

0715. MOZART TO HIS FATHER, SALZBURG

*Mon très cher Pére!*

*Vienne ce 28 de decembre 1782<sup>1</sup>*

I must write in the greatest haste because it is already half past 5, and I have arranged for people to come here to make a little *musique*; – I have altogether so much to do that I often do not know if I am coming or going; – [5] the whole morning, until 2 o'clock, goes past with *teaching*; – then we eat; – after the meal I must at least allow my poor stomach a brief hour for *digestion*; then – there is only the evening in which I can compose something – and that is not certain because I am often asked to attend *concerts*; – now 2 *concertos* are still needed for the *concertos on subscription*<sup>2</sup> – the *concertos* are something precisely in the middle between too difficult and too easy – are a very *brilliant* – pleasant to the ear – without of course falling into fatuousness – here and there the knowledgeable alone can obtain *satisfaction* – yet in such a way – that those without knowledge will surely be content with it, without knowing why. I am distributing subscription vouchers – for 6 *ducats*<sup>3</sup> in cash; – Now I am also finishing the piano reduction of my opera,<sup>4</sup> [15] which will be published engraved, and at the same time I am working on a matter which is very difficult, which is a bardic song by *Denis* about *Gibraltar*;<sup>5</sup> – but it is a secret, for a Hungarian lady wishes to honour *Denis* with it. – the ode is sublime, beautiful, everything you could wish – only – too exaggeratedly turgid for my fine ears – [20] but what can one do? – the middle way – truth in all things – is now no longer known and valued by anyone – to receive applause, one must write things which are so easily understood that a *fiacre*<sup>6</sup> could sing them back to you, or so incomprehensible – that it pleases them precisely because no reasonable person can understand it; – [25] this is not what I wanted to discuss with you, but that I have an inclination to write a book – a short *musical criticism* with *examples* – but *N.B.* not under my name.<sup>7</sup> – Here is an enclosure from *Baroness Waldstätten*,<sup>8</sup> who is likewise afraid that a second letter of hers might have been left lying; – for you cannot have received her last letter,<sup>9</sup> because you did not make any mention of it; – [30] I asked you about it in the letter which went missing. – Now *adieu*, more soon. My little wife and I kiss your hands 1000 times and embraces our dear sister from the heart and are, sir, eternally your

most obedient children,  
W: et C: Mzt mp<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> = "My very dear father! Vienna, this 28<sup>th</sup> day of December, 1782."

<sup>2</sup> BD: Of the three, KV 414 (385p) was finished, KV 413 (387a) and 415 (387b) were yet to come. The subscription was not successful; Mozart then offered the works to Sieber in Paris, again unsuccessfully. Finally, Artaria in Vienna advertised the concertos.

<sup>3</sup> BD: = 26 florins.

<sup>4</sup> BD: The *Abduction*. The first act was published in 1785. Mozart abandoned the work when piano reductions were published in Augsburg and Mainz.

<sup>5</sup> BD: Johann Nepomuk Michael Denis (1729-1800), priest, professor, translator of Ossian. This poem commemorates the rescue of the garrison of Gibraltar by Admiral Richard Howe. The composition remained a fragment.

<sup>6</sup> = "Driver of a hired coach".

<sup>7</sup> BD: The book never appeared.

<sup>8</sup> "von der Baron Waldstätten". BD: No. 0714 (lost). Martha Elisabeth, Baronin Waldstätten (1744-1811), a supporter of Mozart and also an outstanding pianist. Lived separated from her husband Hugo Joseph Dominik, Baron Waldstätten.

<sup>9</sup> BD: No. 0704 (lost). Letters from Leopold: Nos. 0687, 0692.

<sup>10</sup> mp = "manu propria" = "in his/her own hand".