

0570. MOZART TO HIS FATHER, SALZBURG

À / Monsieur / Monsieur Leopold Mozart / maitre de la Chapelle
de S: A: R: / l'archeveque de et à / Salzbourg

Munic ce 27 Dec.^{bre}

Mon très Cher Père!¹

1780.

[5] I have received the whole *opera*² – the letter from Schachtner,³ your note, and the pillules⁴ in the most perfect order. – As far as the 2 *scenes*⁵ which should be shortened are concerned, it was not my suggestion, but only my assent – and the reason I was at once of the same opinion is that *Raaff*⁶ and *del Prato*⁷ sing through the recitative completely without spirit and fire, in such an absolute monotone – [10] and are the most miserable actors⁸ that the stage has ever borne – Because of the unfittingness, unnaturalness and the near impossibility of leaving anything out, I recently had an accursedly breezy contention with Seeau.⁹ – It suffices if everything is printed – which he was not at all ready to admit – but finally, because I snapped at him coarsely, he did. – [15] The last rehearsal¹⁰ was wonderful. – it was in a large room at court, the Elector¹¹ was also there – this time the rehearsal was with the whole orchestra |: that will fit into the *opera* house, needless to say :|. –

After the first act the Elector said *Bravo* to me in an over-loud voice, and as I went over to him to kiss his hand, he said: [20] This *opera* will be *charmante*; he will certainly do himself much honour with this. – Because he did not know if he could stay there long, they had to perform the *concertante aria*¹² and the thunderstorm at the beginning¹³ of the second act. – After this he applauded me once again in the most friendly way and said, laughing: – one would not think that something so great was enclosed in such a small head. – [25] He also praised my *opera* greatly the next morning in the *Cercle*.¹⁴ – the next rehearsal will probably be in the theatre. – *apropos*:¹⁵ *Becke*¹⁶ recently said to me that he had written to you again

¹ = “To Monsieur Leopold Mozart, Music Director to High Royal Highness the Archbishop of and in Salzburg / Munich, this 27th December, 1780. / My very dear father!”

² BD: The text for *Idomeneo* (and the German translation) had been written and altered in Salzburg.

³ BD: Cf. No. 0566/84. He was providing the German translation. – 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.

⁴ BD: Cf. Nos. 0563/21 ff.; 0564/78 ff.; 0566/3.

⁵ BD: The wisdom of the possible cuts had been debated in Nos. 0565/51 ff.; 0566/25 ff.

⁶ BD: Singing *Idomeneo*. 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. Raaff caused Mozart worries with his lack of acting skills. Metastasio praised his singing, but saw him as a cold actor.

⁷ BD: Singing *Idamante*. Vincenzo dal Prato (1756-1828), castrato. An unsatisfactory singer.

⁸ BD: Especially Raaff, cf. No. 0373/67.

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ BD: The third orchestral rehearsal on 23rd December, 1780.

¹¹ 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.

¹² BD: Cf. No. 0569/42.

¹³ BD: In Scene VII towards the end (!) Of the second act.

¹⁴ = “Privy council”.

¹⁵ Here: = “By the way”.

after the penultimate rehearsal, saying among other things that *Raaff's aria* in the 2nd act is apparently written contrary to the text – That's what they told me, he said, [30] I understand too little Italian – is it true? – If only you had asked me earlier and only written afterwards – I must tell you that whoever says such a thing knows too little Italian. – The *aria* is composed very fittingly to the words – one hears the – *mare*¹⁷ – and the *mare funesto*¹⁸ – and the passagework on *minacciar*¹⁹ is appropriate, which then express the *minacciar*, the threatening – entirely. [35] – and this is in every way most splendid *aria* in the *opera* and also received general applause.

Is it true that the Emperor is ill?²⁰ – is it true that the Archbishop is to come to Munich?²¹ – Listen, *Raaff* is the best, most honest man in the world, but – fixed on the old beaten track [40] – that one must sweat blood in the process; – consequently very difficult to write for him. – Very easy too if you wish, if one wishes to write such *arias* every day. – such as *par exemple*²² the first *aria Vedròmi intorno* etc. When you hear it some time it is good, it is beautiful – but if I had written it for *Zonca*,²³ it would have been written reflecting the text even better. [45] – he loves the cut noodles²⁴ too much – and does not consider the expression. – Now I have had a difficult situation with him in the *quartet*. – The more often I hear it, the more often I imagine it on stage, the more effect the *quartet* has on me. – and also has on everyone who has heard it so far on the *clavier*. – *Raaff* is the only one who thinks it will not have an effect. [50] he said it to me completely alone. – non c'è da spianar la voce²⁵ – it is too restricted – as if one should not rather speak in a *quartet*²⁶ than sing – things of this kind he does not understand at all. – I only said: Dearest friend! – If I only knew of one note that could be changed in this *quartet*, I would do it at once. – but – so far there has been nothing in this *opera* with which I am more satisfied than this *quartet*; [55] – and just hear it once all together – then you will certainly speak differently. – In your 2 *arias*²⁷ I have spared no effort to be truly at your service – will also do the same in the third²⁸ – and hope I will be successful – but as far as *trios* and *quartets* are concerned one must leave the *compositeur*²⁹ his free will [60] – at that he declared himself satisfied. – recently he was quite indignant over this word in his last *aria*: – *rin vigorir* – and *ringiovenir* – especially *vienmi à rin vigorir* – five i's – it is true, at the end of an *aria* it is very unpleasant. –

But now I must finish, for the post-coach is leaving this moment. – [65] I have had my black suit³⁰ turned, for it was no longer fit to see – now it is thoroughly good again.

Adieu. I commend myself to all good friends, both gentlemen and ladies, especially to the beautiful and dexterous young lady pupil.³¹ I embrace my sister from the heart, and I kiss your hands 1000 times and am forever, sir, your

¹⁶ BD: Cf. No. 0333/20 etc. Johann Baptist Becké (1743-1817), flautist in the court music in Munich, kept the Mozarts informed about developments there.

¹⁷ = “sea.”

¹⁸ = “baleful sea”.

¹⁹ = “menace”.

²⁰ BD: Joseph II; cf. No. 0572/72, where it was suggested he was feigning illness to avoid obligations.

²¹ BD: Leopold's employer in Salzburg. Leopold had heard nothing about it, cf. No. 0572/73-74.

²² = “For example”.

²³ BD: Giovanni Battista Zonca (Zonka, Zonga) (1728-1809), bass in Mannheim, then in Munich. Cf. Nos. 0379/79; 0570/44. Here it appears that Mozart had been thinking of writing the title role for bass.

²⁴ BD: A phrase also used in No. 0562/28. “Cut noodles” = “irritating preciosity”.

²⁵ = “There is nothing there where the voice can open up”.

²⁶ BD: No. 21.

²⁷ BD: No. 6; No. 12.

²⁸ BD: Here a completely new text was written and set.

²⁹ = “Composer”.

³⁰ BD: Sent from Salzburg in December at Wolfgang's request. Cf. Nos. 0555/8 ff. and 0557/2.

³¹ BD: Perhaps Therese (Maria Theresia) Barisani (1761-1854), mentioned several times in preceding correspondence (cf. Nos. 0544/10; 0572/93-94). Daughter of the court physician Barisani (cf. No. 0270/28-29).

[70]

most obedient son,
Wolfg. Amd. Mozart