

0646.¹ 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

Vienna ce 5 de Decembre

Mon très cher Père!²

1781

[5] Today I have received no letter³ from you, so I will write down such items of news as I am aware of; – these are few indeed, and these few are mostly lies – and that is precisely the reason why I do not write telling you about them, because I would have to be afraid of bringing discredit upon myself: such as, for example, that *General Laudon*⁴ really was already dead – but now [10] |: fortunately for the House of Austria :| has once again risen from the dead. – The Grand Prince⁵ is staying here until New Year; and the Emperor⁶ has now become anxious about how he can entertain him for such a long time – but so that he does not have to rack his brains too much – he is not entertaining him at all. – It is of course sufficient if he entertains <his wife⁷>, and for this purpose – <he alone is enough>. [15] At the Schönbrunn ball there was horrible *confusion*. Because this was foreseeable without witchcraft due to the outstanding organisation, Herr Ego⁸ accordingly did not attend, since he is no lover of jostling, elbows in the ribs and brawls, even if they are <Imperial⁹>! –

Quartermaster Strobel¹⁰ had the task of distributing the *tickets*, [20] the proposal was for 3000 persons. – There was a public announcement that everyone could have their names listed by the Strobel already referred to – well, everyone made their way there and Strobel – put them on the list. – and then all they needed to do was send for the *tickets*. – For some, who are too well-known, they were sent to the houses. – and they entrusted this task to the first boys they happened to find. [25] – What then occurred was that a boy asked someone going past him on the stairs if his name was so-and-so. In fun, the latter said Yes; and he – gave him a *ticket*. I know of two houses which received no tickets because of the disorder. – They were on the list. – sent for the *tickets* – Strobl sent them a message that he had of course sent the tickets a long time ago. – [30] As a result, the ball was full of *hairdressers* and chambermaids. – But now comes the best part, at which the <noblesse¹¹> were very perturbed. – The <Emperor> always had <the Grand Princess> on his arm – there were 2 sets of *conterdansa*¹² by the *Noblesse* – Romans – and Tartars. – With one of these it happened that the Viennese rabble, already badly behaved anyway, [35] pressed so close that they pushed the <Grand Princess> off the <Emperor's> arm – into the middle of the dancers. – The <Emperor> began

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

² = “[From Vienna | To Monsieur Leopold Mozart, Music Director to His Royal Highness the Archbishop of and in Salzburg. / Vienna, this 5th day of December, 1781. / My very dear father!”

³ BD: Cf. line 42.

⁴ “general”. BD: Gideon, Baron [Freiherr] von Laudon (Loudon) (1717-1790), Deutsch Bild No. 515. A Russian officer until 1739, joined the Austrian army in 1743. Conquered Belgrade in 1789 during the Turkish war. Mozart wrote funeral music (KV 594), apparently heard in a “mausoleum” erected for Laudon in 1791 (Deutsch Bild No. 516).

⁵ BD: The Grand Prince of Russia mentioned in letters from No. 0615/34 onwards.

⁶ “kayser”. BD: Joseph II (1741-1790), Holy Roman Emperor [Kaiser] 1765-1790. Son of Maria Theresia. Ruler of the Habsburg lands from 1780.

⁷ BD: Maria Feodorovna, née Princess of Württemberg, due to marry the Emperor’s nephew, son of the Grand Duke of Tuscany.

⁸ BD: Mozart himself.

⁹ “kaiserliche”.

¹⁰ “kammerfourier”. BD: Not identified.

¹¹ = “Nobility.”

¹² Contredance, a social dance form involving groups of couples. During Carnival costumes were usual.

to stamp his foot, cursed in *sacraments* like a *lazzellone*,¹³ pushed an entire heap of people back, and swung his arms about to right and left. – All this time, some of the Hungarian Guard wanted to join him to make some room – but he sent them away. – [40] It serves him right that it turned out like this; – for this cannot be done, ultimately the rabble always remains the rabble.

I have just this moment received your letter¹⁴ of the 27th *Novembre*. This much is certain: the Emperor drove out to receive the Duke von Württemberg¹⁵ – and this in order to please the Princess¹⁶. – [45] Nor is anyone here making any secret of it – only no-one knows if she is to be a morsel for himself or for a *Tuscan* Prince. – The latter is more credible. But – the <Emperor> is much too <tender> with her for my taste – he is constantly kissing her hands, one after the other, and often both at the same time; only this amazes me, because she is, so to speak, still a child. – But if what people are saying is true and happens, [50] I personally would then think that for him blood is thicker than water; – for she is to stay here in a monastery for 2 years.¹⁷ – and – – probably – if no witches get involved, she will be one of my *clavier pupils*.¹⁸

The *bassoonist* whom they want to offload onto the Archbishop¹⁹ is already known to me, [55] he is of course *second* to Ritter²⁰ at the *opera*. You write that I should not forget you! – That it is a joy to you that I do not forget you – that certainly causes me the greatest pleasure. – But if you could believe that I could forget you – that would cause me great pain indeed. I should bear in mind that I have an immortal soul – not only do I bear it in mind, but I believe it; – [60] in what, otherwise, would the difference between man and beast consist? – precisely because I know and believe this only too assuredly – I have not been able to fulfil all your wishes as you had pictured them to yourself²¹ –

Now I wish you well in every possible way; I kiss your hands 1000 times and I embrace my dear sister from my heart and am, sir, eternally your

[65]

most obedient son,
W: A: Mozart

¹³ BD: = “Neapolitan beggar”.

¹⁴ BD: No. 0645, lost.

¹⁵ “Herzog”. BD: The father of Elisabeth Wilhelmine Louise (1767-1790), Princess of Württemberg. BD VI, p. 700: In 1788 she married Archduke Franz, later Emperor Franz II. They died within a day of each other in 1790.

¹⁶ BD: Elisabeth Wilhelmine Louise, Princess of Württemberg, due to marry the Emperor’s nephew.

¹⁷ BD: In the Salesian convent, where the widow of Emperor Joseph I (r. 1705-1771) had spent her last days.

¹⁸ BD: Mozart hopes were to be disappointed.

¹⁹ BD: 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.

²⁰ BD: Georg Wenzel Ritter (1748-1808), bassoonist first in Mannheim, then Munich and finally Berlin.

²¹ BD: Mozart once again refers indirectly to marriage plans.