

0574.<sup>1</sup> MOZART TO HIS FATHER, SALZBURG

*À Monsieur / Monsieur Leopold Mozart / maitre de la Chapelle de  
S:A:R: / l'archeveque et Prince de et à / Salzburg.*

*Salzburg<sup>2</sup> \_ce 3 de Janvier  
1781.*

*Mon très cher Père!*<sup>3</sup>

[5] My head and hands are so full of the third *act* that it would be no wonder if I became the third *act* myself. – It alone costs more effort than a whole *opera* – for there is hardly a scene in it which is not extremely interesting. – The *accompagnement*<sup>4</sup> for the subterranean voice consists of nothing more than 5 parts; namely of 3 trombones and 2 hunting horns, [10] which are positioned in the same place as the voice comes from. – At this point the whole *orchestra* is silent – the main stage rehearsal is quite certainly on the 20<sup>th</sup> – and the first performance<sup>5</sup> on the 22<sup>nd</sup> – neither of you need to take anything with you except black clothing – and other clothing – for every day – if you do not go anywhere except to good friends [15] where one does not pay any compliments so that the black clothes can be saved a little – and, if you want, a more attractive one for going to the *ball* and the *concert masquée*.<sup>6</sup> – I will write concerning the heating stove next post-day – I will no doubt have to send this letter off with the post again. – I have said to the *conducteur*<sup>7</sup> a hundred times that he should always send someone here for the letter at 11 o'clock [20] – at half past 11 the coach leaves – I never get dressed before half past 12 because I have to write, therefore I cannot go out – I cannot send the letter there because he takes it with him by secret arrangement, for the people at the Post Office do not like to see that –

Herr *Robinig*<sup>8</sup> is already here, he sends his compliments to both of you – [25] the 2 *Barisanis*,<sup>9</sup> I hear, will also come to Munich: is that true? . .

The heavens be thanked! that the cut in the Archbishop's finger<sup>10</sup> was of no consequence; – Righteous God! – How shocked I was initially. *Cannabich*<sup>11</sup> thanks you for your charming lines, he and his whole family send their compliments – he said to me – that you had written very playfully, [30] you must have been in a very good humour. –

We will of course still have many observations to make about the 3<sup>rd</sup> *act* on stage; – such as, for example, *scena* VI, where the direction after *Arbace's aria* is: *Idomeneo, Arbace etc*: how can the latter be there immediately again? – – it is fortunate that he can stay away altogether – but to be on the safe side [35] I have written a somewhat longer *introduzion* for the high priest's recitative. – After the chorus of lamentation the king, the whole people and everyone go off – and in the following scene the direction is – *Idomeneo in ginochione nel*

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<sup>1</sup> BD: Original lost. NissenB.

<sup>2</sup> BD: Erroneously instead of *Munic*.

<sup>3</sup> = “To Monsieur Leopold Mozart, Music Director to His Royal Highness the Archbishop and Prince of and in Salzburg. / Salzburg, this third day of January, 1781. / My very dear father!”

<sup>4</sup> = “accompaniment”.

<sup>5</sup> BD: The first performance of *Idomeneo* finally took place on 29th January, 1781 (cf. No. 0577/4-5).

<sup>6</sup> = “masked”.

<sup>7</sup> BD: In charge of the mail coach.

<sup>8</sup> BD: Factory owner Georg Joseph Robinig von Rottenfeld (1710-1760). Cf. No. 0016/67.

<sup>9</sup> BD: Dr. Silvester Barisani (1719-1810), personal physician to the Prince-Archbishop [Fürst-Erbischof] of Salzburg, member of an extensive Salzburg family. Cf. No. 0270/28. His wife: Maria Anna Theresia (1729-1802).

<sup>10</sup> BD: Cf. No. 0572/64. The exclamations here are presumably not genuine.

<sup>11</sup> 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.

*tempio*<sup>12</sup> – that cannot possibly be – he must come with his whole retinue – at this point, now, it is essential to have a *march* – [40] for this I have written an totally simple *march* for 2 *violins, viola, bass* and 2 *oboes* which is played *à mezza voce*<sup>13</sup> – and during which the king comes, and the priests prepare everything needed for the sacrifice – then the king goes down on his knees and begins to pray –

In *Ellettra's recitative* after the subterranean voice – [45] there should also be the direction *Partono*<sup>14</sup> – I forgot to look in the copy written for printing to see if it is there and how it is put – it seems to me so simplistic that these persons rush to get away fast – only to leave *Mad:me Elettra* alone. –

I have just this moment received your 5 lines of 1<sup>st</sup> January; – [50] as I broke the seal, I held it in my hand in just such a way that nothing but blank paper was visible to me – finally – – I found it; –

I am truly glad to have received the *aria* for *Raaff*<sup>15</sup> – for he was *absolument*<sup>16</sup> intent on taking the *aria* he had given me – I would not have had any other way of managing it |: *N.B.* with someone like *Raaff* :| than to have had *Varesco's*<sup>17</sup> *aria* [55] printed, but with *Raaff's* being sung. – Now I have to finish, otherwise I lose too much time – My most special thanks to my sister for the New Year wishes, I wish her the same in return. – I hope that we will soon be able to get each other in truly good spirits together. *Adieu*. I kiss your hands 1000 times, and I embrace my sister from my heart. [60] And I am, sir, eternally your

most obedient son  
Wolfg. Amad. Mozart

I commend myself to all good friends, both gentlemen and ladies. – – Not to forget our *Ruscherle*<sup>18</sup> – the young *Eck*<sup>19</sup> sends her a little kiss – a sugary one, needless to say –

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<sup>12</sup> = “Idomeneo on his knees in the temple”.

<sup>13</sup> = “under the voice, in an undertone”.

<sup>14</sup> = “They leave”.

<sup>15</sup> BD: In the title role: the tenor 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 (cf. No. 0570/8-10) with his lack of acting skills. Metastasio praised his singing, but saw him as a cold actor.

<sup>16</sup> = “absolutely”.

<sup>17</sup> 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.

<sup>18</sup> BD: Katharina Gilowsky (1750-1802), daughter of court surgeon Wenzel Andreas Gilowsky, member of the airgun club of earlier years, frequenter of the Mozart family home. Sometime governess to the children of Leopold Andreas, Count [Graf] Plaz.

<sup>19</sup> BD: Johann Friedrich Eck (1766-c.1810), violinist, son of the Mannheim horn player Georg Eck. Cf. No. 0887/91-92.