

0687.¹ LEOPOLD MOZART TO MARTHA ELISABETH, BARONESS VON WALDSTÄTTEN,² VIENNA

High-born, gracious Madam!³

[Salzburg, 23rd August, 1782]

I owe you gratitude and a debt of obligation, high-born Madam, for the particular understanding that you personally have shown for my circumstances, and I express the greatest thanks and obligation for the exceptional graciousness which you, high-born madam, showed towards my son [5] in your resplendent provision for his wedding day. When I was a young lad, I always believed that philosophers were those who spoke little, laughed seldom and encountered everyone with a morose face. The events of my own life, however, have now completely convinced me that I am one, without realising it myself: [10] for since I have done my duty as a true father – drawn for him the clearest and most comprehensible pictures about everything in so many letters – I am also convinced that he knows my burdensome circumstances, most highly troublesome circumstances for someone of my age, and my setbacks in Salzburg,⁴ – since he knows that I have been sacrificing myself in both the moral and physical sense because of his behaviour [15] – there is therefore no other course open to me than to leave him |: since he wished it so :| to his own devices and to pray God to let my paternal blessing be conferred on him and not to withdraw his divine grace from him. But I will not lose what is left to me, even at this age, of my native cheerfulness, but continue to hope for the best. – [20] Yes, I would have complete peace of mind, if only I had not discovered a major fault in my son, and this is that he is much too easy-going or sleepy, too lackadaisical, sometimes too proud, and whatever other name we are going to give to everything by which a person becomes inactive; or he is too impatient, too hot-headed, and cannot wait for anything. There are two mutually opposed principles that govern him [25] – too much or too little, and no middle way. When he is not suffering any need, he is at once content and becomes lackadaisical and inactive. If he has to take action, he comes to himself and wishes to make his fortune at once. He wishes to have nothing standing in his way, and unfortunately it is precisely the most skilful people, the special geniuses, [30] who have the most obstacles put in their way. Who stands in the way of the career he has started in Vienna if he has a little patience?⁵ – – Music director *Bono*⁶ is an ancient man – after his death, *Salieri*⁷ will take his place and leave room for someone else, and isn't Gluck⁸ also an old man!⁹ – Gracious Madam! Persuade them to be patient, [35] and permit me to ask the favour of hearing your opinion about this, high-born lady. – My daughter commends herself to your Grace and wishes, as do I, for the good fortune of kissing your hands, high-born Madam. She is very touched that your high-born person has deemed her worthy of a keepsake, without her deserving it in any way. Oh, if only we were not so far away from Vienna! [40] I would wish to converse at great length with Your Baronial Grace, – – and if we once got deeper into music!¹⁰ – Hope! only comfort of our wishes, give peace to my heart! – Perhaps I will yet be so fortunate, in due time, as to be able to assure Your Baronial Grace in person not only of my

¹ BD: Original lost. Copy c. 1850.

² “Baronin von Waldstätten”. BD: Martha Elisabeth, Baroness [Baronin] Waldstätten (1744-1811), a supporter of Mozart and also an outstanding pianist. Lived separated from her husband Hugo Joseph Dominik, Baron Waldstätten.

³ “Hochgebohrne, gnädige Frau”.

⁴ BD: Above all the fact that he was still deputy music director and constantly had to expect a new person to be brought in above him as the next music director, as did in fact happen one year later.

⁵ BD: Cf. Similar speculations by Grimm 4 years earlier in No. 0476/13 ff.

⁶ BD: Guiseppa Bonno (1710-1788), from 1739 court composer in Vienna, later (1774) court music director there. Acquainted with the Mozarts since 1773. At this stage 73 years old.

⁷ BD: Antonio Salieri (1750-1825), composer, succeeded Bonno as court music director in Vienna in 1788.

⁸ BD: Christoph Willibald Gluck (1714-1787). Internationally noted. Cf. also No. 0608/41.

⁹ BD: Similar speculations appear in No. 0588/56 ff.

¹⁰ BD: The Baroness was an excellent keyboard player.

true friendship, which, though of no account, nevertheless comes from the heart, but also of my most cordial respect and reverence, [45] since I am indeed

Your Wellborn Grace's

most submissive, most obedient servant

Leopold Mozart $\frac{m}{p}$ ¹¹

[50] Salzburg, 23rd Aug., 1782.

My son wrote to me on one occasion that as soon as he got married, he would not stay on in her mother's house.¹² And I do indeed hope he really will leave the house. If this does not happen, it will be the undoing of him and his wife.

¹¹ mp = "manu propria" = "in his own hand".

¹² BD: Cf. No. 0661/26 ff.