

0476. LEOPOLD MOZART TO HIS SON, PARIS

*À Monsieur / Monsieur Wolfgang Amadé / Mozart maître de musique /  
à / Paris / chez Mr: le Baron / de Grimm etc. / Rue de la Chaussée /  
d'Antin près le Boulevard.*<sup>1</sup>

*Mon tres cher Fils!*<sup>2</sup>

Salzburg, 13<sup>th</sup> Aug., 1778.

[5] In the end I received two letters<sup>3</sup> at once, namely those of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> July. They did not reach me until 11<sup>th</sup> Aug. Esteemed *Baron von Grimm*<sup>4</sup> wrote to me on 27<sup>th</sup> July. His letter<sup>5</sup> brought me great pleasure! And displeasure! Pleasure, because I saw from it that you are in good health, and because he wrote that you had precisely fulfilled all your filial duty towards your dear blessed mother |: although I did not doubt it :| with the greatest punctiliousness. [10] Displeasure, however, because he |: using the same expressions as when he spoke to you<sup>6</sup> :| raised very great doubts as to how you will now make your way or find your fortune, or perhaps he means your necessary keep, in Paris. He says: *<sup>7</sup>he is too trusting,<sup>8</sup> not very active,<sup>9</sup> too leisurely to seize opportunities, too little concerned about the means which can lead [15] to his success. To break through here, one needs to be cunning, enterprising, audacious. For his success, I would wish him half as much talent and twice as much worldly wisdom, and I would not be hesitant about it.*

*For the rest, there are only two paths he can try here to make a success of it. The first is to give harpsichord lessons, [20] but without counting on having pupils except by a lot of activity and even charlatanry; I do not know if he would have sufficient health to sustain this occupation, for it is a very tiring business to run to the four corners of Paris and exhaust oneself talking giving explanations. And then he would not like this occupation because it will prevent him from writing, which he loves above all else. He could then commit himself to this entirely, [25] but in this country the bulk of the public is not knowledgeable in music. They therefore go entirely by the name, and the merit of the work can be judged by only a very small number. The public is at this moment ridiculously divided between Piccini and Gluck,<sup>10</sup> and all the arguments which one hears about music pitiful. It is therefore very difficult for your son to succeed between these two parties. etc: [30] All this is right and true. – Only the last part depends to a large extent on luck and chance. And precisely because there are two parties, a third can hope for more applause than if the entire public were completely taken with one composer alone. For my part, I*

<sup>1</sup> = “To Monsieur Wolfgang Amadé Mozart, Music Director in Paris, c/o Baron von Grimm etc., Rue de la Chaussée d’Antin, near the Boulevard.”

<sup>2</sup> = “My very dear son!”

<sup>3</sup> BD: Nos. 0466, 0471.

<sup>4</sup> “H: Baron v Grimm”. 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. He was living with the Marquise d’Epinay just mentioned. His relationship with Mozart broke down in 1778 during the latter’s stay in Paris. After his mother’s death, Mozart moved into the house shared by Grimm and Madame d’Epinay. Cf. No. 0462/40.

<sup>5</sup> BD: No. 0468, lost.

<sup>6</sup> BD: No. 0471/132.

<sup>7</sup> BD: Quotation from Grimm’s letter (in French) of 27<sup>th</sup> July, 1778 (No. 0468), cf. Deutsch Dok p. 159.

<sup>8</sup> Here Grimm uses the German “zu treuherzig”, the rest of the passage is in French.

<sup>9</sup> BD: Cf. No. 0471/142-143.

<sup>10</sup> BD: The dispute between the supporters of these two composers was at its height at this time; Grimm took the side of Piccinni, cf. No. 0487/93. Piccinni: The composer Nicola Piccinni (1728-1806). Cf. Nos. 0158/56, 0431/67, 0462/142 f. Gluck: The composer Christoph Willibald Gluck (1714-1787). Cf. Nos. 0125/110 ff.; 0135/35 ff.; 0420/160-161; 0476/33 ff.; 0684/43-44 and 0731/18 ff. From February – November 1778, incidentally, he was in Vienna.

consider getting an opera the most difficult thing, and that calls for walking, pushing, using everything, [35] seeking friends etc., and in fact it is surely high time for this now – for *Piccini* and *Gluck* will do everything to prevent it,<sup>11</sup> and it seems almost impossible to me that you should get one. Only *Noverre*<sup>12</sup> would perhaps have forced it through. Under these circumstances, and since I could almost perceive that you are earning nothing now, which will in fact be generally true, [40] since your young lady pupils are in the country,<sup>13</sup> hear what he wrote to me: *You see, my dear director, that in a country where so many mediocre and even detestable musicians have had immense success I am much afraid that Msr., your son, will not come through on his own.* Under these circumstances, as I say, a further heavy load is inevitably laid on my heart, and since he added: <sup>14</sup>*I have given you [45] this account not to afflict you, but in order to take the best line possible together. It is unfortunate that the death of the Elector of Bavaria<sup>15</sup> has prevented Msr., your son, from receiving a position in Mannheim:* – I accordingly wrote<sup>16</sup> to him that they would happily have him here again, that the Elector<sup>17</sup> will go to Munich and leave Mannheim, that here you would be nearer for purposes of currying favour with the Elector etc., [50] which he will probably have said to you, but all of this, needless to say, only under acceptable conditions and because |: if it is not advantageous :| one can leave Salzbg. again without prejudicing oneself as a result. People around me are always talking about this, and I give no reply; if the Countess<sup>18</sup> wanted me to get the post, she would already have spoken about it herself, but so far not a word, [55] – always just questions – how things are with you – whether I have received letters from you? – my reply – always – well – excellently. Now old *Lolli*<sup>19</sup> is dead, we buried him on 11<sup>th</sup> Aug. and yesterday we held the church service for him in St. Sebastian's. Now, of the 4 music directors in the court almanac,<sup>20</sup> I alone remain. Now they will instigate some activity again. [60] I will write to *Padre Martini*<sup>21</sup> tomorrow.<sup>22</sup> To what extent you will be able to rely on your friends – and what they are in a position to do, time will tell.

Experience |: which you will only gain the painful way :| has convinced me that there is no true friend – speaking of the highest degree – except a father; [65] and not even children are such, to the same degree, towards their parents. Reflect – consider thoughts and

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<sup>11</sup> BD: Leopold overestimates the role played by his son in the Paris music world.

<sup>12</sup> BD: Jean Georges Noverre (1727-1810), internationally active (Stuttgart, Milan), ballet master in Vienna 1755-1774. The Mozarts met him in Vienna in 1773. He became composer and master of ballet at the *Académie royale de Musique* and director of festivities [“*Directeur des Fêtes de Trianon*”] in Paris in 1776. His memoirs mention Mozart aged 12; they certainly met in 1778 in Paris, where Mozart wrote part of the music for *Les petits riens* KV Anh. 10 (299b). Cf. Nos. 0293/51; 0430/182.

<sup>13</sup> BD: Cf. No. 0471/145-146. These two pupils of Wolfgang's are not in Paris at the moment.

<sup>14</sup> In French.

<sup>15</sup> BD: Elector [Kurfürst] Maximilian III Joseph of Bavaria (1727-1777) was also an outstanding viola da gamba player as well as a composer. Cf. No. 0337/90. Died December, 1777, triggering the War of the Bavarian Succession involving Bavaria, Austria and Prussia.

<sup>16</sup> BD: No. 0475a, lost.

<sup>17</sup> “Churf.”. 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 30<sup>th</sup> December, 1777, Elector of Bavaria. Cf. No. 0363/30.

<sup>18</sup> “Gräfin”. BD: Maria Franziska von Wallis, née Colloredo (1746-1795), sister of the Archbishop of Salzburg. Cf. No. 0457/67.

<sup>19</sup> BD: Giuseppe Francesco Lolli (1701-1778), from Bologna, initially employed as a tenor, mentioned as such in the *Salzburger Hofkalender* of 1741. 1752-1763 deputy music director in Salzburg; from 1763 music director. Composed some oratorios, masses and vesper psalms as well as music for a stage play.

<sup>20</sup> “Calender”. BD: Giuseppe Francesco Lolli (1701-1778); Giacomo (Jakob) Rust, (1741 1786); Domenico Fischietti (1725? - 1810?); Leopold Mozart.

<sup>21</sup> 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.

<sup>22</sup> BD: Leopold did not write until 21<sup>st</sup> August, 1778. (No. 0477)

facts – you will find enough examples in the world which will convince you of the truth of my statement. This is also why God gave children the commandment to honour their parents and even found it necessary to add a punishment, [70] while he did not find it necessary to lay down a commandment for the parents. Missliwecek<sup>23</sup> has cost me so much in postal charges, and all his letters said the *scrittura*<sup>24</sup> from Naples for you was arranged, undoubted, decided, certain. After I had helped him to get his 37 ducats,<sup>25</sup> he left Munich even before Easter – and now not a word more. I hope that it has worked out that you have now sold something for engraving<sup>26</sup> for 15 *louis d'or*.<sup>27</sup> [75] If you do not have your pupils at the moment,<sup>28</sup> compose something again; even if you have to give it away for a little less now, it will surely, for God's sake, make you known. Simply short – easy – popular. Speak to a *graveur*<sup>29</sup> about what he would most like to have, – perhaps easy *quattro à 2 violini, viola e basso*.<sup>30</sup> [80] Do you perhaps think you are demeaning yourself with such things? – not at all! Has Bach<sup>31</sup> in London, then, ever published anything other than such trifles? The small is great if it is of course – written flowingly and easily and properly harmonised. Doing it this way is more difficult than all the most incomprehensible skilful harmonic progressions and almost unperformable melodies. [85] Has Bach demeaned himself in the process? – – not at all! Good harmonisation and order, *il filo*,<sup>32</sup> – this distinguishes the master from the bungler, even in trifles. If I were in your position, I would start work on something of the kind and then do everything possible to get an *opera*. Now you must make efforts to sell something to one or other of the *graveurs*. [90] Surely you must be in need of money to live on? And how else can you make money when your pupils are in the country? One has to do something! I have never written anything to you about the circumstances of *Md:me d'Epinay*.<sup>33</sup> – But now that you are in her house and probably taking your meals with her, it is time for me to make you better acquainted with her. [95] Her circumstances are not as good as they may appear to you; even when we were in *Paris* together back in those days she had to live from the little that her husband<sup>34</sup> |; who is a *Parisian* debauchee :| was obliged to give her. I therefore cannot ask you to become a burden to her with your food and drink and I am sure that her Herr von Grimm [100] probably pays for that. But I can easily imagine that the latter, too, may not be in such splendid circumstances because such a small court as Saxony-Gotha<sup>35</sup> cannot pay very much, and I deduce much from the following words that he wrote to me: – – *I would wish that my position might permit me to help him efficaciously; if I had two or three thousand livres to give him every year, I simply would not speak about it and would save you all the worries: but you saw me in a much*

<sup>23</sup> BD: Joseph Mysliveček (1737-1781), composer. He met the Mozarts in 1770 in Bologna, where he was working on an opera (cf. Nos. 0171/39; 0172/ 10, 14) 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.

<sup>24</sup> = Commission to write an opera. BD: Mysliveček first raised this prospect in October, 1777. Cf. No. 0347/37 ff.

<sup>25</sup> BD: Mysliveček had repeatedly requested Leopold's help regarding payment for compositions for Salzburg. Cf. Nos. 0446/59 ff.; 0410/56-57; 0403/19 ff. The 37 ducats are worth about 166,5 florins.

<sup>26</sup> BD: Cf. lines 1 to 9-131; No. 0466/163 ff.

<sup>27</sup> BD: = 165 florins.

<sup>28</sup> BD: Cf. lines 39-40; No. 0471/145-147.

<sup>29</sup> = "Engraver".

<sup>30</sup> = "Quartets for two violins, viola and bass".

<sup>31</sup> Johann Christian Bach.

<sup>32</sup> = "the thread".

<sup>33</sup> BD: Louise-Florence-Pétronille Tardieu d'Esclavelles, Marquise d'Epinay (1726-1783), divorced since 1749. Hostess to such figures as J.J. Rousseau, Grimm, Diderot. Visited Voltaire. Author and collaborator in Grimm's *Correspondance littéraire*. Wolfgang had been staying in the house she shared with Grimm since his mother's death.

<sup>34</sup> BD: Her husband was the eldest son of the tax farmer de la Live de Bellegarde.

<sup>35</sup> BD: Grimm was ambassador in Paris for Saxony-Gotha 1775-1792.

more obscure state during your stay in Paris and nevertheless I was richer than I am today, now that my position has forced on me endless expenses which I did not have then. In the thirty years that I have been in France, I have never been [110] in such an embarrassing situation as this year, during which I have been forced to fulfil my ministerial office on a very modest income after having travelled from Paris to St. Petersburg via Naples and from St. Petersburg to Paris via Stockholm, which swallowed an unbelievable amount of my money. He will of course conceal his circumstances behind a good external appearance, [115] but you must beg him in your own name and in mine that it would be most gracious of him that, if you might have permission to dine there, you should bear the costs, since it is something quite different to be invited to dine a few times, and something quite different again to be dining permanently in the same place: the latter would be an indiscretion. – [120] You will have to pay everywhere, but it is indeed always more sensible, more advantageous and more honourable to be allowed to remain at *Baron von Grimm*'s. Otherwise this is more than could be asked, it would be abusing the kindness of a friend who instead of a comfortable fortune now has debts to pay. I would furthermore like to – and must – know if you owe him anything?<sup>36</sup> – whether he has perhaps lent you some cash? [125] and I would like to know most precisely how much it is. It seems to me I have detected something of the kind from his letter. – I have already declared to him that I will stand surety for everything. I have asked him to keep you under his attentive supervision if it is at all possible. If you owe them anything, see to it that you can pay him at least some of it, do not leave it as empty words about wanting to hand over your sonatas for 15 *louis d'or*, [130] hand them over and make sure they are engraved soon. Now, hopefully, being on your own, you will surely be able to live without incurring debts. Write to me without delay saying whether – and what if anything you owe *Baron von Grimm*, he has shown us so much kindness, we must not be ungrateful. [135] If he has given you something, he will need it again for his expenses. I furthermore know that *Md.<sup>me</sup> d'Epinay* was a weak woman even then and will still be ailing, I have sympathy with her. The only other thing that Herr von Grimm writes to me about is his concern and wish to see you happy. He appreciates that you have already been in Paris for 4 months and more. <sup>37</sup>*And he is* |: he says |: [140] *hardly farther than on the first day, although he has got through close to a thousand livres.*<sup>38</sup> So, then, you must indeed have earned this money – or do you owe it? – He wishes that I could be with you, indeed, with that the matter would of course take a completely different direction. He says: *One misfortune to be added to all the others is that I am so burdened with duties that I can only do half of them,* [145] *consequently no means are left to me to concern myself with Msr., your son, or to look for resources for him.* – yes, and for this you have little or no inclination. On top of all this, you always have your eye on the most distant things at the lowest point of perspective, and as a result you neglect the present and therefore also the means necessary for reaching what [150] you have fixed your mind on. Now you are in Paris, so you must draw on all means to make, at the very least, enough to keep you and, if possible, some reserve of money and in the meantime to wait for the other things about which one only speculates if one has to write something about them or answer questions. I will soon answer both your letters properly and in great detail, [155] and tell you those things that you do not yet want to tell me<sup>39</sup> and which I could have told you a long time ago. You will see that, while I feel sorry for you, I will, as far as agrees with sound reasoning, not be against you in these things but will, if possible, help you

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<sup>36</sup> BD: Wolfgang had to return money later, cf. No. 0487/78-79.

<sup>37</sup> *Et il est* [...] [140] *presqu'aussi peu avancé que le premier jour ayant pourtant mangé près de mille livres.*

<sup>38</sup> BD: About 330 florins.

<sup>39</sup> BD: Leopold seems to have guessed what Wolfgang is about to reveal: cf. Nos. 0458/80 ff.; 0471/117 ff.; 0475/45 ff.

myself. Your sister thanks you for the *præambulum*,<sup>40</sup> which is excellent. [160] She will write to you herself. She received it at 4 o'clock, at 5 o'clock I came home and she said she had thought out something which she would write out if I liked it. She started to play the *præludium* from memory, the first page. I opened my eyes wide and said, Where the devil did you get these ideas? She laughed and took the letters out of the bag. Herr Bullinger<sup>41</sup> and all good friends, [165] especially the Company of Marksmen,<sup>42</sup> commend themselves. Mitzerl<sup>43</sup> thanks you for remembering,<sup>44</sup> swears her faithfulness as of old, but has appalling suspicions about you.<sup>45</sup> Regarding the war,<sup>46</sup> you have nothing to fear at all regarding the Emperor.<sup>47</sup> The King in Prussia<sup>48</sup> is still occupying his old position in Bohemia, where they let him in without firing a single shot so that they could say that he invaded. [170] He has Nachod<sup>49</sup> etc. in his rear and has to have all the provisions for his troops brought in from Silesia. The Emperor is drawn up in front of him and has the fortress at Königsgratz at his back, and he is spreading out left and right as far as the Lausnitz,<sup>50</sup> where General Laudon has moved to Zittau with an army. Meanwhile Prince Heinrich<sup>51</sup> is making efforts to press forward with Prussia and [175] Saxony on the other side by Komotau<sup>52</sup> in Bohemia, but he has already failed once, one of Laudon's corps got to Commotau in advance by a forced march and Prince Heinrich's corps withdrew to Saxony again. It will not come to a major battle, they will now simply try to intercept each other's advances [180] until one is cut off properly and then has to make a right brawl out of it. Now there are only skirmishes with hussars, Croats and dragoons, and even if it should cost 2000 or 3000 men, it is more or less nothing. Prince Heinrich has work enough giving the King space to move, otherwise he cannot advance one step further against the Emperor. He will also be constantly attempting to come in via Marienberg<sup>53</sup> and Kommutau, [185] Laudon will make every effort to prevent this. *Addio*, the post is leaving. I am your sincere father

Mzt

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<sup>40</sup> = "prelude". BD: KV 395 (300g); cf. Wolfgang's plans in No. 0466/160 ff.

<sup>41</sup> 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. Amateur viola player. Mozart called him "his best of all friends" (cf. Nos. 0331/5; 0459/1).

<sup>42</sup> BD: The shooting of airguns at humorously decorated targets was practised in the apartments of the members of the "marksmen's company" or club. A member would donate the first prize and pay for all food and drinks consumed during the meeting. Cf. No. 0330/5.

<sup>43</sup> "Jungfer Mitzerl". BD: Maria Anna Raab († 1788, aged 78), along with "Joly Sallerl" (cf. No. 0062/41) one of the most faithful friends of the family. Rented out the first floor of her house, the "Tanzmeisterhaus" ["Dancing Master's House"] to the Mozarts from 1773 until Leopold's death in 1787.

<sup>44</sup> BD: Her name-day. Cf. No. 0466/212.

<sup>45</sup> BD: She suspects he is not taking her seriously and is teasing her.

<sup>46</sup> BD: Cf. note line 46. The War of the Bavarian Succession ended on 13<sup>th</sup> May, 1779.

<sup>47</sup> "Kayser". BD: Joseph II (1741-1790), Holy Roman Emperor [Kaiser] 1765-1790. Son of Maria Theresia.

<sup>48</sup> "König in Preussen". BD: Frederick II ("the Great") (1712-1786), r. 1740-1786.

<sup>49</sup> BD: Today in the Czech Republic.

<sup>50</sup> BD: Lausitz (Lusatia) on the Saxon/Silesian border.

<sup>51</sup> "Prinz Heinrich". BD: Cf. No. 0036/69. Heinrich (1726-1802), brother of Frederick II (the Great) of Prussia. Successful military leader in the Seven Years' War.

<sup>52</sup> BD: Today Chomutov in the Czech Republic.

<sup>53</sup> BD: In the Erz Mountains north-west of Chomutov in the Czech Republic.