

0407. FRANZ VON HEUFELD, ESQUIRE,¹ TO LEOPOLD MOZART, SALZBURG

Most treasured friend!

[Vienna, 23rd January, 1778]

Your most valued missive² of the 16th inst. reached me safely. To your most valued recollection of me I respond with the most indebted gratitude, and am most glad at the good health of you and yours. [5] Your son's removal of himself from a place which was too confined for his genius was no doubt a thoroughly good move. I feel sure he will be received more seemingly everywhere; if he now looks around a little in the world, it will also be of service to him in completing his training and obtaining the necessary knowledge of the world. I have complete confidence that the good principles instilled in him from his youth onwards by his upright parents [10] mean he will not easily become entangled in unwholesome company. Now, best of friends!, concerning the request to present your son here in the manner suggested to me, I must disclose my thoughts to you with the candour which is my custom in my dealings with friends.

[15] ³It is true that His Majesty the Emperor, to whose hands his mother⁴ has completely entrusted the theatre, is disposed to establish a German comic opera. All commands come from the very highest [level]⁵ via the Senior Chamberlain, Count von Rosenberg,⁶ to the troupe, in which a kind of council of the leading actors and actresses has been set up for the allocation and distribution of the plays and roles. [20] The opera, which is being combined with the national troupe, has furthermore currently engaged as singers D^{lle} Cavalir⁷ and the Schindler daughter, married name Lang,⁸ and a bass,⁹ whose name eludes me. Just a few days ago there was the first rehearsal of the first opera,¹⁰ for which Herr Weidmann provided the text and the viola player from the theatre orchestra, Herr Umlauf, composed the music; [25] the performance is to take place very soon. All this is currently only a trial of whether anything can be done with Germans in this area? In the meantime, it is certain that currently no composer of music will be taken on for this specific purpose, especially since Gluck¹¹ and Salieri¹² are in the Emperor's service. To recommend someone to our

¹ "Franz, Edler von Heufeld." BD: Franz Reinhard (von) Heufeld (1731-1795), known to the Mozarts since 1770. Imperial official and playwright. Theatre director. The title role in his version of *Hamlet* was played in 1773 by Joseph Lange, who later married Aloisia Weber, Mozart's sister-in-law. Cf. No. 0163/23, 24, 26.

² BD: No. 0404, lost.

³ BD: Response to Leopold's enquiry on Wolfgang's behalf about plans for a German language opera company in Vienna. Cf. No. 0402/56 ff.

⁴ "S:^c M: der Kaiser, ... seine Mutter". BD: Joseph II (1741-1790), Holy Roman Emperor [Kaiser] 1765-1790. His mother was Maria Theresia (1717-1780), Holy Roman Empress [Kaiserin].

⁵ BD: Word missing.

⁶ "Oberstkämmerer Grafen v Rosenberg". BD: Franz Xaver Wolf, Graf (later Fürst) Orsini-Rosenberg (1723-1796), administrator in Vienna, later "General Director of Spectacles" in Vienna. Cf. No. 0173/7.

⁷ 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 28th August, 1789; Mozart wrote for her KV 469 No. 8; KV 540c.

⁸ BD: Anna Maria Elisabeth Schindler (1757-1779), daughter of the miniature painter and later director of the Imperial porcelain factory, Philipp Ernst Schindler. She sang in Gluck's *Paride e Elena* in 1771 at the age of 14. In 1775 she married Joseph Lange (later the husband of Aloisia Weber), but died in 1779 after giving birth prematurely.

⁹ BD: Fux (Fuchs).

¹⁰ BD: *Die Bergknappen* [=The Miners] by Ignaz Umlauf (1746-1796, soon in charge of the new German opera company in Vienna), text by Paul Weidmann. Première 17th February, 1778. Cf. No. 0402/56 ff.

¹¹ BD: Christoph Willibald Gluck (1714-1787). In No. 0125/110 ff., Leopold expects Gluck to support *La finta giardiniera*, but in No. 0135/35 ff. he sees him as being amongst those composers undermining the possible success of the opera. In Nos. 0420/160-161 and 0476/33 ff., he again sees Gluck as one of Wolfgang's opponents. On the other hand, in Nos. 0684/43-44 and 0731/18 ff., the relationship seemed mutually positive. In his concert on 23rd March, 1783, Mozart improvised variations on "*Unser dummen*

sovereign would be exactly the way to make sure that the recommended person does not get a position. [30] Nor is any mediator available by whom one could approach his person, because the latter, being knowledgeable himself, arranges and selects everything according to his ideas, as it pleases him. Everyone knows this, and no-one dares to come forward with suggestions and recommendations. In this way, His Majesty¹³ has personally selected Gluck, Salieri and, [35] some time ago now, most of the people in his service. I could also point out some examples to you where people who took a matter directly to the sovereign were unsuccessful. The path by which you propose to approach his person is one which I cannot approve, and that is the reason why I have not taken one single step with a petition,¹⁴ [40] as it was self-evident and clear to me in advance that it would be pointless and, on the contrary, disadvantageous. On the other hand, another path, more praiseworthy and more certain, remains open to good talents, one by which they can find success with our sovereign, namely to present a performance, which is gladly permitted to everyone. If your son were willing to take the trouble to write the music for a good German comic opera, [45] to send it in, to entrust his work to the pleasure of this highest person and then await the decision, he could be successful in finding a placement if the work receives applause. In this case, however, it would no doubt be necessary to be present personally. Regarding Benda¹⁵ and Schweizer,¹⁶ your son need have no worries¹⁷ of any kind. [50] I would vouch for neither of them succeeding here. They do not have the fame here that they do elsewhere. Perhaps even Wieland,¹⁸ having stayed in Mannheim, has renounced something of the high opinion which he had of these people. I read a letter of his of the 5th inst. in which he confesses to have reached a completely different view of the music from anything he had had before. [55] He informs us that the opera there has been brought to a halt, and that he is on the point of returning to Weimar.

To instigate a letter of recommendation¹⁹ to the Queen of France²⁰ for my dear Wolfgang, my friend! – for that I find no opportunity. The friends²¹ who could have done it are no longer here. [60] I prefer to say this to you very forthrightly than to awaken empty hopes in you! If he²² were present, there would be better possibilities of doing something in one situation or another, but, as it is, I am powerless: I have withdrawn completely from the theatre; I no longer frequent the great, since I have had enough of bowing and scraping. I am nevertheless in the good books of one man who can currently achieve much with Her

Pöbel meint” from Gluck’s singspiel *La Rencontre imprévue* in honour of the composer present in the audience.

¹² BD: Antonio Salieri (1750-1825), composer, succeeded Bonno as court music director in Vienna in 1788. In 1807 he wrote a reference for Franz Xaver Wolfgang Mozart, stating that he had a rare talent and would certainly be as great a success as his father. He was succeeded in 1825 by Joseph Eybler.

¹³ “S^r: M.”.

¹⁴ BD: Leopold had asked him to draw up a petition for presentation to the Emperor and Empress. Cf. No. 0406/183.

¹⁵ BD: Georg Benda (1722-1795), from 1750-1778 court music director in Gotha, composer.

¹⁶ BD: Anton Schweitzer (1735-1787) was in Mannheim writing the opera *Rosemunde*, text by Christoph Martin Wieland, but the première was delayed, due to the death of Maximilian III Joseph in Munich, until 20th January, 1780.

¹⁷ BD: Wolfgang was obviously afraid that Benda or Schweitzer would get a position at the German opera in Vienna.

¹⁸ BD: Christoph Martin Wieland (1733-1795), author. The Mozarts had read his books *Abderiten* and also (Leopold at least) *Symphathien* (mentioned in Nos. 0353/44-45 and 0692/4). Mozart’s estate included Wieland’s *Die Dialogen...* and *Oberon*. Cf. No. 0393/33 ff.

¹⁹ BD: Wolfgang had asked for letters of recommendation in No. 0388/66 ff.; cf. No. 0399/45 ff.

²⁰ BD: Archduchess [Erzherzogin] Maria Antonia of Austria, now Queen Marie Antoinette of France.

²¹ BD: Including educationalist Joseph Mesmer (cf. line 81; cf. No. 0388/67), previously chief secretary to Archduchess [Erzherzogin] Maria Antonia of Austria, now Queen Marie Antoinette (cf. No. 0288/25).

²² BD: Wolfgang.

Majesty the Empress²³ [65] and who |: fortunately in this case :| is an impassioned lover of music, plays clavier and sings himself, and with whom there is no better way of placing him under obligation than by a short, good musical composition; only I cannot expect him to do something for your son, whom he does not know, and whose cause he could certainly be called on to support if he knew him. [70]

Now a word about myself. I have been married for one and a half years now, already have a boy, and something fresh is on the way. My wife is a Zach von Hartenstein,²⁴ with whom I live in great contentment. I enjoy the satisfaction of my superiors and the graciousness of my lady sovereign, [75] of whose favour you will find proof in my signature.²⁵ Please commend me, sir, to your dear family, and retain your friendship towards me, just as I most committedly pledge mine to you.

I am, with unchanging respect,

your most devoted

[80] Vienna, 23rd January, 778

Franz von Heufeld, Esquire

I will discuss it with Director Mesmer²⁶ as soon as I meet him.

I now live at No. 416 in the Wildwerkerstrasse.

²³ “bey der Kaiserinn Majestät”.

²⁴ BD: She died in 1803. They had seven children.

²⁵ BD: His signature, now including “Esquire” [Edler], showed he had been raised to the nobility.

²⁶ BD: Cf. line 59.