

0776. MOZART TO HIS FATHER, SALZBURG

À / Monsieur / Monsieur Leopold de Mozart / Maitre de la Chapelle de
S: A: R: / L'archeveque de et à / Salzbourg¹

Mon très cher Père! –

Vienne ce 20 de fevrier.² [1784]

I have received your latest letter entire and correct; – yesterday I was so happy to hear Herr Freyhold³ playing a *concerto* of his own *scomposition*.⁴ – in his playing I found little, and missed much; – [5] his entire *bravour* consists of double-tonguing – but otherwise one hears absolutely nothing at all – in the *adagio* I was glad that it was very short; – he also played the *adagio* when he was with you – for, right from the beginning, those *accompanying* could not find the place because the piece was written in 4/4 time and he played it *alla breve*. – and when I wrote *alla breve* on it in my own hand, [10] he admitted to me that Papa had also quarrelled over this in Salzburg. – the *rondò* should have been spirited – that was the most stupid stuff in the world, – in the first *allegro* I found that Herr Freyhold would become not a bad *composer* if he learned *composition* properly. – That Herr Hafeneder⁵ has died so long before his time: I am most sorry about that, but especially because you now have the [15] *seccatura*⁶ hung round your neck: but I cannot say that the Prince⁷ was wrong; in his place I would have done it even before Hafeneder; – but I would have accompanied my orders with an increase in salary and given orders that the boys should come to you – or I would have given you free *quarters* in the Kapellhaus.⁸ – In a few days now 2 gentlemen will leave for Salzburg, [20] a *deputy comptroller*⁹ and a cook; – I will probably give them a *sonata*,¹⁰ a *symphony* and a new *concerto*¹¹ to take with them. – the *symphony* in score, which you can have copied when convenient, you can also give it away and let it be performed anywhere you wish. – the *concerto* in score – [25] which you also give to the *copyist* and send back to me again, but as soon as possible – but *N.B.* do not give it to a *soul*, for I composed it for Fräulein Ployer,¹² who paid me well for it. – But you are entirely free to keep the *sonata*. – Now I must ask you about something of which I understand nothing at all and grasp nothing. – if one has something printed or engraved at one's own expense, [30] how does one do it so that one is not defrauded by the engraver? – he can of course print off as many *copies* as he cares to, and consequently swindle me. – in this situation one would indeed have to be watching these people over the shoulder all the time – but this was not possible for you when you had your book printed because you were in Salzburg and the book was printed in Augsburg. – [35] In future I am inclined not to sell my things to an engraver here again, but to have them printed

¹ Address in DME. “To Monsieur Leopold de Mozart, music director to High Royal Highness the Archbishop of and in Salzburg.”

² = “My very dear father! Vienna, this 20th day of February.”

³ BD: Johann Philipp Freyhold, flautist in the service of the Margrave [Markgraf] of Baden-Durlach. Cf. No. 0775/37.

⁴ In Italian style Mozart prefixes an “s-”, meaning “de-” or “dis-” – thus “decomposition” or “discomposition”.

⁵ BD: Joseph Hafeneder, court musician and composer.

⁶ BD: = “Irritating, burdensome activity”: in this case taking over Hafeneder’s teaching duties.

⁷ “dem fürsten”. BD: Leopold’s employer, Wolfgang’s former employer, the Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg.

⁸ Salzburgwiki: Building dating from the 14th century, at this time used as a boarding school training young people for the cathedral music.

⁹ “Vice-Controleur”.

¹⁰ BD: Possibly the sonata for two keyboards KV 448 (375a).

¹¹ BD: The keyboard concerto in E^b KV 449.

¹² BD: The pianist Barbara (Babette) von Ployer, daughter of Gottfried Ignaz (*von* from 1780 on) Ployer, a high official. Mozart composed for her the concertos KV 449 and 453 and played with her in numerous private concerts.

or engraved with *prenumeration*¹³ at my own expense, as most of them do and profit greatly from the process; I am not anxious about subscribers –I have already had *offers* with *prenumeration* from *Paris* and *Warsaw*. – I therefore ask you to give me information on this. [40] – then I would like to make yet another request. Would it not be possible to have at least a copy of my certificate of baptism?¹⁴ – everyone here is in *dispute*, saying that I must have been at least 10 years old when I was here for the first time.¹⁵ – Last year, in the Augarten,¹⁶ the Emperor¹⁷ himself contradicted me to my face. – now Herr von Strack¹⁸ believes it on my word. – [45] by presenting my certificate of baptism, I could stop up all their mouths. – Now may life go well for you. – 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,
*W: et C: Mozart mp*¹⁹

¹³ = “pre-paid subscription”.

¹⁴ BD: It is doubtful whether a certificate of baptism was necessary for the purpose mentioned. Leopold appears not to have sent one, for Mozart had the same problem again when he attempted to join the Viennese Tonkünstler-Societät [musicians benevolent society] (cf. No. 0846).

¹⁵ BD: 1772, aged 6.

¹⁶ BD: Gardens and palace, today in Vienna's 2nd administrative *Bezirk*, originally laid out by Emperor Friedrich III (1440-1493), opened to the public by Emperor Joseph II in 1775.

¹⁷ “der kayser”. BD: Joseph II (1741-1790), Holy Roman Emperor [Kaiser] 1765-1790. Son of Maria Theresia.

¹⁸ BD: Johann Kilian Strack (1724-1793), entered Imperial service in 1758 as a widowed soldier, rose to be the valet to Joseph II. Closely connected to the Weber and Thorwart families. Played violoncello in a private string quartet with the Emperor, is said to have influenced the Emperor against Mozart, Haydn and others.

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