

0599.¹ 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*²

Mon très cher Père!

Vienne ce 6³ de may 1781

You are entirely right, just as I am entirely right, my dearest father! – [5] I know and recognise all my faults, but – is it not possible, then, for a person to improve himself? – is it really impossible for him in fact to have improved himself? – I can reflect on the matter as much as I like, but I see – that I will in every way be best able to help myself and you, my best of fathers, as well as my dear sister, if I stay in Vienna. It seems as if good fortune wanted to welcome me here. [10] – for me it is as if I had to stay here. – and that was already the case when I left Munich. – I was thoroughly looking forward to Vienna and did not know why. – You must be patient a little longer, then I will indeed soon show you how profitable Vienna is to all of us. – Believe quite firmly that I have changed completely [15] – besides my health, I know of nothing more essential than money; I am certainly not a skinflint – for it would be very difficult for me to become a skinflint, and yet the people here consider me more inclined to tight-fistedness than to squandering – and that is always enough at the beginning. – Regarding the *pupils* – I can have as many as I want; but I do not want so many [20] – I wish to be better paid than the others – and so I would rather have less. – One must go onto the back foot a little right at the beginning, otherwise one has lost for all time – one always has to continue on the common path with the others. That is quite true about the *subscription* – and I see no reason why I should hold myself back concerning the *opera*.⁴ – [25] Count Rosenberg⁵ received me in the most courteous manner on the two occasions when I *called* on him and, with *van Suiten*⁶ and Herr von *Sonnenfels*,⁷ heard my *opera* at Countess Thun's.⁸ – and since – <Stephani⁹> is my good friend, it all runs smoothly. – You can quite confidently believe that I do not love idleness, but work. – in Salzburg, in Salzburg, yes, that is true, it was strenuous for me, [30] and I was almost unable to resolve to get down to it: why? – because I was not content in my heart; you must after all admit yourself that in Salzburg – for me at least – there was not a pennyworth of entertainment to be had; I have no wish to mix with many of them, – and for most of the others I was not good enough. No encouragement for my talents! – When I play or something of my *composing* is performed, [35] it is as if the listeners were nothing but tables and chairs. If at least a theatre with some kind of name were there. For that is what my entire entertainment consists of here. In Munich, it is true, there I unintentionally presented myself to them in the wrong light, there I treated

¹ This letter contains passages in "family code"; these are marked with angle brackets < >.

² BD: Address not in Mozart's hand.

³ BD: The correct date is "26". Mozart appears to have used a leaf already dated for a previous unfinished letter.

⁴ BD: With (Johann) Gottlieb Stephanie (1741-1800), ("the Younger"), the *Abduction from the Seraglio* was being prepared. Cf. No. 0590/27-28.

⁵ "graf". BD: Franz Xaver Wolf, Count [Graf] (later Fürst) Orsini-Rosenberg (1723-1796), administrator in Vienna, later "General Director of Spectacles" there. Cf. No. 0173/7.

⁶ BD: Gottfried Bernhard van Swieten, Dutch diplomat. In active contact with C. P. E. Bach and Joseph Haydn. Owner of a vast library, introduced Mozart to the music of Bach and Handel.

⁷ BD: Joseph, Baron [Freiherr] von Sonnenfels. Professor of jurisprudence and Freemason. Editor of a Masonic periodical.

⁸ "gräfin". BD: Marie Wilhelmina, Countess [Gräfin] Thun-Hohenstein (1747-1800), Vienna, appears frequently in the letters as a patroness of Mozart, although only until 1782. Wife of Johann Joseph Anton, Count [Graf] Thun (1711-1788), Imperial Chamberlain [kaiserlicher Kämmerer], Freemason. It was there that Mozart lodged with his wife returning from Salzburg in 1783 and wrote the Linz Symphony KV 425. She was also acquainted with Baron van Swieten. Cf. Nos. 0585/57, 85; 0766/16; 0863/8.

⁹ BD: (Johann) Gottlieb Stephanie (*1741), studied law, was a soldier, became an actor and stage author.

myself to too much entertainment – – but I can swear to you, upon my honour, [40] that, before the *opera* went on *stage*, I went nowhere except to the *Cannabichs*.¹⁰ – It is true that I received the major and most difficult part at the end, but not due to laziness or negligence – but I went a fortnight without writing a note because it was impossible for me – I have of course written it, but not in fair copy.¹¹ [45] – Of course a lot of time was lost then, but I do not regret it; – My being in high spirits afterwards happened out of youthful foolishness; I thought to myself: where are you going now? – to Salzburg! – that means you will have to go enjoy a farewell feast. It is certainly the case that in Salzburg I sigh after 100 entertainments, and here – after none at all. – [50] for being in Vienna is already entertainment enough. Rely securely on me, I am no longer a clown. – and even less will you believe that I am a godless, ungrateful son. Therefore trust completely in my head and my good heart – you will certainly not regret it. –

Where, then, could I have learned to value money?¹² – I have not yet had enough of it in my hands. [55] – I know that when I once had 20 *ducats*,¹³ I thought I was already rich. – Only need teaches one to value money. –

May life go well for you, my dearest, best of fathers! – My duty is now to make good and replace, by my care and my hard work here, what you believe you have lost through this situation. [60] – I will certainly do this too, and with 1000-fold joy! – *Adieu*. I kiss your hands 1000 times, and I embrace my sister from my heart and I am, sir, eternally

your most obedient son,
Wolfgang Amadè Mozart

[65] *P.S.* As soon as any of the archbishop's people go to Salzburg, the *portrait*¹⁴ will follow. – *hò fatto fare la sopra scritta d'un altro espressamente, perchè non si può sapere*.¹⁵ – not one of the rogues [70] is to be trusted.

My compliments to all acquaintances.

¹⁰ BD: The family of (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.

¹¹ BD: During this time Mozart had obviously prepared drafts of individual numbers of *Idomeneo*.

¹² BD: Cf. Nannerl's comments in Nos. 1212/414-415; 1213/102 ff.

¹³ BD: 1 ducat = 4.5 florins.

¹⁴ BD: Diplomatic skills were apparently required to coax the artist into parting with this family portrait. Cf. Nos. 0537/87; 0585/96; 0606/4; 0608/5 ff.

¹⁵ = "I expressly let someone else write what is above [BD: *the address*], so that no one can know". Mozart obviously did not wish the letter to receive any undesirable official attention.