

0575. LEOPOLD MOZART TO HIS SON, MUNICH

*À Monsieur / Monsieur Wolfgang Amadé / Mozart maître de musi=
que / à / Munic / Franco*

*Mon très cher Fils!*¹

Salzb., 4th January, 1781.

It was at 9 o'clock, just as I was going to Mass on New [Year's]² Day, that I received your letter of 30th December. [5] After church I carried out [some] New Year's *Seccaturen*³ and went to *Varesco's*⁴ at half past 10. The man was now abominably evil-tempered and said, as the Italians or half-Italians do, the most clownish things: amongst others, that he wrote to tl. Count S[e]eau in the last few days to ask him to take care [10] that no printing errors should find their way into the book etc.: good! That he should ask for 12 copies himself as a special favour: enough! and that he furthermore hoped to receive some ducats in recognition, in view of the fact that he has copied out the text 4 times and afterwards had to make many changes, all of which, if he had known in advance, he would not have taken it on for 20 ducats, such a frugal payment etc.: [15] as far as I am concerned also good, only it occurred to me right away that Herr Varesco might have the godless Italian idea of keeping the money, as if we had made a somewhat more remunerative agreement. The reasons for this surmise are: he is half-Italian, peggio del Italiano Vero;⁵ I could not give him the letter concerning his agreement from Count S[e]eau⁶ to read, [20] but only read to him from it, since he did not need to know the other things; because he wrote to Count Seau via you when sending the 3rd act, and the Count did not answer him, but you wrote to me saying he had handed over to you the task of giving an answer. All of this could arouse in him the suspicion that there are yet more people in the world such as himself. He may have judged us as he would judge himself. [25] – Now to continue: – I spoke to him quite calmly and, since I was finally tired of his slighting words and incompetent poppycock, I said to him: I need from you no answer other than whether I should write today that on the next post-day, the 4th of January, another aria will come or not. I have to make the reply! All the rest does not bother me a trifle. [30] He then said to me: I will see if anything occurs to me. And then I went to finish my other New Year's *Seccaturen*. Now, everything else he said and how very indignant he is you can deduce from what he has written next to the aria: I will tell you the details when we meet. Above all, make sure that Count Seau pays the money to him and to Schachtner⁷ [35] as soon as possible, one need only give it to Herr Gschwendner,⁸ that is the shortest way.

Now you know that I am a lover of peace and an honest man who wishes to spare everyone vexation. – You see from *Varesco's* accompanying note that, although he has written another *aria* for singing, [40] he nevertheless wishes to see the *aria Sazio è il Destin* etc. printed. That would be ludicrous, one *aria* in the book and another one being sung. The best remedy would be to print both *arias*, and to mark the *Sazio è il Destin* etc. with dashes „

¹ = “To Monsieur Wolfgang Amadé Mozart, music director in Munich / Postage paid / My very dear son!”

² BD: Two lines damaged by the seal. The two words have been made up following the suggestions in BD.

³ BD: Leopold's Germanised version of the Italian *seccature* (nuisances) presumably refers to obligatory visits.

⁴ 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.

⁵ BD: “Worse than the real Italian” – Leopold obviously sees the half-Italian as worse than the true Italian.

⁶ 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.

⁷ BD: Producing the German translation of the opera. – Johann Andreas Schachtner (1731-1795), court and field trumpeter to the Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg. Probably supplied Mozart with texts for Grabmusik KV 42 (35a) and parts of numerous stage works.

⁸ BD: Joseph Franz Xaver Gschwendtner (1740-1800), city councillor and merchant in Salzburg.

at the edge of each line because it is not sung. This way all vexation would be prevented and it does not of course involve more than printing a few lines.

[45] Herr Schachtner had no objection at all, as you see, he even did the translation twice; one can choose whichever one wishes. I like the 2nd better. The first follows the Italian conditional and main clauses, is consequently more precisely in keeping with the Italian. The second is infinitely more German, less forced and more natural, and that does not in any way mean that the Italian main clause turns into a conditional clause due to the free translation [50] because it is much more permissible in German. As far as the transfer is concerned, it is not necessary, because Herr Gschwendner already left yesterday and is now in Munich. You need only go to him, he will surely give you what you need, although I have not spoken to him, for when I wanted to speak to him today his worthy brother told me he had already left yesterday. [55] Give him my compliments, for I hope to come soon myself anyway. Only write telling me when the main rehearsal will be. I am as always your father Mzt.

P.S. And poor *Marquesini*⁹ has thus had to end his life *mal à propos*?¹⁰ A pity! – That’s how it goes! – when the reason, along with the whole head, goes for a walk. [60] – I recommend to you once again that *Varesco* and Schachtner are paid soon. Your sister and I kiss you a thousand times and I am yours as ever.

⁹ BD: Cf. the (apocryphal) story told in No. 0573/67 ff.

¹⁰ BD: “so ill-timed”.