

Dearest friend!

Paris ce 7 aoust² 1778

Now allow me, above all, to thank you most expressly for your recent act of friendship towards me, namely that you went to so much trouble for my dearest father, prepared him so well, and were such a friend in comforting him;³ – [5] You played your role outstandingly – these are my father’s own words,⁴ best of friends! – How can I thank you enough! – You have saved this best of all fathers for me! – It is thanks to you – that I have him. – Allow me, therefore, to break off here completely, and not even begin to express my thanks, [10] for I feel in fact that I am too weak, too imperfect – too unfitted for it – Best of friends! – I am thus forever in your debt; – yet patience! – I am not yet, upon my honour, in a position to compensate you for the matter in question,⁵ but entertain no doubts: – God will give me the grace to show in deeds what I am not capable of expressing in words – [15] indeed, that is my hope! – In the meanwhile, however, until I am so fortunate, allow me to beg for the continuation of your treasured and most valued friendship – and at the same time that you might accept, anew and for ever, my friendship, which I swear to you eternally with an entirely sincere – good heart; – though this will of course not be of much advantage to you! – [20] but all the more sincere and lasting it will therefore be – As you no doubt know, the best and truest friends are the poor – the rich know nothing about friendship! – Especially those who were born to it; – and those whom fate makes rich are also often lost in their fortunate circumstances! – But if a man is placed in advantageous circumstances not by blind but by just fortune, – [25] by merits, if he never allowed his courage to fail when he came into adverse circumstances for the first time, kept religion and his trust in God, was a good Christian and honest man, knew how to value his true friends, in short, truly deserved better fortune, – nothing evil is to be feared from such a person! – [30] Now let me answer your letter:⁶ now you will probably be free of all worries about my health – for in the meantime you must have received 3 letters⁷ from me – the first of these, which consisted of the sad news of the death of my blessed mother, was sent to you as an enclosure; – I know that you will also forgive me if I remain silent about this whole matter [35] – that, I must say, is where my thoughts always are. – You write to me that I should now think only about my father, disclose my thoughts to him sincerely, and place my trust in him, – would I not be most wretched if I needed this reminder! – It is very profitable for me that you did so; – but I am pleased – [40] |: and you are too :) that I do not need it; – I said as much in my last letter to my dear father, as I still know to this day – and assured him that I will always inform him of everything in detail and sincerely disclose my opinions to him because I place my entire trust in him and am entirely assured of his fatherly concern, love and true kindness [45] – knowing with certainty that he in turn will at some time not refuse a request on which my entire happiness and contentment for the rest

¹ 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).

² = “Paris, this 7th August”.

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⁴ BD: Cf. No. 0464/124 ff.

⁵ BD: Bullinger had helped to finance the Paris journey with 300 florins. Cf. No. 0375/70-71.

⁶ BD: No. 0474b, lost.

⁷ BD: Nos. 0459, 0462a, 0474a.

of my life depends,⁸ and which |: as he in turn cannot expect anything less from me :| is quite assuredly fair and reasonable. Dearest friend! – do not let my dear father read this; – you know him; he will come up with all kinds of thoughts [50] – and quite needlessly; – Now for our saga with Salzburg! You know, best of friends, how odious Salzburg is in my eyes! – Not only because of the injustices that my dear father and I had to bear there,⁹ which alone would have been sufficient reason to forget such a place and eradicate it entirely from one’s thoughts! – But let us not stir all that up now – [55] Events should go in such a way that we can live well; – living well and living in contentment are two different things, – and I would not be able to achieve the latter |: without witchcraft :|; it would truly have to be something supernatural! – and now this is not possible, for at the present time there are no witches anymore; – yet a thought comes to me: there are people of that certain kind in Salzburg – who are born there, [60] and the town is swarming with them – one need only change the first letter of their true name¹⁰ and they could be of help to me; – Now, let it turn out how it may, – it will always be the greatest of pleasures for me to embrace my dearest father and dearest sister and, moreover, the sooner the better; but I cannot deny that my pleasure [65] and my joy would be doubled – if it could happen somewhere else – – because I have more hope of being able to live in contentment and happiness anywhere else! – You will perhaps misunderstand me and think of Salzburg is too small for me? – In that you would be very much deceived; – I have already written to my father stating some reasons for this; [70] in the meantime let it suffice you that Salzburg is no place for my talent! – Firstly, those employed in the music receive no respect, and secondly there is nothing to hear: there is no theatre there, no opera! – And if one really did want to perform one, who, then, would sing? – For 5 or 6 years now, the Salzburg music has always been richly supplied with the useless – the unnecessary – but very impoverished [75] in what is necessary, and entirely deprived of the indispensable. Whatever the case may truly be: – the cruel French are the reason that the *musique* is without a music director!¹¹ – But now, as I have been firmly assured, peace and order will prevail in the music! – yes, that is what happens if one does not think ahead! – One must always have half-a-dozen music directors on hand [80] so that, if one is absent, another can be put in his place immediately – where are they to find one now? – – and the danger is indeed imminent! – The order, peace and good accord in the music cannot be allowed to get out of hand! – – otherwise the rot will spread ever further – and in the end there is no more remedy; can it really be that there is not a single donkey-eared wig left – one lousy head [85] who could bring things back into their previous limping gait? – I will certainly do all I can in this regard; – tomorrow I will immediately take a *remise*¹² for the whole day and drive to all hospitals and sanatoriums and see if I can get hold of one; why were they so careless as to let Misliwetceck¹³ slip through their hands? – [90] and so close by; he would have been a tasty morsel; it is not easy to get someone like that again – just coming fresh from the Duke Clement Conservatory!¹⁴ – and that would have been a man whose presence would have put the

⁸ BD: Once again a reference to marriage plans, cf. Nos. 0458/80 ff.; 0471/115 ff.

⁹ These include the dismissal of both Leopold and Wolfgang, although Leopold was later reinstated. Cf. No. 0328.

¹⁰ BD: “Fexen” (fools, clowns) become “Hexen” (witches).

¹¹ BD: Bullinger’s letter would probably explain this “absence” of a music director; at any rate, Mozart sees himself as the next in line.

¹² Livery coach for hire, superior to the simple fiacre.

¹³ BD: Joseph Mysliveček (1737-1781), composer. He met the Mozarts in 1770 in Bologna, where he was working on an opera (cf. No. 0171/39) and in Milan in 1770 and 1773 (cf. Nos. 0257/12; 0277/28; 0279/22; 0281/35-36). Mozart visited him in hospital in Munich in 1777 on his way to Paris, cf. No. 0347/2.

¹⁴ BD: Mocking reference to the Duke Clement Hospital [herzoglich Clementisches Spital] in Munich, where Mysliveček was being treated for venereal disease.

entire court music in fear and trembling;¹⁵ Now, I need not be so anxious; where there is money, one gets people enough! – [95] my opinion is simply that one should not put the matter off too long, not out of foolish fear that one might perhaps not get anyone, but there I know only too well that all these gentlemen are already waiting as longingly and hopefully as the Jews for the Messiah – simply because these circumstances are intolerable – and it would therefore be more necessary and to the point [100] to look around for a music director, now that they really have none, than to send notices everywhere |: as I have been informed by letter :| trying to get a good female singer; but I simply cannot believe it! – A female singer! when we have so many of them! – and all outstanding; I would sooner agree about a tenor, although we do not need one of these either; [105] but a female singer, a *prima donna*!¹⁶ – when we now have a *castrato*;¹⁷ – it is true that Haydn’s wife is poorly; – she has exaggerated her strict way of life far too much; but there are few of her mettle! – I wonder that, with her constant flagellation, scourging, hair shirts, supernatural fasting, nocturnal prayer, she did not lose her voice a long time ago!¹⁸ – – [110] but she will retain it for a long time yet – and rather than getting worse it will get better and better; – but if God should finally place her among the number of his saints, – we still have 5 left,¹⁹ all capable of competing for each other’s laurels! – Here, now, we see how unnecessary this is! – But now I will take it to extremes! – [115] Let us suppose that we no longer had the weeping *Magdalene*,²⁰ which is of course not the case; but suppose one of them suddenly had to give birth, one came into a correctional institution, the 3rd were perhaps publicly whipped, the 4th at best beheaded, and the fifth – perhaps taken by the d-v-l? – what would it mean? – nothing! – we do of course have a *castrato*; – you know, of course, what kind of animal that is? – he can indeed sing high, and therefore impersonate a woman wonderfully; [120] – of course, the Cathedral Chapter will have to intervene;²¹ but intervention is indeed always better than subvention – and they will not easily knock this gentleman out of his stride; for the time being, we can always let Herr *Ceccarelli* play women and men in alternation; ultimately, because I know that our people love variety, changes and innovations, [125] I can picture a wide field before me, whose harvest will be epoquemaking; my sister and I have already done a little work on this as children: what then will the grown-ups achieve? – Oh, if one is *genereux*,²² one can have everything; – I have no doubts at all |: and I will vouch for it :| that one could have *Metastasio*²³ come from Vienna, [130] or at least make the proposal, that he should write some dozen operas, in all of which the *primo uomo*²⁴ and the *prima donna* never appear together. In this way the castrato can play the male and female lovers at the same time and as a result the piece becomes more interesting because people admire the virtue of the two lovers, which goes so far that they

¹⁵ BD: Because of his appearance, cf. No. 0347/115, 122-123.

¹⁶ = “leading lady”.

¹⁷ BD: Francesco Ceccarelli (1752-1814), castrato, employed in Salzburg and then, from 1795, in Dresden; often a guest in the Mozarts’ house. Mozart wrote for him KV 374, cf. No. 0587/19; he also sang in Mozart’s concert in Frankfurt in 1790. Cf. No. 0357/22, 42.

¹⁸ BD: Ironic; Maria Magdalena Haydn, née Lipp, singer and wife of Michael Haydn, was known for a life of indulgence and drinking.

¹⁹ BD: Only four are known: Maria Magdalena Haydn-Lipp, Elisabeth Meissner, Anna Braunhofer, Maria Anna Adlgasser-Fesemayr.

²⁰ BD: Mozart means the “repentant Magdelene”.

²¹ BD: For moral reasons.

²² = “generous, liberal”.

²³ BD: Pietro Metastasio (1698-1782). Came to the Vienna court in 1730; Apostolo Zeno (1668-1750) had suggested him as his own successor. He remained there until the end of its life. He met Mozart at least once, cf. No. 135/60-61. Mozart set several of his libretti (KV 118/74c; 126; 208; 362) and numerous arias (KV 21 (19c); 369; 23; 78 (73b); 79 (73d); 88 (73c); 71; 74b; 77 (73e); 82 (73 o); 83 (73p); 368; 440 (383h); 294; 512; 468a (295a); 432 (421a); 538; KV Anh. 2; KV⁶: 73 A (lost)).

²⁴ = “leading man”.

diligently avoid the opportunity of speaking to each other *in publico*; – [135] there, now you have it, the opinion of a true patriot! – Do your best to make sure that the music ensemble soon has an arse – for that is what it needs most; it already has a head – that is precisely its misfortune! – Until there is a change in these absurd theatricals, I will not come to *Salzburg*; but then I will come [140] and will turn the pages every time I see V. S. written. – Now something about the war:²⁵ as far as I can gather, we shall soon have peace in Germany;²⁶ the esteemed King of Prussia²⁷ is simply a little anxious. I have read in the newspapers that the Prussians took an Imperial²⁸ detachment by surprise, but the Croats and 2 regiments of *cuirassiers*, who were in the proximity and heard the noise, [145] came to their help instantly, attacked the Prussians, put them under crossfire and took 5 cannons off them; the route by which the Prussian came into Bohemia is now entirely blocked and barricaded so that he cannot go back; the Bohemian farmers are also inflicting fierce damage on the Prussians, and among the Prussians there is constant desertion – [150] but these are things that you have already heard, and know better than we do here; but now I will tell you something from here. The French have forced the English back;²⁹ but they did not go at it hammer and tongs at all – the most remarkable thing is that in all, friend and foe, 100 men fell. Despite that, there is indeed appalling jubilation here, and is no talk here of anything else; [155] now they are also saying that we will soon have peace; – it is all the same to me, as far as matters here are concerned; but in Germany I will be very glad if peace came soon, for many reasons; – Now, live very well indeed, dearest friend! Forgive my bad handwriting, but the quill is unserviceable; convey my compliments to all Salzburg, giving my respects [160] especially to your honoured Count, my compliments to Count Leopold,³⁰ and pay dear Sallerl³¹ a long, long compliment in verse – and to my dear father and dear sister say everything – that a son and brother would say if he had the good fortune to be able to speak to them himself; *adieu*; I beg for your treasured friendship, and assure you [165] that I will be eternally, sir, your

true friend and most indebted servant
Wolfgang Romat.³²

²⁵ BD: Karl Theodor (1724-1799), Elector [Kurfürst] of the Palatinate, succeeded the childless Maximilian III Joseph of Bavaria in December, 1777, leading to the War of the Bavarian Succession, involving Bavaria, Austria and Prussia, and which ended on 13th May, 1779.

²⁶ BD: Negotiations had already started, but were to last until May, 1779.

²⁷ “dem herrn könig von Preußen”. BD: Frederick II (“the Great”) (1712-1786), r. 1740-1786.

²⁸ “kaiserlich”, i.e. of Austria and allies.

²⁹ BD: One of the skirmishes linked to French support for the rebellious British colonies in North America.

³⁰ “graf Leopold”. BD: Leopold Ferdinand III, Count [Graf] Arco (1764-1832), son of Senior Chamberlain [Oberstkämmerer] Leopold Julius Felix, Count [Graf] Arco, one of the younger court gentlemen. Probably a pupil of Leopold Mozart. Cf. Nos. 0347/203; 0337/111.

³¹ BD: Maria Anna Rosalia Walburga Joly [Joli] (1723-1788), usually referred to in the correspondence as “Sallerl”, was for many years a friend of the Mozart family, especially Nannerl and Wolfgang, with whom she exchanged humorous poems (cf. Nos. 0391/75 ff.; 0394/64 ff.). She was the daughter of the Salzburg Royal Confectioner [Konfektmeister] Mathias Joly.

³² BD: A further rearrangement of his name besides the familiar “Trazom”.