

0608. MOZART TO HIS FATHER, SALZBURG

À / Monsieur / Monsieur Leopold Mozart / maître de Chapelle à /
Salzbourg.

vienne ce 27 de Juin

Mon très cher Père!¹

1781

[5] Regarding *Mad.^{me} Rosa*² I must tell you that I went there 3 times before I finally had the good fortune of finding her in; you would hardly recognise her anymore, she is so thin. When I requested the *portrait* from her, she even wanted to honour me with it as a present, adding that she does not need it as things stand and would send it to me the following day. – But 3 weeks passed, [10] and no *portrait* came; I returned there 3 times again in vain; finally, however, I went very early while she was still at breakfast with her boorish spouse. – Then she leaped down from making a present to not parting with it at all. – but it occurred to me that one must be a little coarse with *Italians* in cases like this, – and said to her that she that she had not lost her faculties, [15] but that I did not wish to be forced by her congenital weakness to play the clown in front of my father, saying black today and white tomorrow, and I can assure you that I do not need the *portrait*; then she came out with fine words and promised to send it to me the following day, and did indeed send it. – Yet you must send it back again at a suitable opportunity.³ –

[20] I have just come back from Herr von Hippe's, private secretary to Prince Kaunitz,⁴ who is a very likeable man and a very good friend of mine. He paid the first *visit* to me on his own initiative, and then I played to him; – we have 2 keyboards in my apartment, one for playing *galanterie*, and the other a *machine* which is tuned throughout with the low *octave* [25] as we had in *London*, consequently like an organ; on this, then, I played *capriccios* and *fugues*. Almost daily I eat at Herr von Auerhammer's;⁵ – the *Fräulein* is a monster! – But her playing is enough to ravish you; the only thing lacking is the true, fine, singing taste in *cantabile*; she plucks everything apart. – She disclosed her plan to me |: as a secret |: [30] which is to practice diligently another 2 or 3 years, and then to go to Paris and make a *profession* of it. – For she says, I am not beautiful; *o contraire*,⁶ ugly. I do not want to marry a hero from a legal office with 3 or 400 gulden,⁷ and I will not get anything else; therefore I prefer to remain as I am and wish to live from my talent. And in that she is right; so she asked me to support her in carrying out her plan. [35] – but she does not want to tell it to anyone in advance. – I will send the *opera*⁸ to you as soon as possible. Countess Thun⁹ still has it, and is

¹ = “To Monsieur Leopold Mozart, Music Director in Salzburg. / Vienna, this 27th day of June, 1781. / My very dear father!”

² BD: Maria Rosa Barducci (c. 1744-1786), Italian painter and wife of sculptor Johann Baptist Hagenauer. Diplomatic skills were apparently required to coax the artist into parting with this family portrait. Cf. Nos. 0537/87; 0585/96; 0599/66; 0606/4.

³ BD: Deutsch Bild No. 39. The picture of Nannerl was evidently never sent back and can be seen today in Salzburg.

⁴ “Fürst”. BD: Wenzel Anton, Count [Graf] (from 1764 Prince [Fürst]) Kaunitz-Rietberg (1711-1794), diplomat, from 1753 Austrian State Chancellor [Staatskanzler]. Cf. No. 0034/89.

⁵ BD: Johann Michael (von) Auerhammer, (+1782). His “Fräulein” (daughter) was Josepha, who had professional aspirations and to whom he dedicated the six violin sonatas KV 296, 376 (374d), 377 (374e), 378 (317d), 379 (373a), 380 (374f).

⁶ = “On the contrary”.

⁷ BD: Josepha did finally marry a “hero from a legal office”, Johann Bessenig (1751-1837), a municipal official.

⁸ BD: *Idomeneo*, cf. No. 0599/25. Mozart had been considering changes.

⁹ “Gräfin”. 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. 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 his 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.

currently in the country. – Please have the *sonata à 4 mains*¹⁰ in B^b and the 2 *concertos* for 2 *claviers* copied for me.¹¹ – and send them to me as soon as possible; – I would be very glad to get my Masses¹² bit by bit. [40]

Gluck¹³ has suffered a stroke, and what they say about his state of health is not good. – Write telling me if it is true that *Becké*¹⁴ in Munich was almost eaten to death by a dog? – Now I must close, for I must go to eat at Auerhammer's. *Adieu*; I kiss your hands 1000 times [45] and embrace my dear sister from my heart and am, sir, eternally your

most obedient son

Wolfg. Amadé Mozart

Bernaskoni¹⁵ is here and has 500¹⁶ ducats salary because she sings all *arias* a full *comma* higher; [50] but this is truly an art, for she remains absolutely in tune. Now she has promised to sing a ¼ tone higher, but then she wants to earn double. *adieu*.

¹⁰ = “for 4 hands”. BD: KV 358 (186c).

¹¹ BD: KV 365 (316a) and Mozart's own arrangement of KV 242. Leopold sent them to Vienna before 13 October 1781; they were intended for use with Josepha Auernhammer.

¹² BD: Probably the masses KV 275 (272b), 317 and 337.

¹³ BD: The composer Christoph Willibald Gluck (1714-1787). Cf. Nos. 0420/160-161; 0476/33 ff.; 0684/43-44 and 0731/18 ff. Wolfgang encountered Gluck in Vienna in 1768. Cf. Nos. 0125/110 ff.; 0135/35 ff. In his concert on 23rd March, 1783, Mozart improvised variations on “*Unser dummen Pöbel meint*” from Gluck's singspiel *La Rencontre imprévue* in honour of the composer, present in the audience.

¹⁴ BD: Johann Baptist Becké, flautist at the court in Munich, informed the Mozarts of events there.

¹⁵ BD: Antonia Bernasconi, singer, sang Aspasia in *Mitridate* KV 87 (74a) in 1770, cf. note on No. 125/134.

¹⁶ BD: 55 ducats = 2250 florins.