

0411. LEOPOLD MOZART TO HIS SON, MANNHEIM

*A Monsieur / Monsieur Wolfgang Amadé / Mozart Maitre de Musi=
que / à / Man[n]heim*¹

*Mon très cher Fils!*²

Salzb., 29th January,
1778

[5] Here you have the original letter³ from Herr von Heufeld.⁴ To confess the truth, I have not got involved in any elaborate thoughts about the whole matter, for it seems to me that the Emp.⁵ does it the same way as our Archb.⁶ – it should be something good, and not cost much. I do not need the letter back again, Mama should just keep it. With this letter, a note from Director Messmer⁷ was enclosed, [10] written word for word as follows: *Dearest friend! I do not understand how it could be that you have not received any answer to the letter you sent me; I wrote to you, admittedly somewhat late but quite certainly, after my illness. Could it perhaps be the fault of my wife⁸ /: although I hardly believe it :/ who was always in concealed anxiety because of her Joseph⁹ [15] and did not send the letters off? – My relative Dr. Messmer,¹⁰ who leaves here¹¹ for Paris in the coming days and wished to take my son¹² with him in the hope it might profit him, was to raise precisely this matter with you. Now this is all off again, since your esteemed son¹³ is no longer in Salzb. You can rest assured of my hearty love for you [20] and of my inner partaking in everything that happens to you and your family. – Why did you not send your esteemed son straight to Vienna? Or why do you not send him even now? – I herewith give you the most faithful assurance that he will have lodging, board and everything etc. as long as he wishes, and that I and all other friends would endeavour to quickly procure other good sources of income for him. [25] This is indeed always a good place for a great talent, only it sometimes does not happen at once; but with the support of good friends, one achieves one's purpose successfully – and ultimately Vienna is still the best place to live. You know your Swabian friends¹⁴ and the place itself. [30] Choose, sir – and let me know. – I am, to you and yours, your old friend Dr. Messmer.* If the good Messmer had answered me, or if

¹ = “To Monsieur Wolfgang Amadé Mozart, music director in Mannheim”.

² = “My very dear son”.

³ BD: Cf. No. 0407.

⁴ BD: Leopold had written to Heufeld for help obtaining a post and a letter of recommendation for Wolfgang. Franz Reinhard (von) Heufeld (1731-1795): Known to the Mozarts since 1770. Imperial official and playwright. Theatre director. The title role in his version of *Hamlet* was played in 1773 by Joseph Lange, who later married Aloisia Weber, Mozart's sister-in-law. Cf. No. 0163/23, 24, 26.

⁵ “K.”: BD: Joseph II (1741-1790), Holy Roman Emperor [Kaiser] 1765-1790.

⁶ “Erzb.”: BD: Hieronymus Joseph Franz de Paula, Count [Graf] Colloredo (1732-1812), Prince-Archbishop [Fürst-Erzbischof] of Salzburg from 1772. Employer of Leopold and, for a time, of Wolfgang. Cf. No. 0263/9.

⁷ BD: Joseph Mesmer, educationalist, was previously chief secretary to Archduchess [Erzherzogin] Maria Antonia of Austria, now Queen Marie Antoinette of France. Related to the famous Dr. Franz Anton Mesmer. Cf. Nos. 0288/25; 0407/81-82.

⁸ BD: Therese Mesmer, nee Steiner, cf. No. 0299/9.

⁹ BD: Joseph (1766-1818), son of the school director Joseph Mesmer (cf. No. 0288/25) and his first wife, Maria Theresia. Cf. No. 0289/27.

¹⁰ BD: Dr. Franz Anton Mesmer (1734-1815), the famous “magnetizer”. A brief memorial to his methods is found in the first finale of *Così fan tutti*. Sang (tenor) and played numerous instruments (violoncello, harpsichord, glass harmonica).

¹¹ BD: After an initially promising, but then unsuccessful, treatment of the blind pianist Maria Theresia von Paradis (cf. No. 0764/17-18), Dr. Mesmer had to leave Vienna. He went to Paris via Munich and Switzerland, staying in Paris until 1789 and attracting great attention.

¹² BD: Joseph, as in line 14.

¹³ BD: Wolfgang.

¹⁴ BD: The Mesmers, who were from the Lake Constance area.

perhaps his wife had not kept the letters back, I would without doubt have come upon the idea of sending you to Vienna, since you would have been well-placed in his house, which you know. [35] At least this path remains open to you if you want it. You will also see that Herr von Heufeld, however lukewarm a Christian he may be, as we all know, nevertheless makes the remark¹⁵ that he is confident for you that the principles you received from your parents will keep you from unwholesome company. Count Khünburg,¹⁶ who is known to make no claims of holiness, held a discourse of exactly this kind with me a few days ago, and expressed to me his anxious concern regarding Paris, since he loves you and knows Paris, where one must take every care to avoid the dangers; in particular, one must flee from all familiarity of any kind – especially with young Frenchmen; and women who wish to be provided for [45] are astonishing in laying snares for young people of great talent in order to take their money off them or even to get them into their trap and gain a husband. God and your watchful mind will keep you. – That would probably be the death of me!

This afternoon, Janitsch and Reicha set off for Linz with the post-coach. [50] They will have had takings of around 70 florins in their concert.¹⁷ The Archbishop made a contribution of only 8 thalers.¹⁸ They both play very beautifully, have astonishing dexterity and correct bowing, secure intonation, a beautiful tone and the greatest expression. Reicha is a solid fellow. Janitsch¹⁹ has the Lolli²⁰ manner, but the *adagio* is much better. [55] I am simply not enamoured of these terrifying speeds at which one has to produce everything with hardly half the tone of the violin and, so to speak, hardly touch the violin with the bow and almost play in the air. Then he lacks a great deal in the *cantabile*, hefty detaching takes place with *allegro* clowning amongst it all, which is utterly painful for the listener who understands the matter.

[60] Reicha plays *cantabile* better, but both have Beecke's²¹ fault of holding back, where they hold the whole orchestra back with the wink of an eye and their movement, and only then continue in the previous tempo. At the end, they played a *duetto* together with *contratempo*²² and the most exciting execution and cleanness. But in *tempo* completely in the style of the 2 Besozzi²³ in Turin, who are both dead. They were with us for the whole afternoon yesterday until six o'clock in the evening. Your sister had to play your clavier concerto²⁴ from the score, and other things etc. We played the violins for it. Your composition pleased them astonishingly. The concerto²⁵ which Reicha played was of his

¹⁵ BD: Cf. No. 0407/8-10.

¹⁶ "Graf Khünburg". BD: Leopold Joseph Maria, Count [Graf] Kuenburg (1740-1812), Royal and Imperial Chamberlain [k.k. Kämmerer], Privy Councillor [Geheimer Rat], from 1764 Chief Stablemaster [Oberstallmeister] in Salzburg.

¹⁷ BD: In the town hall on 27th January, 1778. Cf. No. 0410/94-95.

¹⁸ BD: 8 talers = 19.2 florins.

¹⁹ BD: Cf. line 41. Anton Janitsch (1753-1812), violinist; court musician in Wallerstein 1774-1779 and 1782-1785. Visited Salzburg in January, 1778, with the cellist Joseph Reicha; they reported on Mozart's performance in Wallerstein (cf. Nos. 0379/65; 0422/67 ff.).

²⁰ BD: Antonio Lolli, whose violin playing was apparently disapproved of by Leopold. Cf. No. 0153/21. Leopold heard him in a concert in August, 1775 (cf. No. 0319/17-18).

²¹ 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.

²² BD: A reference to the style described in Chap. 16, §16 of the Violin School, with notes in the melody coming "offbeat" after the corresponding bass notes.

²³ BD: Alessandro (1702-1775) and Hieronimo (Girolamo) Besozzi (1704-1778), whom Leopold and Wolfgang had heard in Turin in 1771 (cf. No. 0229/7). Their nephew, the oboist Carlo Besozzi, played at court in Salzburg in May, 1778 (cf. No. 0450/122).

²⁴ BD: Possibilities are KV 175; 238; 246; 271.

²⁵ BD: Probably one of the 3 *Concerts à Violoncelle principal avec accompagnement de plusieurs instruments*, op. 2.

own composing, very good, new ideas, and much in your style, it also pleased Haydn.²⁶ – The opera company²⁷ from Munich was to come here on Monday the 20th, but a letter came in which Count Seau²⁸ did not wish to accept the clause that they should perform an intermezzo during the German plays. A dispatch-rider was sent to Munich at Count Seau's expense that they do not need to perform these intermezzi. [75] Now one still has to wait and see if they are coming or not: I would prefer them to stay away! Now there are only two post-days left to me in which I could send something to you if you want to leave on 15th February,²⁹ namely the 2nd and 5th of February. – I must therefore send you a rather thick letter packet each time, which is expensive, in order to send all the music; but, in God's name, the sonatas *à 4 mani* and the variations³⁰ are necessities for you. Who will comb³¹ Wolfg. now? Is his <head free of lice>, not free of charge?³² – – Oh, how many things I am thinking about! If only Herr von Grimm³³ had answered me, then a great weight would have fallen from my heart. Everyone commends themselves. Nannerl and I kiss you a million times and I am, as always, your [85] Mzt.

²⁶ BD: Johann Michael Haydn (1737-1806), brother of Joseph. Employed at court in Salzburg from 1763. During his Vienna years, Mozart frequently asked for music by Michael Haydn to be sent from Salzburg so that he could perform it at van Swieten's. On a personal level relationships were difficult, possibly because of his inclination to drink.

²⁷ BD: Cf. No. 0403/30-31.

²⁸ BD: Josef Anton, Count [Graf] Seeau († 1799), from 1753 supervisor of the Palace Theatre [Residenztheater] in Munich. One of his relatives, Ferdinand, Graf Seeau, († 1768) was Senior Stable Master [Oberstallmeister] in Salzburg. BD V, p. 385, quotes Müller to the effect that Seeau had all the takings from the Italian opera and the German theatre, as well as 9000 florins per year from the Elector, at his disposal.

²⁹ BD: Cf. No. 0405/50.

³⁰ = "For four hands". BD: The sonatas KV 358 (186c) and 381 (123a) (cf. No. 0405/46 ff) and the variations KV 179 (189a) (cf. No. 0417/201-202).

³¹ BD: Up to this point apparently done by his mother.

³² BD: Cf. No. 0371/37.

³³ BD: Friedrich Melchior von Grimm (1723-1807), 1748 private secretary to the Saxon Count [Graf] Friese, with whom he moved to Paris, where he was in contact with the Encyclopaedists. Various publications, one of which, in 1763, mentioned the Mozart children. His relationship with Mozart broke down in 1778 during the latter's stay in Paris.