

*Mon très cher Père!*¹[Augsburg, 17th October, 1777]

Now I must first of all start with Stein's *pianoforte*.² Before I had seen anything of Stein's work, the *claviers* by Späth³ were my favourite. But now I have to give preference to Stein's, for their [5] damping is even better than in those from Regensburg. When I strike strongly, I can leave the finger lying, or lift it, and the tone simply finishes the moment I choose. I can come at the keys however I like, the tone will always be the same. It will not jangle, it will not come out stronger or weaker, or even fail to sound. In brief, [10] everything is even. It is true, he does not part with such a pianoforte for less than 300 florins, but the effort and diligence which he applies are beyond price. His instruments have this particular property compared to others: they are made with an escapement.⁴ Not one in a hundred will get involved with that, but without the escapement it is simply not possible for a piano forte not to jangle or sound on. When one plays the keys, its [10] little hammers fall back from the strings again the moment they hit them, whether one leaves the keys pressed or released. Once he has finished such a *clavier* |: as he told me himself :| he first of all sits down and tries out every kind of passage, run and leap, and shaves and works until the *clavier* does everything. [20] For he works only for the sake of music, and not for his own advantage alone, otherwise he would finish it at once. He often says, If I were not such a passionate lover of music myself, and could not play some little things on the *clavier* myself, I would certainly have lost the patience for my work a long time ago, but I am simply a [25] lover of instruments which do not let the player down and will last. And his *claviers* really do last. He takes good precautions to ensure the soundboard does not break or crack. When he has finished a soundboard for a *clavier*, he exposes it to air, rain, snow, heat of the sun, and every devil, so that it cracks, and then he inserts a cutting [30] and glues it in so that it becomes properly strong and firm. He is quite happy when it cracks, afterwards one is simply sure that nothing more will happen to it. He sometimes even cuts into it himself, and glues it together again, and strengthens it properly. He has three such finished *piano fortes*. I have just played on them again today. We dined today, the 15th, at the young Herr Gassner's,⁵ [35] who is the young, handsome widower of a young beautiful woman.⁶ They had only been married for 2 years. He is a very honest, polite young man. They treated us to the best. Also dining there was a colleague of the gentlemen *Abbé Henri*,⁷ *Bullinger*,⁸ and *Wishofer*,⁹ an ex-Jesuit who is currently music director in the cathedral here. He knows Herr Schachtner¹⁰ extremely well, [40] he was his choir director

¹ = "My very dear father".

² BD: Mozart carries out the intention voiced in No. 0351/164-165.

³ BD: Franz Jakob Späth (1714-1786) of Regensburg, credited with the invention of the tangent mechanism. Mozart is not known to have ever possessed an instrument by Späth, so he must have got to know them elsewhere.

⁴ BD: Instead of a full-length hammer rail, Stein's instrument said individual hammer tongues.

⁵ BD: Valentin Alois Gasser took the copies of Leopold's violin school printed by Lotter to the Frankfurt book fair free of charge. Cf. No. 0331/53.

⁶ BD: His first wife died in 1777. In 1784 he married the widow of the merchant Vinzenz Brentano.

⁷ BD: Ex-Jesuit, like Bullinger, tutor [Hofmeister] to the family of Hereditary Provincial Marshal Lodron.

⁸ BD: Abbé Franz Joseph Johann Nepomuk Bullinger (1744-1810), Jesuit, private tutor, friend of the Mozart family in Salzburg, where he seems to have arrived between 1774 and 1776. House teacher to Count [Graf] Leopold Ferdinand Arco, later to Count [Graf] Sigmund ("Sigerl") Lodron. Mozart called him "his best of all friends" (cf. No. 0459/1).

⁹ BD: The name is probably Weishofer, an ex-Jesuit like the other two.

¹⁰ BD: Cf. No. 0089/73. Johann Andreas (he called himself "Andrée") Schachtner (1731-1795). Became Salzburg royal trumpeter in 1754. He also played violin (cf. No. 1210/99) and violoncello. He published a book of poems in 1765, dedicating it to Johann Christoph Gottsched. Probably contributed texts to KV 42, 50

in Ingolstadt. His name is Father Gerbl.¹¹ I am to send his compliments to Herr Schachtner with this letter. Herr Gassner and one of his Mad:^{sele} sisters-in law, Mama, myself, and our little cousin¹² went to Herr Stein's after the meal. At four o'clock, the music director and Herr Schmittbauer,¹³ organist at Saint Ulrich's, a simple, old, honest man, joined us afterwards; [45] and just as I was sight-reading a *sonata* by *Becché*,¹⁴ which was pretty difficult, *miserable al solito*,¹⁵ how the esteemed music director and organist¹⁶ crossed himself cannot be described. I have already played all my 6 *sonatas*¹⁷ from memory very often here and in Munich. It was the fifth, in G,¹⁸ that I played in the distinguished Bauernstube concert.¹⁹ The last, in D,²⁰ comes out incomparably on the pianoforte by Stein. [50] He also makes the mechanism where one presses with the knee²¹ better than anyone else. I hardly need to touch it, and it goes beautifully, and, as soon as one takes one's knee off even a little, one does not hear anything sounding on at all. Now I may get to his organs tomorrow – that is, I will get round to writing, and I am keeping his little daughter for the end.²² [55] When I said to Herr Stein I would like to play his organ,²³ for the organ is my passion, he was greatly amazed and said: What, such a man as yourself, such a great clavier player, wants to play on an instrument where there is no sweetness, no expression, no *piano* nor *forte*, but it always goes on the same? – – All of that has no significance. [60] The organ is indeed in my eyes and ears the king of all instruments. Well, whatever you wish. Then we went together. I had already noticed from his conversation that he thought I would not produce much on his organ; I would, for example, surely play it exactly like a clavier. He told me he had already taken Chobert²⁴ to the organ at his request, [65] and I certainly felt anxious, said he, for Chobert told everybody and the church was pretty full, for I simply thought this person will be full of spirit, fire and speed, and this does not suit the organ. But, when he began, I changed my opinion at once. I said nothing but this: What, Herr Stein, do you think I will run around on the organ? – – [70] Oh, sir, this is something quite

(46b), 196; 345 (336a), 344 (336b), the German version of KV 366. In 1792 gave Nannerl detailed information on Mozart's early years, cf. No. 1210.

¹¹ BD: Father Philipp Gerbl (1719-1803), Jesuit, professor of canon and civic law, from 1777 music director at Augsburg cathedral. Received honorary position at the cathedral after the dissolution of the Jesuits in 1793.

¹² BD: Mozart's cousin Maria Anna Thekla Mozart (1758-1841), known in the letters as the "Bäsle" ["little cousin"].

¹³ BD: Johann Adam Joseph Schmidbauer († 1786), from 1742 organist at the monastery of St. Ulrich and Afra in Augsburg.

¹⁴ BD: Notger Ignaz Franz von Beecke (1733-1803), keyboard player, later superintendent of music in Wallerstein, cf. No. 0111/33-34. The first publication of his compositions was in Paris. He took part in a keyboard "competition" with Mozart in Munich in winter 1774/75, cf. No. 0312/22.

¹⁵ = "Miserable as always" – ironical "performance direction".

¹⁶ BD: Johann Adam Joseph Schmidbauer († 1786), from 1742 organist at the monastery of St. Ulrich and Afra in Augsburg.

¹⁷ BD: KV 279 (189d), 280 (189e), 281 (189f), 282 (189g), 283 (189h), 284 (205b), Mozart's repertoire pieces on this journey, cf. No. 0363/27. In 1784, Leopold offered them to the Prince [Fürst] von Fürstenberg via Sebastian Winter.

¹⁸ BD: KV 283 (189h), probably written in Salzburg at the end of 1774.

¹⁹ BD: The Geschlechterstube ["patrician room"] in Augsburg (cf. No. 0351/144, 145), described here as a Bauernstube [peasants' room].

²⁰ BD: KV 284 (205b), the so-called *Dürnitz Sonata*, cf. No. 0340/25.

²¹ BD: A knee lever enabled precise stamping of all the strings.

²² BD: Nanette (1769-1833), daughter of the instrument maker Stein and from 1794 wife of the pianist Johann Andreas Streicher (1761-1833). She was not only a recognised keyboard player (first performance 1776 in Augsburg), but also became so familiar with the whole process of making keyboard instruments that she was able to take over the workshop after the death of her father.

²³ BD: There were two in churches in Augsburg.

²⁴ BD: Probably Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart (1739-1791), who published his *Deutsche Chronik* [German Chronicle] in Augsburg and Ulm from 1774, and was imprisoned in Württemberg 1777-1787 for inciting insurrection.

different. We came up to the choir-loft. I began to improvise a prelude, and there he was already laughing, then a fugue. I certainly believe, he said, that you like playing organs, when one plays like that – – At the beginning, the pedals were a little strange to me, because it had no short octave. It started with c, then d, e in a row, but with us D and E are above, as E^b and f# are here. But I soon found my way. [75] I was also at St. Ulrich's, on the old organ.²⁵ The stairs are something abominable. I asked if someone would play something on it, I would like to go down and listen, for upstairs the organ had no effect at all. But I could not distinguish anything, for the young choirmaster,²⁶ a clergyman, played such runs all over the organ that one understood nothing and, when he wanted to make harmonies, it was nothing but disharmonies, [80] for it was not properly tuned. Afterwards, we had to go into a parlour, for Mama and my cousin and Herr Stein were also there. A certain Father *Emilian*,²⁷ a conceited donkey and a simplistic joker in his own mind, was quite delightful. He always wanted to have his fun with my little cousin, but she had her fun with him – – finally, when he was tipsy |: which soon [85] happened :|, he turned to music. He sang a *canon*, and I said, I have never heard anything more beautiful in my life. I said, I am sorry, I can't join the singing, for I have intrinsically no intonation. That doesn't matter, said he. He started. I was the third. But I sang a completely different text to it, e.g. Oh you prick, you, lick my arse, *sotto voce*,²⁸ to my little cousin. [90] Then we laughed again for half an hour. He said to me: If only we could be together a little longer. I would like to discuss the art of composition²⁹ with you, sir. There we would soon reach the end of the discussion, said I. Keep your nose of it.³⁰ To be continued the next time.

W: A. Mozart.

³¹MOZART'S POSTSCRIPT ON THE ENVELOPE:

Msr. Novac, who arrived here today, sends his compliments to all, [95] especially to *Mad^{selle}* Catherl.³² The next time I will write more entertainingly. Next Wednesday, I will give a disconcert in the Count Fugger Hall. My dear little cousin also commends herself. Now all 3 of us are going to Herr Stein and will dine there. I have no worries, except for the accompaniment in my concert, for the music here is bad from its very heart. [100] Now I must finish, it is already 11 o'clock. I kiss Papa's hands 100 000 times, and I embrace my sister with all my brute force,

*À tutti tutti tutti*³³
our compliments.

and am so bold,
not hot, not cold,
your most obedient son, W: A. Mozart

²⁵ BD: Built in 1581 by Eusebius Ammerbach.

²⁶ BD: Father Nidgar Fichtl (1784-1817), took vows in St. Ulrich in 1769. Was still in charge of the music there in his old age.

²⁷ BD: Father Aemilian Angermayr, took his vows as a Dominican in Augsburg in 1755. Professor of dogmatics and theology in Füssen, had returned to Augsburg shortly before Mozart's visit.

²⁸ = "in an undertone".

²⁹ BD: According to one of the brothers in the monastery, he left a number of "successful examples of his great knowledge and skill".

³⁰ Literally: "How does it taste, scrofulous one?".

³¹ BD VI, p. 401: This postscript was originally considered to be lines 192-201 of No. 0351. The numbering on the leaf bearing this postscript and in letter No. 0352 suggests the postscript could belong to No. 0352, where it becomes lines 94-104.

³² BD: "Katherl, Katerl, Catherl", Katharina Gilowsky (1750-1802), daughter of Wenzel Andreas Gilowsky, court surgeon, member of the airgun club of earlier years, frequenter of the Mozart family home. Sometime governess to the children of Leopold Andreas, Count [Graf] Plaz.

³³ = "To everyone, everyone, everyone".