

Monsieur
*mon très cher Père!*²

Mannheim, 19th February,
1778

I hope you have received my last two letters³ safely: in the last, I was concerned with my mother's journey home,⁴ [5] but have now seen from your letter⁵ of the 12th that this was quite unnecessary. I have never imagined anything⁶ other than that you would not approve of the journey with <the Webers⁷>, for I have never, meaning under our present circumstances,⁸ of course, had it in mind; but I had given my word of honour to write to you about it. Herr Weber does not know how things stand with us; [10] I certainly do not tell anyone. Because I wished to be in such circumstances that I would not have to consider anyone else, that we would all be well situated, I forgot in my intoxication⁹ how impossible the matter was, and therefore also – to inform you of it, which I have now done. In the last two letters, [15] you will have gathered in sufficient detail the reasons why I did not go to Paris. If my mother had not started on about it herself, I would certainly have travelled with them; after I had noticed, however, that she was not happy at the prospect, I was no longer happy either,¹⁰ for as soon as someone does not have confidence in me, I too lose confidence in myself. The days when I stood on the chair and sang the *oragna fiagata fà*¹¹ to you, and ended by kissing the point of your nose, [20] are of course past, but have my reverence, love and obedience towards you, sir, diminished for that reason? – I will say no more. Regarding your accusations against me concerning the little lady¹² singing in Munich, I must confess that I was a donkey to write such blatant lie to you. She does not even know what singing means. It is true that for a person who had only been learning music for 3 months, [25] she sang quite outstandingly, and she furthermore had a very pleasant, pure voice. The reason why I praised her¹³ so much may well have been that, from morning to night, I heard nothing else but that there is no better singer in all Europe; anyone who has not heard her has not heard anything. I did not really dare to contradict this, partly because I wanted to make good friends for myself, [30] partly because I had come straight from Salzburg,¹⁴ where one gets out of the habit of contradicting.¹⁵ As soon as I was alone, however, I had to laugh heartily, so why did I not laugh in my letter to you as well? – I don't understand it.

¹ This letter contains passages in "family code"; these are marked with angle brackets < >.

² = "My very dear father".

³ BD: Nos. 0419, 0423.

⁴ BD: Plans for a return via Augsburg; cf. No. 0423/33 ff.

⁵ BD: No. 0422

⁶ BD: Surely an attempt by Wolfgang to play down the seriousness of his travel plans with the Webers. Cf. No. 0416/76 ff.

⁷ BD: With Franz Fridolin Weber (1733-1779) and two daughters. He became a high administrative official. Married Maria Caecilia Stamm (1727-1793), daughter of Otto Stamm, secretary to the Palatine government; they had 5 daughters and 1 surviving son. Forced to leave his position in 1763, was then employed at the court in Mannheim as a bass, prompter and music copyist.

⁸ BD: Leopold had calculated his debts as c. 700 florins, cf. No. 0417/23. Wolfgang had showed great generosity to the Webers on the journey to and from Kirchheimbolanden, cf. No. 0416/108-109.

⁹ BD: Cf. Leopold's phrasing in No. 0422/86.

¹⁰ BD: Cf. No. 0416/44 ff.

¹¹ BD: Cf. No. 422/29. Child's song in pseudo-Italian.

¹² BD: Margarethe Kaiser, cf. No. 0422/57-58; cf. Note on letter from Munich No. 0342/42, 51.

¹³ BD: Cf. No. 0342/41 ff.

¹⁴ French spelling.

¹⁵ BD: Prince-Archbishop [Fürst-Erzbischof] Hieronymus could not tolerate contradiction.

The very biting comments you write about my humorous entertainment with your brother's daughter¹⁶ insult me greatly, [35] but since the facts are wrong, I do not have to reply to it. Regarding Wallerstein,¹⁷ I don't know what I should say: at Beecke's¹⁸ I was very reserved and serious, and also sat there with real *auctorité*¹⁹ at the officers' table²⁰ and did not speak a word to anyone. Let us put all of this behind us, [40] you only wrote this way in the first heat of the moment.

What you write regarding Mad:^{selle} Weber²¹ is all true, and when I wrote it, I knew as well as you do that she is still too young and that she needs acting and must sing often in the theatre beforehand, but often with certain people one must make progress gradually. [45] These good people²² are tired of being here, just like²³ – you already know whom and where. They therefore believe it is all feasible. I promised them that I would write to my father about everything. In the meantime, while the letter was on the way to Salzburg, I repeatedly said: She is still a little too young, etc. And they listen to me on everything, for they have a high opinion of me. [50] Now the father, on my advice, has spoken to Mad:^{me} Toscani²⁴ |: the actress |: so that she might instruct his daughter in acting. Everything that you wrote about the Weber girl is true, with one exception,²⁵ namely that she sings like a Gabrielli,²⁶ for it would not be to my taste at all if he sang like that. Anyone who has heard Gabrielli says, and will say, [55] that she is nothing but a producer of passagework and roulades, although she deserves admiration because she expresses herself in such a special way, but this does not last beyond the 4th time that one hears her singing, for she cannot please over long stretches, one is soon tired of the passagework, and she has the misfortune that she cannot sing. [60] She is not capable of holding a whole note as required, she has no *messa di voce*, she does not know how to sustain: in brief, she sings with art but without understanding. The other, however, sings to one's heart, and most likes to sing *cantabile*. It was not until the grand aria²⁷ that I got onto passagework, for it will be necessary for her, when she gets to Italy, to sing *bravura* arias. She will certainly not forget the *cantabile*, [65] for that is her natural inclination. Raff²⁸ himself |: who certainly does not flatter |: said, when he was asked for his sincere opinion, that she did not sing like a pupil, but like a *professora*. So now you know everything. I still recommend her to you wholeheartedly, and

¹⁶ BD: Cf. No. 0422/64 ff. Mozart's cousin in Augsburg, Maria Anna Thekla Mozart (1758-1841), known in the letters as the "Bäsele" ["little cousin"], cf. No. 0358; No. 0353/181; No. 0355/159-160; No. 0848/83 ff.

¹⁷ BD: Wolfgang visited Wallerstein, with its substantial court music, after leaving Augsburg. The visit was frustrating. Cf. No. 0422/67 ff.

¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹ = "authority".

²⁰ BD: Cf. No. 0370/14.

²¹ BD: Cf. Nos. 0405/30; 0422/85-86. Aloisia Weber (c. 1760-1839), was said to be 17 when Mozart met first her. She was already singing at court (cf. No. 0469/56). The family moved to Munich in 1778 with many of the other court musicians; Aloisia was employed there at the "German Theatre" ["zum deutschen Theater"]. In September, 1779, she was given a leading position at the German Opera in Vienna [Deutsche Oper].

²² BD: The Weber family.

²³ BD: Referring to the Mozart family's experiences in Salzburg.

²⁴ BD: Anna Elisabeth Toscani, actress. She also performed in the première of Schiller's "The Robbers".

²⁵ BD: Cf. No. 0422/110-111.

²⁶ BD: Cf. No. 0170/25. Catarina Gabrielli (1630-1696), daughter of the personal cook to Prince Gabrielli, for which reason she was often called "la cochetta/cochettina". She stated that no one could write as well for her voice as Joseph Mysliveček (1737-1781). Wolfgang had a negative view of her artistry; Leopold compared her unfavourably with Aloisia Weber (No. 0422/110-111).

²⁷ BD: No. 11 from *Lucio Silla* KV 135. Cf. No. 0405/38, 39.

²⁸ BD: Anton Raaff (1714-1797), son of a shepherd, originally intended for the priesthood, appeared as a singer in Bonn, Vienna, Paris, Lisbon, Madrid and Naples before a longer period of service in Mannheim and Munich. Cf. No. 0120/54.

I would ask you not to forget about the arias,²⁹ cadenzas³⁰ etc. I wish you well. [70] I kiss your hands 100 000 times and am your most obedient son,

Wolfgang Amadé Mozart

I can no longer write for absolute hunger.

My mother will explain our large funds³¹ to you. [75] I embrace my sister with my whole heart, and she should not cry at once over every piece of sh--,³² otherwise I will never come back as long as I live. My compliments to all good friends, both gentlemen and ladies, especially to Herr Bullinger.³³

MARIA ANNA MOZART'S POSTSCRIPT:

My dear husband, my wish is that this present letter should again find you doing well, [80] and we are heartily sorry that our letter³⁴ so alarmed you; conversely, your last letter³⁵ of the 12th caused us great worry. I ask you, for the sake of everything that I can ask, not to let everything weigh on your mind so much that it damages your health. Everything can assuredly be put right again, and once again nothing has been lost other than <bad> company.³⁶ We will try to prepare ourselves for the Paris journey as much as possible. [85] Our money, the whole *sum[m]a*, consists of 140 florins; we will try to sell the coach,³⁷ but will probably not get much more than 60 or 70 florins for it |: for only recently a beautiful four-seater *Schwimmer*³⁸ with windows was bought for 9 *louis d'or*³⁹ :|. We will pack all our things into two chests and travel to Paris with the post-coach, [90] that will not come to so much. Fine people travel this way, but we should take lodgings⁴⁰ so that we do not need to stay in an inn very long. If this merchant⁴¹ about whom you wrote to us would be so kind as to help us with that, it would be very good indeed. In the meantime, I wait longingly for your next letter [95] so that we can take directions from you about what we have to do. *Adio*, keep well, both of you. I kiss you many 10 000 times and I remain your faithful wife,

Maria Anna Mozart.

Every good wish imaginable to all good friends. This is an abominable pen and ink.

²⁹ BD: Cf. note on No. 0419/120 ff.

³⁰ BD: Cf. note on No. 0423/68 ff.

³¹ BD: Cf. lines 85 ff.

³² BD: Cf. Nos. 0422/226; 0430/110 ff.

³³ 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 tutor to Count [Graf] Leopold Ferdinand Arco, later to Count [Graf] Sigmund ("Sigerl") Lodron. Mozart called him "his best of all friends" (cf. Nos. 0331/5; 0459/1).

³⁴ BD: No. 0416.

³⁵ BD: No. 0422.

³⁶ BD: The Mannheim musicians Wendling and Ramm, with whom Wolfgang had originally planned to travel to Paris. The dancer Lauchéry was also included in the original plans for sharing a coach, but did not go.

³⁷ BD: The family chaise, with which Wolfgang and his mother reached Mannheim.

³⁸ BD: = "Swimmer" (dialect): a half-covered travelling coach with opening rear section. Usually built as a two seater + coachman's seat. Usually without windows.

³⁹ BD: = 99 florins.

⁴⁰ BD: Cf. No. 0425/66-67.

⁴¹ BD: Joseph Felix Arbauer, merchant, probably resident on the "Brotmarkt" in Augsburg; cf. Nos. 0422/182 ff.; 0425/64 ff.