

*Mon très cher Fils!*²

Salzb., 22 Decembre, 1780

I must write in haste, for the post-coach leaves tomorrow morning, that is, one day earlier. Here are the pillules.³ Of these one takes, N.B. one day after the moon has begun to wane, 5 in the morning, then [5] one can have breakfast if one wishes one and a half hours later. In the evening, 5 once again before sleeping. This is continued until the waning moon has passed. The most inconvenient thing about this for women is that there are times when they must postpone or interrupt taking this medicine.

[10] Here are the three acts written for printing.⁴ Space has been left to insert the names of the singing characters. -- The invention of the ballet. -- the ballet-music etc.

All that is written in before every big scene change |: if Herr Quaglio⁵ has changed it in any way |: will be easy to change in the book. -- [15] In Atto primo Scena VIII, for example, at the words: Nettuno esce etc.⁶ and then Nel fondo della prospettiva si vede Idomeneo, che si sforza arrampicarsi sopra quei dirupi⁷ etc., there, I say, one will have to arrange the indication and explanation of these scenes according to the way in which one plans to realise them. -- That is, whether Idomeneo remains on the ship, or whether, while not suffering shipwreck, [20] he has nevertheless left the ship with his people because of the apparent danger and found safety on the rocks. In short! It depends on how one realises it. This will be left to Herr Quaglio as a skilled and experienced man. There must be wrecked ships, however, for in the recitative in Scena 10 Idamantes says: vedo frà quel'avanzi di fracassate navi su quel Lido [25] sconosciuto guerrier.⁸

Now to go on! Your firm wish is to have 2 recit. shortened.⁹ I therefore sent for Varesco at once, for I received your letter this evening at 5 o'clock, and the post-coach leaves tomorrow morning. We read it one way, we read it another, and neither of us found an opportunity to shorten it. It has been translated from the French,¹⁰ just as the scheme demands. Yes, if one consults the scheme, [30] there was a further demand that one should extend this recit. a little so that they might not recognise each other so quickly, and now the wish is to push it towards the ridiculous in that they already recognise each other after just a few words. Let me explain: Idamantes must of course say why he is there, sees the stranger and places himself at his service. [35] Idomen. now becomes so personal that he speaks of sufferings and must consequently offer his compliments in return. And then Idamant will say to him that he feels compassion for those in misfortune, because he has experienced misfortune himself. Idomeneus' answer is a necessary question. Now Idamantes tells of the king's misfortune and Idomeneus, [40] with the mysterious words non più di questo etc., causes Idamantes to catch a glimmer of hope and to ask with eagerness: dimmi amico, dimmi dov'è? This eagerness causes Idomeneus to ask: ma d'onde etc. -- Surely Idamantes must reveal himself here in such a way that he portrays himself as a son worthy of his father and arouses in Idomeneus the astonishment, admiration and curiosity [45] to find out who this

¹ Text version in BD VI, p. 695.

² = "My very dear son!"

³ BD: Cf. Nos. 0563/21ff.; 0564/78 ff.

⁴ BD: Text and translation were to be made available to the public.

⁵ BD: Cf. No. 0537/5: Lorenzo Quaglio (1730-1804), responsible for stage decoration in Munich.

⁶ BD: Referring to Varesco's planned pantomime in which Neptune appears and calms the sea.

⁷ = "In the background of the view Idomeneo is seen, trying to climb up on top of those rocks".

⁸ = "I see among those remains of wrecked ships on that shore an unknown warrior".

⁹ BD: Discussed in No. 0565/51. Leopold opposes Mozart's view and wants the recitatives preserved in full length.

¹⁰ BD: Varesco was working from a French original by Antione Danchet, set by André Campra, first performed in Paris in 1772. Leopold had sent the "plan" to Munich on 11th November, 1780, cf. No. 0536/9.

young person is, which makes the whole thing more interesting at the point when he realises it is his son. – But if one wishes to leave something out *par force*¹¹, I thought about after *Idamante's recit.: che favella? vive egli ancor? etc.* which ends: *dove quel dolce aspetto vita mi Rendera? Idomeneo, ma d'onde nasce questa, che per lui nutri* [50] *tenerezza d'amor? then immediately: perchè qual tuo parlar si mi conturba? Idamante, e qual mi sento anch'io,* and then so on etc. Here 1½ pages in *Varesco's* present enclosed copy, page 32, are cut, namely the beautiful account of the heroic deed where *Indaman* begins: *Potessi almeno etc.* and there it may become a minute shorter, yes, a whole minute *in puncto*.¹² [55] A great gain! Or do you want to have father and son running into each other and recognising each other like the disguised *Arlequin* and *Brig[h]ella* finding each other as servants in a foreign land and quickly recognising and embracing each other? Bear in mind that this is one of the most beautiful scenes in the opera, yes, the main scene, on which the whole continuation of the story depends. [60] Nor can this scene easily tire, because it is in the first act.

In the 2nd act nothing can be omitted except in the 2nd speech by *Idomeneo*. *Idomeneo: un Sol Consiglio or mi fà d'uopo. ascolta: Tu sai quanto a Trojani fù il mio brando fatal. Arbace: tutto m'è noto*¹³ etc. Then it goes on and sound reason will not allow a word to be omitted, nor can this whole recit. last long, [65] because there are many things in it which have to be sung fervently and quickly, and there you win half a minute! A great gain! This recit. will furthermore not tire a soul, since it is the first in the 2nd act. Otherwise it would at most be possible to leave out when, immediately after *Arbace's recit.: male s'usurpa un Rè etc.*, *Idomeneo* says: *Il voto è ingiusto*.

[70] What would then be left out are *Idomen: Intendo Arbace intendo* etc. and *Arbace: Medica man* etc. etc. Whether it is now worth the trouble to make a change amounting to 2½ minutes at most for such a detail I do not know, especially since these rec. are in places where they cannot tire anyone. In the first act everyone is patient, and the first recit. in the 2nd does not tire anyone. [75] To me it is ridiculous, for at the rehearsal, where the eye has nothing, it is of course immediately boring, but in the theatre, where there are so many diverting objects between the stage itself and the spectators present, a recit. of this kind goes past without anyone noticing it. You can tell that to everyone in my name. [80] If, despite all that, something of the kind should be left out, I would specially request that everything should at least be printed. Herr *Varesco* knows nothing of all that I have written here. – If Herr Schachtner¹⁴ has not done everything to the greatest perfection, one must take account of the fact that there was very little time. Here are all the arias written by *Aesop*.¹⁵ Also a letter from Schachtner, who commends himself along with *Varesco*. [85] We wish you luck, that the opera thus turns out well. More next post-day. *Addio*. All written by candlelight with eyeglasses. We commend ourselves to everyone, we kiss you a million times and I am as always your faithful father

L. Mozart.

¹¹ = “At any price!”

¹² = “On the dot, precisely”.

¹³ = “*Idomeneo*: Now I need only one counsel. Listen: you know how fatal my sword was to the Trojans.

Arbace: It is all known to me.”

¹⁴ BD: Cf. No. 0089/73. Johann Andreas (he called himself “Andrée”) Schachtner (1731-1795). Became Salzburg High Princely Court and Field Trumpeter [Hochfürstlicher Hof- und Feldtrompeter] in 1754. He also played violin (cf. No. 1210/99) and violoncello. He published a book of poems in 1765, dedicating it to Johann Christoph Gottsched. Probably contributed texts to KV 42, 50 (46b), 196; 345 (336a), 344 (336b), the German version of KV 366. In 1792 gave Nannerl detailed information on Mozart's early years, cf. No. 1210.

¹⁵ BD: The mysterious figure (copyist?) mentioned in No. 0559/38 ff. and No. 0565/42 ff.