

1044.¹ MOZART TO HIS FATHER, SALZBURG²

*À Monsieur Monsieur Leopold de Mozart / Maître de La Chapelle de
S. A. R. / à / Salzbourg³*

*Mon tres cher Père!*⁴ –

[Vienna, 4th April, 1787]

It is very irksome to me that, due to the foolishness of *Storage*,⁵ my letter did not reach your hands; [5] – among the things in the letter was that I hoped you had received my last letter⁶ – but since you make no mention at all of what I wrote |: it was the 2nd letter from Prague |: I do not know what I should think; it is quite possible that some servant at Count Thun's⁷ may have seen fit to put the postage money in his pocket; [10] – I would of course rather have paid double postage money than discover my letter was in the wrong hands, – This Lent Ramm⁸ and 2 Fischers⁹ were here – the *bass* and the *oboist* from *London*. – If the latter did not play better during the time that we knew him in Holland¹⁰ than he does now, he certainly does not deserve the *renome*¹¹ that he has. – This, however, just between the two of us. [15] – at that time I was at an age in which I was not capable of making a judgement – I am only able to remember that he pleased me exceptionally, as he did everyone; – one will find this quite obvious if one assumes that taste has changed extraordinarily – he will be playing according to an old school. – but No! – [20] he plays, in a word, like a miserable *pupil* – young André,¹² who learnt with *Fiala*, plays a thousand times better – and then his *concertos*¹³ – of his own *composition* – each *ritornello* lasts quarter of an hour – then the *Hero* appears – lifts one leaden foot after the other – and then thumps them down on the earth again in alternation – his tone comes completely through the nose – and his *themes* are a *tremulant* on the organ. [20] Is this the picture you would have called to mind? – and yet it is nothing but the truth – but a truth which I am telling only you, sir. – I have just this moment heard news that leaves me very downcast – all the more so since I was able to suppose from your last letter that you are, praise God, in very good health; – but now I hear that you are truly ill! [30] It is surely not necessary to tell you with how much longing I look forward to comforting

¹ BD: Original *olim* W. Heyer, Cologne. Copy Bspk. NissenB.

² BD: The last extant letter from Mozart to his father before the latter's death (27th May, 1787) and the only one extant from the time between Leopold's first letter to Nannerl (No. 0803) and his last (No. 1048).

³ = “To Monsieur Leopold de Mozart, music director to His Royal Highness in Salzburg”.

⁴ = “My very dear father”.

⁵ The mother of the famous singer. BD: Cf. No. 1036/42-43; No. 1037.

⁶ BD: One of the two lost letters from before 8th February, 1787 (No. 1030).

⁷ “Graf Thun”. BD: Johann Joseph Anton, Count [Graf] Thun, who gave Mozart accommodation in Prague.

⁸ BD: Friedrich Ramm, oboist, joined the court music in Mannheim aged 14, was in Paris with Mozart, went to Munich with the court in 1778. Mozart met him in 1777 and composed the oboe quartet KV 370 (368b) for him in 1781.

⁹ BD: Johann Ignaz Ludwig Fischer, pupil of Raaff, distinguished singer. Mozart wrote at least one “*scena*” for him. Now returning to Vienna for the first time since 1783; there he sang Mozart's *Scena* “*Alcandro...*” KV 512 in Vienna on 21st March, 1787. Johann Christian Fischer, oboist, mentioned in No. 0105/22. Resident in England since 1784, where he was married to Thomas Gainsborough's daughter. Mozart chose a theme from the finale of his oboe concerto of 1768 for his variations for piano KV 179 (189a).

¹⁰ BD: September 1765 – April 1766.

¹¹ = renown.

¹² BD: The young oboist André, presumably from the well-known family of musicians and publishers in Offenbach, travelling to Vienna with his teacher Joseph Fiala (cf. No. 0529/7). He stayed in Mozart's accommodation in Vienna for a time (cf. No. 0918/19-20).

¹³ BD: 2 concertos for oboe and orchestra and 9 concertos for oboe or flute and orchestra by Johann Christoph Fischer are known.

news direct from yourself; and this is also my firm hope – although I have made it my habit¹⁴ always to picture to myself the worst in all things – As death |: strictly considered :| is the true ultimate destination of our life, I have therefore, over the past few years, made myself so familiar with this true, best friend of man [35] that its image not only no longer holds anything terrifying for me, but also a great deal that calms and comforts! And I thank my God that he has granted me the good fortune to create the opportunity |: you understand me¹⁵ :| to come to know it as the key to our true blessedness – [40] I never lay myself down to sleep without recollecting that perhaps |: young though I may be :| I may no longer exist the next day – and surely none of all those who know me will be able to say that I am sullen or sad in my comportment – and for this blessedness I thank my creator every day and wish the same to all my fellow men. – [45] in the letter |: which *Storace* packed away :| I had already made a statement to you on this point |: on the occasion of the sad demise of my dearest, best friend, Count von Hatzfeld¹⁶ :| – he was just 31 years old, like me – I do not feel sorry for him – but quite certainly and heartily feel sorry for myself and for all who knew him as well as I did. – I hope and wish that you may be in better health as I write this; [50] but if, contrary to all expectations, you are no better, I ask you by¹⁷ not to conceal it from me, but to write, or have someone write, to me with the truth so that I can be in your arms as soon as is humanly possible; I swear this to you by all that – is holy to us. – [55] Yet I hope to receive from you soon a letter full of consolation, and in this pleasant hope I am joined by my wife and *Carl* in kissing your hands 1000 times, and I am eternally, sir,

your most obedient son
W. A. Mozart mp¹⁸

[60] Vienna 4th April 1787

¹⁴ BD: The following thoughts are certainly based on ideas found in Moses Mendelssohn's *Phädon oder über die Unsterblichkeit der Seele*, 1767. [*Phaedon, or on the immortality of the soul*]. A copy of the work was found in Mozart's estate.

¹⁵ BD: Perhaps on the basis of Masonic ideas they shared, not referred to elsewhere in the letters.

¹⁶ “grafen von Hatzfeld”.BD: The Eichstätt cathedral canon August Clemens Ludwig Maria, Count [Graf] Hatzfeld (1754-1787), who had become acquainted with Mozart in Vienna in the spring of 1786 and died in Düsseldorf on 30th January, 1787. Mozart wrote for him and Baron Pulini the scene with rondo for tenor with a violin solo “*Non più, tutto ascoltai*” – “*Non temer, amato bene*” KV 490 (cf. No. 0937/10 ff.).

¹⁷ BD: Dots left by Mozart.

¹⁸ mp = manu propria = in his own hand.