

[Salzburg, 22nd December, 1777]

My very esteemed, Very Reverend Padre Maestro

At last the day is here! For a year now my son has owed you a reply to your most courteous letter³ of 18th December of last year, in which you were so good as to [5] assure him of your approval of the motet concertato à 4,⁴ showing at the same time your desire to have the portrait⁵ of my son as well as of myself.⁶ I have delayed this service to you until now for lack of an able painter, since such are missing in our country, and hoping that a good painter might pass through this town, as sometimes happens, I deferred it time after time; but in the end [10] I was forced to take a decision all at once and to have the portrait done by one of our painters. Please hear the story.⁷ 5 years have passed in which my son served our Prince for a pittance, in the hope that, little by little, his efforts and his weak knowledge united with his very great diligence and unceasing study would be received gratefully. But we were deceived! [15] Refraining from giving you a broad description of our Prince's manner of thinking and acting, it suffices to say that he was not ashamed to say that my son knows nothing, that he should go to a Conservatory in Naples to study music⁸ – and why all of this? – to make it plain that a fellow of this kind should wish to be so stupid as to persuade himself, as a result of having heard these decisive words from the mouth of a prince, that he does not deserve more [20] pay and recognition. The rest will gradually become known in Italy, and I would not be surprised if it is already known. This caused me to take the decision to allow my son to resign his service and go elsewhere. He then left Salzburg on 23rd September and after having stayed for a time at the Electoral Court of Munich, [25] went to Manheim, where he is in the best of health and sends you his most devoted respects. His stay in Manheim will continue until the first days of March, that is, until the end of Carnival, so that afterwards, for Lent, God willing, he will be in Paris. That is the reason that I took the decision to have the desired portrait done as a service to our dear Sig. Padre Maestro. [30] If you should wish, according to your customary goodness, to give his Highness the Elector⁹ a good impression and paint a favourable picture¹⁰ of my son, you would be doing a grand and beautiful action, since two words from yourself carry more weight than the warmest recommendation by a sovereign. I flatter myself that this could perhaps take place – on the occasion of New Year. – But if this picture is not already in your hands, [35] you will say, Where is the portrait? – I entrusted

¹ BD: Original lost. Schieder mair; translation in Nissen B.

² BD: Giovanni Battista Martini (1706-1784), specialist in the theory and history of music. Taught Mozart during his stay in Bologna in preparation for admission to the Accademia filarmonica. Cf. No. 0171/20.

³ BD: No. 0325.

⁴ BD: The motet *Misericordias Domini* KV 222 (205a), sent for Padre Martini's comments on 4th September, 1776. Cf. No. 0323/4-5, 9.

⁵ BD: The portrait of Mozart as a Knight of the Golden Spur (Deutsch Bild No. 11). Cf. No. 0380/110 ff.

⁶ BD: It appears that no portrait of Leopold was sent to Bologna.

⁷ BD: There follows a concise record of Wolfgang's dismissal and his decision to travel.

⁸ BD: This statement by the Archbishop seems to be authentic.

⁹ BD: Karl Theodor (1724-1799). Studied in Leyden and Leuven. From 1742 Elector [Kurfürst] of the Palatinate, where he encouraged the arts in Mannheim, and from 30th December, 1777, Elector of Bavaria. Cf. No. 0363/30. On his especial regard for Martini, cf. No. 0389/30 ff. Martini dedicated the second part of his *Storia della musica* to the Elector.

¹⁰ BD: Figuratively speaking.

it to the firm of Sigismund Haffner,¹¹ an important merchant of Salzburg, who took it to Bolzano for the St. Andrew's Fair, where he will try to arrange its delivery, and perhaps it will be addressed to Sgr. Prinsechi¹² in Bologna. The picture is not of great value or artistry but for the likeness, which I assure you is most like him – he is just like that. [40] At the back of the picture I have written¹³ his name and age, and I have yet another idea, which is to send you the beginning of his compositions,¹⁴ first of all from his sonatas for harpsichord¹⁵ composed for Madame Victoire and printed in Paris when he was aged seven – then from those written for the Queen of England¹⁶ at the age of eight, printed in London, – then from those composed for the Duchess of Nassau Weilburg¹⁷ [45] at the age of nine, and printed at The Hague in Holland etc. etc., where I will then add a short note about his journeys and notable deeds etc. As for a portrait of me, it does not seem to me that my snout merits being placed in the company of men of talent. – But if you nevertheless desire it, I shall consider how to serve you, but not for any merit on my part other than that of having done my duty in cultivating the talent [50] that our most beneficent God gave to my son. May you continue to grant us your grace and protection, be careful to preserve your health and to note that, entirely at the disposal of your commands and inalterably respectful of your person, I declare myself

Your most Reverend Holiness'
most humble, most devoted and most obliged servant,
Leopoldo Mozart

[55]

Salzburg, 22nd Decemb. 1777

I spoke of New Year, and I almost forgot the good wishes etc. – – But what would you like me to say to you? – I wish you good health – – one requires nothing else. I pray that God may say: Amen!

¹¹ BD: Founded by Siegmund Haffner the Elder (1699-1772), Salzburg merchant and public figure. Mozart's Haffner Symphony KV 385 was written for his son by his second marriage, Siegmund Haffner the Younger (1756-1787).

¹² BD: Cf. No. 0171/47-48, 94.

¹³ BD: Cf. No. 0380/110, 112.

¹⁴ BD: Here meaning, obviously, simply the names of the first compositions.

¹⁵ BD: KV 6, 7; engraved in Paris as Opus I.

¹⁶ BD: KV 10-15; engraved in London in 1765 as Opus III.

¹⁷ BD: KV 26-31; engraved in The Hague in 1766 as Opus IV. Cf. No. 0102/24 etc.