

0598. MOZART TO HIS FATHER, SALZBURG

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

*Mon très cher Père!*

*vienne ce 19 de may 1781:<sup>1</sup>*

Nor do I know<sup>2</sup> what in the world I should write first, my dearest father; [5] for I cannot recover from my first amazement, and never will do if you continue to think and to write in this way; – I must confess to you that there is not a single tendency in your letter<sup>3</sup> in which I recognise you, my father! – Certainly a father, but not the best, most loving father, the father concerned for his own and for his children's honour – [10] in a word, not – my father; yet that was all only a dream – now you have woken up – and do not need any answer at all from me on the points you raise in order to be more than convinced that I – now more than ever – cannot in any way stand down from my decision. – Yet, because my honour and my character are most deeply attacked in some passages, [15] I must reply to a few points. – You can never approve of my having *left* service in Vienna:– I believe that if one does have an inclination to do so |: although I did not have it at that time, for otherwise I would have acted the first time |: it would then be most sensible in a place where one is well placed and has the finest prospects in the world. – [20] It may be that you cannot approve of it directly under the gaze of the Archbishop,<sup>4</sup> but to me you cannot possibly do anything except approve of it. I have no other means of preserving my honour than to take back from my decision? – how on earth can you formulate such a contradiction? – When you wrote this the thought did not cross your mind that I would become the most abject villain in the world as the result of such a retreat. [25] – All Vienna knows that I have left the Archbishop – knows why! – knows that it happened because of slighted honour – and indeed honour slighted for the third time – and I should in turn prove the opposite in public? – should make of myself a cringing coward and of the Archbishop a virtuous Prince<sup>5</sup> – no-one can do the former, and I [30] – least of all – and only God can do the second, if his will is to enlighten him. – So I have not yet shown any love towards you? – this is the time that I must show it? – can you truly say that? –

I was not willing to sacrifice anything of my pleasure for you? – – –

What kind of pleasure, then, do I have here? – That, with toil and worry, I keep my purse in mind! [35] – It seems to me that you believe I am swimming in pleasures and entertainments. – Oh, how wrong you are! – For the moment, that is! – For the moment I have only as much as I need – Now the *subscription* for 6 *sonatas*<sup>6</sup> has started, and there I will receive money – It is furthermore true about the *opera*<sup>7</sup> – and in *Advent* I am giving a *concert*,<sup>8</sup> [40] then it will continue from good to better – for in winter thoroughly good earnings are to be made here. – If this is what one calls pleasure, when one has broken away from a Prince who pays one nothing and mistreats one to death, then it is true that I am

<sup>1</sup> = “From Vienna. To Monsieur Leopold Mozart, Music Director to His Royal Highness the Archbishop of and in Salzburg. / My very dear father! / Vienna, this 19th day of May, 1781”.

<sup>2</sup> BD: Mozart is obviously quoting from the missing letter No. 0597.

<sup>3</sup> BD: No. 0597, lost.

<sup>4</sup> BD: Hieronymus Joseph Franz de Paula, Count [Graf] Collaredo (1732-1812), Prince-Archbishop [Fürst-Erzbischof] of Salzburg from 1772. Employer of Leopold and, for two periods, of Wolfgang. Cf. No. 0263/9. At one point he dismissed both Leopold and Wolfgang, although Leopold was later reinstated. Cf. No. 0328.

<sup>5</sup> “Fürst”.

<sup>6</sup> BD: The six violin sonatas dedicated to Josepha Auernhammer: KV 296, 376 (374d), 377 (374e), 378 (317d), 379 (373a), 380 (374f). Published by Artaria as Opus II at the end of November, 1781; the first Mozart work to be published in Vienna.

<sup>7</sup> BD: With (Johann) Gottlieb Stephanie (1741-1800), (“the Younger”), the *Abduction from the Seraglio* was being prepared. Cf. No. 0590/27-28.

<sup>8</sup> BD: Did not take place.

enjoying pleasure; – for if I should do nothing from morning to night except think and work, I would be happy to do so, purely so as not to live from the favour of such a [45] – I do not even wish to call him by the right name. – I have been forced to take this step – and from that I cannot retreat by even a hair’s breadth – impossible – all that I can say to you is that I very much regret |: for your sake, only your sake, my father :| that I was brought to this point – and that I wished that the Archbishop had acted more wisely, [50] purely so that I could have dedicated the whole of my remaining lifetime to you – To please you, my best of fathers, I was willing to sacrifice my fortune, my health and my life – but my Honour – is for me – and must be for you above everything else. – let Count *Arco*<sup>9</sup> and all Salzburg read this. – After this insult – after this threefold insult, [55] the Archbishop could approach me in person with 1200 florins, and I would not take it – I am not a lad, not a boy – and if it were not for you, I would not have waited for the third time so that he could say to me: Let him clear off,<sup>10</sup> without taking it as an official statement; what did I say: Waited! – I am the one who would have said it, and not he! – [60] I am only amazed that the Archbishop was capable of such ill-considered action in such a place as Vienna! – He should therefore see how wrong he was; – Prince Breiner<sup>11</sup> and Count *Arco* need the Archbishop, but I do not. – and if it comes to the most extreme consequences, so that he forgets all the obligations of a prince, of an ecclesiastical prince, come to me in Vienna; you can get 400 florins anywhere [65] – what kind of scandal do you think he would cause here in the eyes of the Emperor, who hates him anyway, if he did that! – It would also be more to my sister’s suiting here than in Salzburg – there are many houses of the gentry where they have reservations about taking a male person – but would pay a woman very well. – [70] All of that may yet happen. –

At the next opportunity, when for example Herr von Kleinmayer, Beneckè, or Zetti<sup>12</sup> travel to Salzburg, I will send you something to pay for that certain matter – the fine cloth will be brought to my sister by the esteemed *Controleur*,<sup>13</sup> who left today. –

[75] Dearest, best of fathers, desire anything of me that you wish, but not that, otherwise anything – the mere thought of it makes me tremble with rage – *Adieu* – I kiss your hands 1000 times and embrace my sister from my heart and am, sir, eternally your

most obedient son,

Wolfgang Amadè Mozart

[80]

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<sup>9</sup> “Graf”. BD: Georg Anton Felix, Count [Graf] Arco (1705-1792), member of a very extensive and influential Tyrolean family (cf. BD V, p. 8), occupied various positions at court, ultimately that of Royal High Steward (Obersthofmeister). Cf. Nos. 0004/86, 0157/24-25.

<sup>10</sup> BD: Cf. No. 0593/7.

<sup>11</sup> “Fürst”. BD: Franz Xaver, originally Baron [Freiherr], later Prince [Fürst], Breuner (\* 1723). Cousin of Archbishop Hieronymus of Salzburg. He received the rank of Prince so that he could retain his rank as Bishop of Lavant after being appointed Bishop in Chiemsee, a post he held 1786-1797. Cf. No. 0340/93.

<sup>12</sup> BD: These three members of the Salzburg court shared accommodation with Mozart in Vienna, cf. No. 0583.

<sup>13</sup> BD: Ernst Maximilian Köllenberger (c. 1733-1811), Auditor [Kontrolleur] to the Office of the Senior Royal Marshal [Obersthofmarschallstab], subordinate to the Senior Master of the Kitchens [Oberstküchenmeister], Karl Joseph, Count [Graf] Arco (1743-1830).