –the *quartet* – and I can say that I am entirely and completely satisfied with the *finale*, [45] and am indeed looking forward to it. – That is why I would be sorry if I had had to write such *musique* for nothing, that is, if what is inescapably necessary does not happen. – Neither you nor *Abate Varesco*¹³ nor I *realised* that it is almost unthinkable, yes, the *opera* really must fail, [50] if neither of the 2 leading ladies comes on stage until the last moment, but always have to wander around on the *bastion* or *rampart*. – for one *act* I trust the audience to have so much patience – but then they cannot possibly hold out during the 2nd, that cannot be done. – this did not occur to me until I was in *Linz*. – [55] and in this there is no other recourse than to have a few *scenes* take place in the fortress in the 2nd *act*. – *Camera della fortezza*.¹⁴ – one can place the *scene* at the point where *Don Pippo* gives orders for the goose to be brought into the fortress; then one can present the room in the fortress in which *Celidora* and *Lavina* are. – *Pantea* comes in with the goose. – *Biondello* slips out. – [60] They hear *Don Pippo* coming. *Biondello* is now a goose again. – So here, then, one could put a good *quintet*, which will be all the more comical because the goose is one of the singers too. – otherwise I must tell you that the only reason that I had no objection to the whole goose story is that 2 men of greater insight and reflection than myself could not find anything against it, [65] and these 2 are you and *Varesco*. – But there is still time to think up something else – *Biondello* once promised that he would come into the tower; – how he now tackles this, whether he comes in as a fabricated goose or by some other trick is now all the same. – I would have thought one could fit in much more comical and more natural things if *Biondello* stayed in human form. [70] – for example, the news that *Biondello*, in despair at not succeeding in getting into the fortress, had abandoned himself to the waves could come right at the beginning of the 2nd *act*. – He could then disguise himself as a Turk or whatever else you might wish, and lead in *Pantea* as a slave girl |: as a Moorish girl, needless to say :|. – *Don Pippo* is willing to buy the slave girl as his bride. [75] – as a result the slave trader and the Moorish girl are allowed into the fortress so that they can be inspected closely. – Because of this, *Pantea* has the opportunity to *mistreat* her husband and inflict 1000 *impertinences* on him and gets a better role – for the more comical Italian *opera* is, the better. – Now I would ask you to make my opinion unmistakably clear to the good *Abate Varesco*, [80] and say that I ask him to work hard. – I have worked fast enough in the short time. – indeed, I would have had the whole first *act* finished if I did not still need changes in the words in some *arias*; – but I ask you not to say this to him yet. – – My German *opera*, the Abduction from the Seraglio – has been performed – very well – in Prague and *Leipzig* to the applause of all. [85] – I know these two facts from people who saw it there. – I will take the trouble of calling on Herr von Deckelmann,¹⁵ and then give him the *cadenzas* along with the *concerto* as well as the 4 *ducats*.¹⁶ – But I ask you to send me as soon as possible my Idomeneo – the 2 *violin duets* – and *Seb. Bach's* fugues – I need *Idomeneo* [90] – because this Lent I will give 6 *subscription concerts* |: as well as my *concert* in the *theatre* :|, in which I would also like to perform this *opera*;¹⁷ – I furthermore ask you to beg *Tomaselli*¹⁸ to give us the *recipe* for the skin rash ointment, since it has performed wonderful services for us; – and one cannot know whether I might need it again [95] – or can at least be of service to someone with it. – I have is always

¹² BD: *L'oca del Cairo* KV 422.

¹³ BD: 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. Asked by Mozart to write an *opera buffa* (*L'Oca di Cairo*) for him for Vienna.

¹⁴ = “in the chamber of the fortress”.

¹⁵ BD: Bernhard, Baron [Freiherr] von Deglmann, Court Counsellor [Hofrat] in the Bohemian-Austrian Court Chancellery.

¹⁶ BD: = 10 florins.

¹⁷ BD: The performance did not take place.

¹⁸ BD: Guisepe Tomaselli (1758-1836), came to Salzburg in 1781 as a tenor.

better than I would have had. – Now *adieu* – My wife and I kiss your hands 1000 times and embrace our dear sister from the heart, and are, sir, eternally your

most obedient children

[100] *P.S.*

W: *et C: Mozart mp*¹⁹

I ask you to speak effectively with *Varesco* and to *press* him. – please send the *musique* soon. – we kiss Gretl, Heinrich, and Hanni.²⁰

[105] – I will write to Gretl in the next few days. Let Heinrich know that I have already spoken a good deal to his advantage in *Linz* and here; – he should get down to real work on his *staccato*. – for it is only in this that the Viennese cannot forget *La Motte*.²¹ – [110] *Adieu*

¹⁹ mp = “manu propria” = “in his/her own hand”.

²⁰ BD: Margarete and Heinrich Marchand; Johanna Brochard. 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 joined him in February, 1782. Maria Johanna Brochard (*1775), from 1783 the third boarder learning in the Mozarts’ home in Salzburg.

²¹ BD: Franz Lamotte (1751-1781), from 1772 until his death first violinist in Maria Theresia’s court music.