

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

Vienna ce 26 de Septembre
1781

Mon très cher Père!¹

[5] Forgive me for making you pay more postage recently! – Only the fact is that I had nothing urgent to write about, – and thought it would be pleasant for you if I gave you a little *idée*² of the opera. – The opera had begun with a *monologue*, and there I asked Herr Stephani to make a little *arietta* out of it – [10] and that instead of having the two chatting after *Osmín's* little song, it should be made into a *duet*. – Since we had intended the role of *Osmín* for Herr Fischer, who certainly has an outstanding bass voice |: despite the Archbishop's telling me he sings too low for a bass, and I however averred he would sing higher the next time – :| one must make use of such a man, especially since he has the public year entirely on his side. [15] – But in the *original* libretto this *Osmín* has that single little song to sing, and otherwise nothing except the *trio* and *finale*. He has therefore been given an *aria* in the first act, and will also have one in the 2nd. – I dictated the *aria* to Herr Stephani complete; – and the greater part of the music for it was already finished before Stephani knew a word of it. [20] – you have only the beginning of it and the end, which must make a great impression – *Osmín's* rage is made to look comical because the Turkish music is used in it. – The way I have done the *aria* has allowed his beautiful deep notes to gleam through |: despite the Salzburg *Midas*³ :|. – Drum beym Barte des Propheten⁴ etc. [25] may be in the same *tempo*, but has fast notes – and since his anger is growing constantly, the *allegro assai* – since they believe the *aria* has already finished – in an entirely different tempo and in a different key – must therefore have the greatest *effect*, for a person who is in such a violent rage over-reaches all order, measure and orientation, he does not know himself – [30] therefore the music, too, must no longer know itself – but because the passions, violent or not, must never be expressed to the point of revulsion, must never insult the ear, but must therefore ultimately be content to remain music at all times, I did not choose a key foreign to the *F* |: to the key of the *aria* :| [35] but one on friendly terms, but not the closest, *D minor*, but the more distant *A minor*. – Now Belmont's *aria* in *A major*. O wie ängstlich, o wie feurig, we know how it is expressed – the pulsating, love-filled heart, too, is certainly portrayed – the 2 *violins* in octaves. – This *aria* is the *favourite* of all who have heard it – and also mine. – [40] and is written entirely for *Adamberger's* voice. One sees the trembling – vacillating – one sees how the swelling breast rises – which is *expressed* by a *crescendo* – one hears the murmurs and sighs – which are expressed by the first violins with mutes and the flute with them in *unisono*. –

The Janissaries' chorus is everything one could ask for in a Janissaries's chorus. [45] – short and entertaining; – and written entirely for the Viennese. – I have sacrificed Konstanze's *aria* a little to the agile gullet of *Mad:selle Cavallieri*. – I have attempted, as far as an Italian *bravura aria* allows, to express Trennung war mein banges loos. und nun schwimmt mein aug in Thränen.⁵ – I have changed the hui – to schnell thus: [50] doch wie schnell schwand meine freude etc. I do not know what our German poets are thinking about; – If they do not

¹ = “To Monsieur Leopold Mozart, Music Director to His Royal Highness the Archbishop of and in Salzburg. / Vienna, this 26th day of September, 1781. / My very dear father!”

² = “Idea”.

³ BD: Archbishop Hieronymus of Salzburg is obviously meant.

⁴ = “Therefore by the beard of the Prophet.”

⁵ = “Separation was my anxious lot, and now my eyes swim in tears.”

understand the theatre anyway, as far as opera is concerned – they should at least not have people talking as if there were pigs standing in front of them. – hui Sau;⁶ –

Now the trio, namely the close of the first act. – [55] Pedrillo has passed his master off as an architect so that he has an opportunity to be together with his Konstanze in the garden. The Pasha has taken him into service: – *Osmín*, as supervisor and who knows nothing about this, as a coarse lout and arch-enemy of everything foreign, is *impertinent* and does not want to let them into the garden. The beginning, as mentioned, is very short – [60] and because the text for it offered the opportunity, I have done it in fairly good 3 part writing. But then the *major* comes in immediately in *pianissimo* – which must go very fast – and the close will make a whole lot of noise – and that is of course everything that is required at the end of an act – the more noise, the better; – the shorter, the better – so that the people do not become too cold to clap. –

[65] All you have of the *overture* is 14 bars. – It is very short – alternates constantly between *forte* and *piano*, with the Turkish music always coming in at the *forte*. – In this way it modulates through the keys – and I believe one will not be able to sleep through it, even if one has had no sleep all night long. – Now I sit there like the one who is impeding everything – [70] the first act has already been finished for over 3 weeks now – one aria in the 2nd act, and the carousing duet |: *per li Sig:^{ri} vieneri*⁷ |: , which consists of nothing except my Turkish military tattoo :| is already finished; – but I cannot do any more of it – because now the whole story has been overturned – and that at my request. – At the beginning of the third act there is a *charming quintet*, or rather *finale* – [75] but I would prefer to have this at the end of the 2nd act. In order to be able to achieve this, a great alteration, yes, an entirely new *intrigue*, has to be undertaken – and Stephani⁸ is up to his ears in work, one simply has to have a little patience. – Everyone is derogatory about Stephani – it could also be that he is only so friendly to me to my face – [80] but he is simply the one *arranging* the libretto for me, after all – and indeed just as I want it – to a hair – and, by God, I do not ask any more of him! – Now that is a mouthful about the opera; but it also had to be done, of course. – I beg you, send me the march which I recently mentioned. – *Gylofsky*⁹ says *Daubrawaick*¹⁰ will come soon. – Fräulein von Auerhammer and I are waiting longingly for the 2 double *concertos*¹¹ [85] – I hope we will not wait for them as fruitlessly as the Jews for the *Messiah*. – Now *Adieu* – I wish you well in every way, I kiss your hands 1000 times, and I embrace my dear sister |: with whose health, as I hope, the situation will be better :| from my heart, and am, sir, eternally your most obedient son,

W: A: Mozart.

⁶ According to *Heinrich Wilhelm Dobel's Neueröffnete Jäger-Praktika* (Leipzig, 1828, p. 99), this call is made by hunters while trapping wild boar.

⁷ = “For the Viennese ladies and gentlemen”.

⁸ BD: (Johann) Gottlieb Stephanie (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*.

⁹ BD: Franz Xaver Wenzel [von] Gilowsky (1757-1816), son of Salzburg 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.

¹⁰ BD: Cf. No. 0624/26. Johann Baptist Anton Daubrawa von Daubrawaick (1731-1810), Court Councillor [Hofrat], chapter legal adviser [Kapitelsyndikus], seems to have been in Vienna frequently and acted as “messenger” for the Mozarts on various occasions.

¹¹ BD: Cf. Nos. 0608/83; 0627/17. Daubrawaick was obviously meant to take them to Vienna.