

0615. MOZART TO HIS FATHER, SALZBURG

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

Vienne ce 1 d'aout.  
1781.

Mon très cher Père!<sup>1</sup>

[5] I went to fetch the *sonata* for four hands<sup>2</sup> immediately, for Frau von Schmidl<sup>3</sup> is just opposite the Eye of God.<sup>4</sup> – If *Mad.<sup>me</sup> Duscheck*<sup>5</sup> should perhaps already be in Salzburg, I would ask for her to be given my most friendly *compliments*, at the same time asking whether, before she left Prague, a gentleman<sup>6</sup> might perhaps have come to deliver a letter to her from me. – [10] If not, I shall write immediately to him asking him to send it to Salzburg. – This man is *Rossi*<sup>7</sup> from Munich; he asked me to support him with a letter of recommendation – from here he took some good letters with him to Prague. – If my letter were only about recommending him, I should no doubt leave it up to him, [15] but, as it is, it also contained my request to *Mad.<sup>me</sup> Duscheck* to be of assistance to me in my subscription for 6 *sonatas*.<sup>8</sup> – I had all the more reason for doing *Rossi* this favour because he wrote the *poetry* for the *cantata*<sup>9</sup> which I want to put on for my *benefit* in *Advent*. –

Now, two days ago, the young Stephani<sup>10</sup> gave me a libretto to set. [20] I must admit, badly as he can behave towards other people, as it seems and about which I know nothing, he is a very good friend to me. – the libretto is quite good. The *sujet*<sup>11</sup> is Turkish and it is called: Belmont and Konstanze, or the Abduction from the *Seraglio*.<sup>12</sup> – I will write the *Symphony*,<sup>13</sup> the chorus in the first act,<sup>14</sup> and the closing chorus<sup>15</sup> with Turkish music.<sup>16</sup> *Mad.<sup>selle</sup> Cavalieri*,<sup>17</sup> [25] *Mad.<sup>selle</sup> Teyber*,<sup>18</sup> *M.<sup>sr</sup> Fischer*,<sup>19</sup> *M.<sup>sr</sup> Adamberger*,<sup>20</sup> *M.<sup>sr</sup> Dauer*<sup>21</sup> and *M.<sup>sr</sup>*

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

<sup>2</sup> BD: KV 358 (186c).

<sup>3</sup> BD: Not identified.

<sup>4</sup> BD: Cf. No. 0592/18. This was the house where the Webers (and Mozart) stayed.

<sup>5</sup> BD: Josepha Duscek (1753-1824), singer, wife of Franz Xaver Duscek (1731-1799), pianist and composer in Prague. They met the Mozarts in 1777. Mozart wrote two works for Josepha: KV 272 (cf. No. 0337/84); KV 528 (cf. No. 1070/809).

<sup>6</sup> BD: = the Rossi mentioned in line 11.

<sup>7</sup> BD: Rossi the *buffo*; cf. No. 0585/53.

<sup>8</sup> BD: The subscription has already been mentioned in Nos. 0598/38 and 0612/49.

<sup>9</sup> BD: Cf. No. 0606/19. It seems that this work was never carried out.

<sup>10</sup> BD: (Johann) Gottlieb Stephani[e] (1741-1800), (“the Younger”), studied law, became a soldier, was an amateur actor with Johann Anton Mesmer in 1768, became member of the Burgtheater company, Vienna, in 1769. At least 32 of his stage works were put on there in 393 performances between 1776 and 1846. Collaborated with Mozart on the libretto of the *Abduction*.

<sup>11</sup> = “Subject”. BD: *The Abduction from the Seraglio* had been published in Leipzig in 1781 and immediately set to music by Johann André in Berlin. The author, Bretzner, later protested about some of Mozart’s changes.

<sup>12</sup> BD: Christoph Friedrich Bretzner, *Belmont und Constanze, oder Die Entführung aus dem Serail*.

<sup>13</sup> BD: The overture, KV 384.

<sup>14</sup> BD: No. 5.

<sup>15</sup> BD: The original intention was obviously to close the work with a chorus.

<sup>16</sup> BD: “Janissary music”, perhaps inspired by Gluck’s “La Rencontre imprévue” of 1764.

<sup>17</sup> BD: Catarina Cavalieri (1755 in Vienna – 1801 in Vienna), trained by Salieri, active in German and Italian opera troupes in Vienna 1778-1793, sang *Konstanze* in the première of the *Abduction*, *Donna Elvira* in the Vienna première of *Don Giovanni*, *Demoiselle Silberklang* in the *Schauspieldirektor*, and the *Gräfin* in the Vienna performance of *Figaro* on 28<sup>th</sup> August, 1789; Mozart wrote for her KV 469 No. 8; KV 540c.

<sup>18</sup> BD: Therese Teyber, singer, member of a large musical family in Vienna in long-standing contact with the Mozarts. (Cf. BD, note on 0117/10-11).

<sup>19</sup> BD: Johann Ignaz Ludwig Fischer, pupil of Raaff, distinguished singer. Mozart wrote at least one “*scena*” for him. He sang Mozart’s *Scena* “*Alcandro...*” KV 512 in Vienna on 21<sup>st</sup> March, 1787.

*Walter*<sup>22</sup> will sing in it. – Setting this libretto is such a joy for me that *Cavaliere's* first *aria*,<sup>23</sup> and *Adamberger's*,<sup>24</sup> and the trio<sup>25</sup> which closes the first act, are already finished. The time is short, that is true, for it is already due to be performed halfway through September,<sup>26</sup> – but – [30] the circumstances which come together at a time when it is to be performed, and quite generally – all other aspects – raise my spirits so much that I hurry to my writing desk with the greatest longing and remain seated at the task in the greatest joy.

The Grand Prince of Russia<sup>27</sup> will come here, and therefore Stephani asked me, [35] if possible, to write the *opera* in this short time, for the Emperor<sup>28</sup> and Count Rosenberg<sup>29</sup> will now come soon, and then they will immediately ask if anything new is finished? – he will then be able to say with pleasure that Umlauf<sup>30</sup> will soon be finished with his *opera* |: which he has had a long time now :|, and that I am writing one *specially* for this – [40] and he will certainly tell them how meritorious it is that I agreed to write it for this occasion in such a short time. – No one knows about it yet except *Adamberger* and Fischer, for Stephani asked us to say nothing because Count Rosenberg is not yet there, and a thousand rumours can easily arise – [45] Stephani of course does not want to be seen as being all too good a friend of mine, but rather that he is doing all this because Count Rosenberg wants it this way, and in fact did give him orders,<sup>31</sup> on his departure, to see me about a libretto. – Now I know of nothing more to write about – [50] for I do not know anything new at all; the room I am to move into<sup>32</sup> is already being prepared; – now I am going to borrow a *clavier*, for I cannot live there until it is in the room, precisely because I have to compose at the moment, and not a moment is to be lost. – I will indeed miss many *comforts*<sup>33</sup> in my new *lodgings*, – especially regarding food – [55] when I really needed to compose, they waited with the meals as long as I wanted, and I could continue writing without dressing, and then go into the meal through the other door, both evening and midday. – Now, if I do not want to spend money and do not want to have the meals brought to my room, I lose at least an hour with dressing [60] |: which was otherwise my work in the afternoon :| and must go out. – especially in the evening. – You know that I usually write hungry. – The good friends with whom I could take *supper* eat early as 8 o'clock or half past 8 at the latest. – There we did not sit down at the table before 10 o'clock – Now *adieu*, I must close, for I must look around for a keyboard – May life go well

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<sup>20</sup> BD: Josef Valentin Adamberger (1740-1804), sang in Germany, Italy and then in Vienna, where he was well paid. Sung in many of Mozart's works. Freemason.

<sup>21</sup> BD: Johann Ernst Dauer (1746-1812), 1779-1812 member of Burgtheater, but not as singer. Cf. No. 0672/13.

<sup>22</sup> BD: Johann Ignaz Walter. Did not appear in the première; Dominik Jautz sang Bassa Selim (cf. No. 0627/8).

<sup>23</sup> BD: No. 6.

<sup>24</sup> BD: No. 1.

<sup>25</sup> BD: Probably No. 7, for Belmonte, Pedrillo and Osmin. So Mozart had composed these three numbers in 2-3 days after receiving the book only on the 30<sup>th</sup> July. He played them to Countess [Gräfin] Thun on 7<sup>th</sup> August, 1751, cf. No. 0616/9. From the correspondence, it appears that the Janissary chorus was ready on the 8<sup>th</sup> of August, the first act was finished by the 22<sup>nd</sup>; Mozart played the second act to Countess Thun on 7<sup>th</sup> May, 1782, the third act on 30<sup>th</sup> May, 1752 (cf. No. 0675/25-26).

<sup>26</sup> BD: The première was delayed for various reasons. The libretto was changed (cf. No. 0629/73); Grand Prince Paul of Russia visited Vienna (cf. No. 0620/38-39). It finally took place in the Burgtheater on 16<sup>th</sup> July, 1782.

<sup>27</sup> BD: Paul Petrovich (\*1754, murdered 1801), later Czar Paul I. He visited Vienna in November 1781 and October 1782.

<sup>28</sup> “kayser”. BD: Joseph II (1741-1790), Holy Roman Emperor [Kaiser] 1765-1790. Son of Maria Theresia. Ruler of the Habsburg lands from 1780.

<sup>29</sup> “graf”. BD: Franz Xaver Wolf, Count [Graf] (later Prince [Fürst]) Orsini-Rosenberg (1723-1796), administrator in Vienna, later “General Director of Spectacles” there. Cf. No. 0173/7.

<sup>30</sup> BD: Ignaz Umlauf (1746-1796), established as composer, viola player and music director in Vienna. The opera is probably *Das Irrlicht...*, première on 17<sup>th</sup> January, 1782.

<sup>31</sup> BD: Cf. No. 0606/35-37, where Mozart speculates about Rosenberg's instructions regarding a book.

<sup>32</sup> BD: Probably the “rats' nest” mentioned in No. 0619/9 ff.

<sup>33</sup> BD: Mozart is still trying to win Leopold's support for staying at the Webers'.

for you, I kiss your hands 1000 times and embrace my dear sister with my whole heart and  
am, sir, eternally your

*P.S. My compliments to  
all Salzburg.*

most obedient son,  
Wolf: Amadè: Mozart