

0477. LEOPOLD MOZART TO PADRE GIOVANNI BATTISTA MARTINI, BOLOGNA¹

To the Most Reverend Father / Signore Padre Maestro Giambatista /
Martini, minor conventional / in / Bologna

Most Rev Father Master!
Most esteemed Father!

[Salzburg, 21st August, 1778]

[5] I would not have failed to be of service to Your Most Reverend Fatherliness with my portrait,² since you desire it, if that painter³ had not left our country and if there were another here. But since at last a painter has arrived in our city and has already caused talk of his ability with some portraits, I thus hope to be able to be of service on the occasion of the St. Andrew's Fair⁴ in Bolzano, since the painter, [10] being the only good one, has much to do, and I would not know of any more conveniently placed opportunity than that of the fair to send it safely and gratis. I begged Your Most Reverend Fatherliness to favour my son with one of your most valued recommendations⁵ to the court at Manheim. You had the kindness to write to me: I shall not fail to write to Sgr. Raff⁶ in order that he may recommend him to His Electoral Highness⁷ on my behalf. [15] – and then in your letter informing me that you had received the portrait:⁸ – The events in Bavaria and with the departure of His Palatine Electoral Highness from Manheim⁹ may prevent them from having their full good effect on His Electoral Highness – nevertheless, even if delayed, they shall not fail their aim. – But, Dearest and Most Esteemed Sigr. Father Master! I must inform you that Msr. Raff did not receive this letter of yours. [20]

My son arrived in Paris on 23rd March in the company of his mother. Then Sgr. Raff arrived afterwards and they became the closest of acquaintances, to the extent that Msr. Raff came to see my son almost every day, remained 2 or 3 hours in company together, called my wife his dear mother and desired nothing more [25] than to see my son gaining a position with His Palatine Electoral Highness. But what a tragedy! It was the wish of fatal destiny that my dear wife should fall ill, and after an illness of two weeks she died! My God! What a blow! If Your Very Reverend Fatherliness would consider my state and that of my poor daughter and the situation of my son – alone, desolate in Paris. Sgr. Raff had

¹ Written entirely in Italian.

² BD: Padre Martini had previously been sent a portrait of Wolfgang (cf. line 15; Deutsch Bild No. 11), and had now requested one of Leopold (cf. No. 0396/46 ff.)

³ BD: Presumably the same one as painted Wolfgang.

⁴ BD: Padre Martini had previously received the portrait of Wolfgang (cf. line 15; Deutsch Bild No. 11), and had now request one of Leopold (cf. No. 0396/46 ff.)

⁵ BD: Padre Martini had been requested to send a letter recommending Wolfgang to the court at Mannheim. Cf. No. 0396/30 ff. Elector Karl Theodor was a great admirer of Padre Martini. Cf. No. 0466/124. Martini, however, did not write to the Elector, but to the singer Raaff, who had lost the letter. Wolfgang then asked Leopold to request Martini to send another. No. 0477 is Leopold's response, but now asking for a recommendation to be sent also to Count [Graf] Seeau, supervisor of music at the court in Munich. Cf. Nos. 0483; 0490/27 ff.

⁶ 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.

⁷ 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.

⁸ BD: 31st November.

⁹ BD: When Karl Theodor became Elector of Bavaria as well as Palatine Elector, he chose to move most of the Mannheim court's activities to Munich.

left,¹⁰ [30] since the Elector was once again in Manheim – Raff had left, assuring my son of his true friendship and of his best efforts, desiring nothing more than to have a letter ostensibly to himself from our Dearest Sigr. Padre Maestro. – It is the case that His Electoral Highness [: as you may already know :] only takes operas written in the German language. A German master is therefore required.¹¹ Count Seau,¹² knight, [35] music supervisor in Munich has been confirmed in his office and is presently in Manheim carrying out the division of the personnel into two bodies of musicians, that is, for Munich and for Manheim. – And then the whole court will return to Munich where the residence will be in future.

Dearest and Most Esteemed Sigr. Father Master! You see a young man of 22 left to himself completely alone in a town like Paris, a dangerous city! And you, sir, – you find yourself in a position, having made a favourable promise, to save the soul and make the fortune of a young man of talent. With a letter from you addressed to His Electoral Highness or at least with a letter ostensibly written to Sigr. Raff and another one to Sigr. Count von Seau testifying to the talent of my son, you can do a saintly work, [45] saving the soul of a well educated young man but who is now exposed to a thousand perils, placing in public view a young man of particular talent whose only search is for the opportunity to advance ever further, who does nothing other than practice and compose, and ultimately you can calm the anxious heart of a father and save his life. May you forgive my getting carried away! The death of an excellent wife and most excellent mother, [50] the situation of a son of this kind have made me almost delirious. All my hopes are on your sensitive heart, sir, I commend myself along with my son and with all veneration I call myself

Your Fatherliness'
most reverent
most humble, most devoted and most obliged servant
Leopoldo Mozart
Music director to His Highness

[55]

Salzburg, 21st August, 1778

If you deign to do this favour, as I hope, I beg you to lose no time and to write directly to Manheim.

[60] Prince Henry of Prussia¹³ tried to join forces with the King;¹⁴ but General Laudon¹⁵ prevented him and the Prince mentioned had to retreat to Leipa,¹⁶ and Gen. Laudon is at Tornau.¹⁷ That makes it 7 weeks now that the King has not been able to move.

¹⁰ BD: Raaff did not leave Paris until 10th July, 1778 (cf. No. 0462/117), and was thus still in Paris at the time of Mozart's mother's death.

¹¹ BD: Leopold last wished Martini to recommend Wolfgang as a "German master".

¹² BD: Josef Anton, Count [Graf] Seeau († 1799), from 1753 supervisor of the Palace Theatre [Residenztheater] in Munich. One of his relatives, Ferdinand, Count [Graf] Seeau, († 1768) was Senior Stable Master [Oberstallmeister] in Salzburg.

¹³ BD: Cf. No. 0036/69. Heinrich (1726-1802), brother of Frederick II (the Great) of Prussia. Successful military leader in the Seven Years' War.

¹⁴ BD: Frederick II ("the Great") (1712-1786), r. 1740-1786. Prussia was involved in the War of the Bavarian Succession which followed the installation of Karl Theodor as Elector of Bavaria; also involved were Bavaria and Austria.

¹⁵ BD: Gideon, Baron [Freiherr] von Laudon (Loudon) (1717-1790), Deutsch Bild No. 515. A Russian officer until 1739, joined the Austrian army in 1743. Conquered Belgrade in 1789 during the Turkish war. Mozart wrote funeral music (KV 594), apparently heard in a "mausoleum" erected for Laudon in 1791 (Deutsch Bild No. 516).

¹⁶ BD: Now Č. Lipa, Czech Republic.

¹⁷ BD: East of Prague in eastern Bohemia. Now Turnov, Czech Republic.