

0535.¹ MOZART TO HIS FATHER, SALZBURG

*À / Monsieur / Monsieur Leopold Mozart / Maitre de la Chapelle
de S:A:R: / l'Archeveque de et à / Salzbourg*

Mon très cher Père!

Munic ce 8 de 9bre 1780.²

Safe and pleasant was my arrival! – safe because no adverse events befell us on the journey, [5] and pleasant because we could hardly wait for the moment of reaching our place and destination because the journey, although short, was very wearisome; – for I assure you that none of us was able to sleep even a minute during the night – this coach indeed bumps the soul out of one's body! – and the seats! – hard as stone! – [10] after Wasserburg³ I did not believe that I would succeed in getting my behind to Munich in one piece! – it was all covered with weals – and probably flaming red – for two whole post-stages I travelled with my hands pressed on the cushion and holding my behind in the air – – – but enough of that, it is after all now over! – But I will make it my rule rather to go on foot than to drive in a post-coach. [15] – Now concerning Munich. – That same evening |: we did not arrive here until 1 o'clock in the afternoon :| I was at Count Seeau's,⁴ where, since he was not at home, I left a note – The next morning I went there with *Becckè*,⁵ who commends himself to all of you and to the *Fiala*⁶ household, *enfin*⁷ to all his acquaintances in Salzburg; [20] – Seeau has been melted like wax⁸ by the Mannheimers – regarding the book⁹ the Count says it is not necessary for *Abbate*¹⁰ *Varesco*¹¹ to write it out again and send it here – because it is being printed here – but my opinion was that he should put it all on paper right away, but not forgetting the short notes¹² in the process, and send it here, together with the argument¹³ [25] – as far as the names of the screen characters are concerned, that is the least necessary thing, it can probably be done most easily here.

¹ BD: In 1780, probably with the assistance of Count (or Countess) [Graf, Gräfin] Paumgarten (cf. No. 0537/9-10), Mozart received the commission to compose the opera seria *Idomeneo, Rè di Crete*, for the 1781 carnival season in Munich. Older libretti, set by André Campra (1660-1744) and Baldassare Galuppi (1706-1785), existed, but it was arranged that Abbate Varesco, court chaplain in Salzburg, should produce a new libretto, drawing on both the old ones. Mozart's employer, Prince-Archbishop Hieronymus, granted him leave until 18th December, 1780 (cf. No. 0563/56-57). Mozart had already composed a large part of act one before leaving for Munich on 5th November, 1780. He arrived at 1 o'clock in the afternoon on 6th November, 1780.

² = “To Monsieur Leopold Mozart, music director to His Royal Highness the Archbishop of and in Salzburg / My very dear father! / Munich, this 8th day of November, 1780.”

³ BD: A post stage approximately halfway between Salzburg and Munich.

⁴ 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. Cf. No. 0300/11. 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.

⁵ BD: Johann Baptist Becké (1743-1817), flautist in the court music in Munich, kept the Mozarts informed about developments there.

⁶ BD: Joseph Fiala (c. 1754-1816), oboist in Prague, Regensburg, Wallerstein, Munich, Vienna, Salzburg, St. Petersburg, Donaueschingen. Also composed. Cf. Nos. 0485/67; 0529/7.

⁷ = “In short.”

⁸ BD: His previous reputation was for being brusque and unapproachable. Mozart's first call on Count Seeau is mentioned in No. 0333/30 ff.

⁹ BD: The fair copy of the libretto for *Idomoneo*.

¹⁰ *Abbé*, abbot, man entitled to wear ecclesiastical dress.

¹¹ BD: Abbate Giambattista Varesco (c. 1736-1805), court chaplain in Salzburg from 1766, wrote the texts for *Idomeneo* KV 366 and *L'oca del Cairo* KV 422. The latter was his response to Mozart's request for an opera buffa for Vienna.

¹² BD: Stage directions etc.

¹³ BD: Outline of the plot.

There will be little changes¹⁴ made here and there – the *recitatives* shortened somewhat – but everything will be printed;

Now, I have a request for the esteemed *Abbate*; – I would like to have *Ilia*'s aria in the second act and second scene changed a little for what I need [30] – *Se il Padre perdei in te lo ritrovo*; this stanza could not be better – but now comes what has always seemed unnatural to me *N.B.*: in an *aria* – namely speaking *à parte*.¹⁵ In dialogue these things are quite natural – one quickly speaks a couple of words aside – [35] but in an *aria* – where one has to repeat the words – this has a noxious effect – and even if this were not the case I would wish to have an *aria* here – the opening can be left as it is if he finds it adequate, for it is *charming* – an *aria* with a quite natural, continuous flow – in which I am not so tied to the words, can also thus go on quite easily with the writing, for we have made an agreement [40] to have an *aria andantino* here with 4 *concertante* wind instruments, namely for a *flute*, an *oboe*, a horn and a bassoon. – and I ask that I might receive it as soon as possible. –

Now a messy business; – I may not have the honour of knowing *del Prato* the hero,¹⁶ yet from the description *Ceccarelli*¹⁷ is better: – [45] for his breathing often fails in the middle of an *aria* – and – *N.B.*: he has never yet stood on any stage – and *Raaff*¹⁸ is a statue – – Now just imagine the scene in the first act.¹⁹ –

But now for something good. *Mad.^{me} Dorothea Wendling*²⁰ is *arci-contentissima*²¹ with her scene – she wanted to hear it 3 times in a row. [50] Yesterday the Teutonic Grand Master²² arrived – E(s)sex²³ was performed at the Electoral Court Theatre²⁴ – and a *magnifique* ballet. The theatre was entirely *illuminated*; – the opening was an *overture* by *Cannabich*²⁵ which, because it is recent, I did not know. – – – I assure you, if you had heard it yourself – it would have pleased and touched you as it did me! [55] – and, if you had not already known in advance, you would certainly not have believed that it was by *Cannabich* – so come soon and hear it – be amazed at the orchestra – Now I know of nothing more. This evening there is a grand *concert*. *Mara*²⁶ will sing 3 arias – is it snowing in Salzburg as it is here? –

[60] To Herr Schickaneder²⁷ my compliments, I beg his forgiveness that I cannot send the *aria*²⁸ yet, for I have not yet been able to finish it completely –

¹⁴ BD: Mozart had obtained the right to intervene the text depending on musical requirements.

¹⁵ = “Aside”.

¹⁶ BD: Vincenzo dal Prato (1756-1828), castrato.

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: 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. Now aged 66!

¹⁹ BD: Probably the scene where Idomeneo goes onshore, despairing and terrified.

²⁰ BD: Dorothea (I) Wendling, née Spurni, wife of the traverse flautist Johann Baptist Wendling, singer in the court music in Mannheim, later dedicated herself entirely to teaching.

²¹ “Arch-most-content” – Mozart's creative use of Italian: ‘most exceptionally satisfied’.

²² “der gross deutschmeister”. BD: Maximilian Franz, son of Maria Theresia, succeeded his uncle as Grand Master of the Teutonic Order.

²³ BD: Translation of the tragedy *The unhappy Favourite or the Earl of Essex* by John Banks (written 1681).

²⁴ “Chrfl: Hoftheater”.

²⁵ BD: Christian Cannabich, music director to the Elector in Mannheim and then Munich.

²⁶ BD: Gertrud Elisabeth Mara, née Schmebling (1749-1833), fled with her husband from the Prussian court after constant disputes with Frederick II.

²⁷ BD: Emanuel Schikaneder (1751-1812), actor and theatre director. He took over the Moser troupe in 1778, which he took to Ulm, Stuttgart, Augsburg, Neuburg an der Donau, Nuremberg, Erlangen, Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Laibach, Klagenfurt and Linz 1780. They were in Salzburg 1780/81. He soon got to know the Mozart family, gave them free entry to the theatre every evening, and participated in the air-rifle club. He was important in giving Mozart familiarity with stage practice. In 1786 they performed operas ten times and plays three times in Salzburg.

I kiss your hand a thousand times, and embrace my sister with my whole heart, and I am, sir,

[65] *Mon très chér Père*²⁹

From *Cannabich*,³⁰ Wendl.³¹
thousand *compliments*,
and hope soon to have the pleasure
of making the acquaintance
[70] of both of you. *Adieu*.

most obedient son
Wolf. Amdè Mozart

ON THE ENVELOPE:

*Il vostro Figlio Giovane
Beckio fa i suoi Comp:
con suo sigillo*³²

²⁸ BD: Mozart had promised Schikaneder an aria for insertion into the comedy *Die zwey schlaflosen Nächte oder Der glückliche Betrug*. Cf. Nos. 0550/3; 0559/22. After repeated reminders by Leopold, Mozart sent it off on 22nd November, 1780 (cf. No. 0541/3). The music is the recitative and aria “*Warum, o Liebe, treibst...*” – “*Zittre, töricht Herz, und leide*” KV Anh. 11a (365a; lost).

²⁹ = “My very dear father”.

³⁰ BD: (Johann) Christian (Innocenz Bonaventura) Cannabich (1731-1798). Joined the Mannheim court music at the age of 13. After the death of Toeschi (see above), he was sole music director to the Elector in Munich. The Cannabich family became particular friends of Mozart’s in Mannheim in 1777/78. Cf. No. 0057/13. In 1777 Mozart dedicated the clavier sonata in C KV 309 (284b) to his daughter Rosa.

³¹ BD: The flautist Johann Baptist Wendling (1723-1797); his brother was the violinist Franz Anton Wendling (1729-1786). For the various members of the family Mozart wrote KV 487a (295a), KV 307 (284d) and perhaps KV 368; he also wrote an instrumentation of a flute concerto by J.B. Wendling.

³² = “Your son Giovane Beckio [Johann Baptist Becké, cf. line 18] pays his compliments with his seal.”