

0605. MOZART TO HIS FATHER, SALZBURG

*de vienne / À Monsieur / Monsieur Leopold Mozart / Maitre de
Chapelle de S: A: / R: L'Archeveque de et / à / Salsbourg*¹

Mon Très Cher Père!

*vienne ce 13 de Juin 1781.*²

Best of all fathers! How heartily and willingly I would have continued to sacrifice my best years to you in a place where one is badly paid³ [5] – if this were the only evil. But badly paid, and on top of that mocked, despised and *mistreated* – that is then truly too much. – For the Archbishop's *concert*⁴ here I wrote a sonata for myself, a *rondeau*⁵ for *Brunetti*⁶ and *Ceccarelli*,⁷ played twice in each *concert*, [10] and the last time, when everything was finished, *variations*⁸ for a whole further hour |: for which the Archbishop gave me the *theme* :|, and there was such general applause that, if the Archbishop had only something of a Human Heart, he would certainly have had to feel joy; and instead of showing me at least his satisfaction and pleasure – or, as far as I am concerned, nothing at all – [15] he made me out to be a street urchin – told me to my face I should clear off,⁹ he can get a hundred who serve him better than I do. – and why? – because I could not leave on just the day that he had imagined to himself; I have to leave home, have to live from my money, and should not have the freedom to leave when my purse allows me, [20] when I was furthermore not needed in Salzburg, and the whole difference consisted of 2 days. – Twice the Archbishop said the greatest *impertinences* to me, and I said not a word; nay, more: I played for him with the same zeal and diligence as if nothing had happened; and instead of recognising my zealous service and my efforts to please him, [22] at just the moment when I would rather expect something different from him, he treats me for a third time in the most abominable manner in the world – and so that I am not only not in the wrong, but entirely in the right; it is as if they would do anything to have me gone. Well – if they do not want to have me, that is of course what I wish. – Count *Arco*,¹⁰ instead of accepting my letter of petition, [30] or arranging an audience for me, or advising me to send the letter on to him, or persuading me to leave the matter as it stands and to reconsider it, *afin*,¹¹ – whatever he may have wanted – No – he then throws me out the door and gives me a kick in the rear. – Now, this means in plain German that Salzburg is no longer for me, with the exception, given good opportunity, [35] of returning the esteemed Count's kick in the arse in like measure, even if it has to happen openly in the street.

¹ BD: Address not in Mozart's hand. The true sender of the letter is once again hidden.

² = “From Vienna. To Monsieur Leopold Mozart, music director to His Royal Highness the Archbishop of and in Salzburg / My very dear father! / Vienna, this 13th day of June, 1781.”

³ BD: Obviously referring to a now lost letter from Leopold (No. 0604a).

⁴ BD: On 8th April, 1781 (cf. No. 0587/13). Mozart had travelled to Vienna with his employer, the Archbishop of Salzburg. Hieronymus Joseph Franz de Paula, Count [Graf] Colloredo (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.

⁵ BD: Sonata: KV 379 (373a); rondeau: KV 374; cf. Nos. 0587/19; 0588/33.

⁶ BD: Antonio Brunetti († 1786; cf. No. 1015/6 ff.), concertmaster of the Salzburg court music. Mozart's compositions for him include KV 261. Cf. No. 0346/10.

⁷ BD: Francesco Ceccarelli (1752-1814), castrato, employed in Salzburg and then, from 1795, in Dresden; often a guest in the Mozarts' house. Mozart wrote for him KV 374, cf. No. 0587/19; he also sang in Mozart's concert in Frankfurt in 1790. Cf. No. 0357/22, 42.

⁸ BD: Conceivably on the theme from Grétry's opera *Les Mariages Samnites*, used in the variations KV 352 written in the same month.

⁹ BD: Cf. No. 0592/39-40.

¹⁰ “graf”. BD: Karl Joseph Felix, Count [Graf] Arco (1743-1830), son of Count [Graf] Georg Anton Felix Arco, held various offices in Salzburg, including High Master of the Kitchen [Oberstküchenmeister]. Played a role in the dismissal of Mozart as described in No. 0604/4 ff.

¹¹ = “Well, after all that”.

– I therefore do not ask for satisfaction at all from the Archbishop, for he would not be in any way capable of procuring it for me in the manner in which I must obtain it for myself; rather, I will write to the esteemed Count in the coming days to tell him what he can reliably expect from me [40] as soon as fate wishes that I should meet him, wherever that may happen to be, only nowhere where I need to have respect; –

Regarding the salvation of my soul, rest at ease, my own, best of fathers! – I am a young man in every way, like all the others, and can to my consolation wish that it were as little true of others as it is of me. – [45] You may perhaps believe things about me which are not as you think; – my main mistake is that I do not always seem to act as I should act. – That I boasted¹² that I eat meat every fast-day is not true, but I did say that I do not worry about it and do not consider it a sin, for in my book fasting means abstaining, eating less than otherwise. – I hear my Mass every Sunday and every feast-day and, [50] if possible, on working days as well, as you know, my father. – My entire contact with that person of bad reputation¹³ consisted of the ball. – And this contact went on for some time before I knew that she was of bad reputation – and only so that I could be sure of having a definite *contredance* partner. – Then I could not suddenly break off without giving her a reason [55] – and who will say such a thing to someone’s face? – Did I not finally often leave her sitting and dance with others? – This time I must say that I was utterly glad that Carnival finally ended. – Otherwise, no-one will be able to say that I have seen her anywhere else or was in her house without *passing* for a liar. [60] – otherwise rest assured that I certainly have *religion* – and if I should ever have the misfortune |: which God will prevent :| of departing from the straight road, then I absolve you, my own, dearest of fathers, of any guilt. – For I alone would be the blackguard – it is you that I have to thank for both my temporal and spiritual well-being and salvation. [65] Now I must close, otherwise I will miss the post. I kiss your hands 1000 times and embrace my dear sister from my heart and am, sir, eternally your

Most obedient son,
Wolfgang Amadè Mozart

[70] *P.S.* I commend myself to the young Marschad,¹⁴ to Katherl,¹⁵ to all good friends, both gentlemen and ladies.

¹² BD: Leopold had obviously appealed to Mozart to respect the church fasting requirements.

¹³ BD: This person has not been identified. Cf. No. 0860/44.45: the informant seems to have been Franz Xaver Wenzel [von] Gilowsky (1757-1816), son of ante-chamber servant and court barber/surgeon Wenzel Andreas Gilowsky (1716-1799); studied medicine in Vienna, master surgeon, brother of “Katherl”, witness at Mozart’s wedding.

¹⁴ BD: When Leopold and Nannerl returned from Munich on 14th March, 1781, they took with them Heinrich Marchand, son of the theatre director Theobald Marchand. He had board, lodging and teaching in keyboard, violin and composition in the Mozarts’ home for three years. His sister Maria Margarethe (“Gretl”) joined him in February, 1782. They left in September, 1784 (cf. Nos. 0585/3; 0665/13).

¹⁵ 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.