

0725. MOZART TO HIS FATHER, SALZBURG

*À / Monsieur / Monsieur Leopold de Mozart / maitre de la Chapelle
de S: A: R: / l'archeveque de et à / Salzbourg¹*

Gaetano Majorani / |: Caffarello :| Amphion Theba / ego Domum.²

Vienne ce 5 de fevrier

[5] *Mon Très cher Père!³*

1783

I have duly received your last letter,⁴ and hope that you will also in the meantime have received my last one⁵ and have noted my request regarding the *Harlequin* costume; – I repeat it once again – and furthermore additionally asking you to be so good as to send it to me as soon as possible; [10] – and as far as the *symphonies*⁶ are concerned, but especially the last one – I ask you to please send them very soon. – For my *concert*⁷ will already be on the third Sunday in Lent, namely 23rd March – and I still have to get them *duplicated* several times. –

I therefore thought, if it has not yet been copied, you should simply send it back to me in *score*, [15] as I sent it to you; but with the *minuets*⁸ too. –

Is *Ceccarelli*⁹ then no longer in Salzburg? – or didn't he get a role in *Gatti's*¹⁰ *cantata*? – because you do not give him a place among the other arguers and quarrellers! –

[20] Yesterday my *opera*¹¹ was performed again for the 17th time, to the customary applause and full theatre. –

On the coming Friday, in two days time, a new *opera* will be given, the *musique* |: *Galimathias*¹² :| by a young local man,¹³ a *pupil* of Wagenseil who is known as *Gallus Cantans, in arbore sedens, gikirigi faciens*;¹⁴ [25] – It will probably not be very well received; – yet better than its predecessor, an old *opera* by *Gasman*¹⁵ |: *la notte crittica*¹⁶ :|, which translates as the troubled night – which only just held out for 3 *performances* – for – before this was the *exegrable*¹⁷ *opera* by Umlauf¹⁸ which I wrote to you about – it did not succeed in

¹ = “To Monsieur Leopold de Mozart, Music Director to His Royal Highness the Archbishop of and in Salzburg”. [note Viennese-style addition of “de” before “Mozart”].

² BD: With these words, Mozart reminds his father of an old acquaintance, the successful castrato Gaetano Majorano, known as Caffarelli, who died on 31st January, 1783. Over the entrance gateway to his villa near Naples were the words “Amphion Thebas, ego domum” [“Amphion [built] Thebes, I a home”], recalling the legend that Amphion's flute-playing built the walls of Thebes.

³ = “Vienna, this fifth day of February, 1783 / My very dear father!”

⁴ BD: No. 0724, lost.

⁵ BD: No. 0722.

⁶ BD: Cf. No. 0719/21 ff. The last one, the most recently composed, was KV 385.

⁷ BD: Including KV 385.

⁸ BD: At this time the symphony, like the old serenade form, was opened by a march and closed with 2 minuets. On 23rd March Mozart omitted the march and one of the minuets. Cf. Nos. 0677/24 and 0680/6-7.

⁹ BD: Francesco Ceccarelli (1752-1814), castrato, employed in Salzburg and then in Dresden; frequent guest in the Mozarts' house.

¹⁰ BD: Luigi Gatti (1740-1817), deputy director of music at the Reale Accademia in Mantua, later employed as second music director in Salzburg. On the cantata cf. No. 0721/13 ff. Leopold must have written about the performance in the missing letter No. 0724.

¹¹ BD: *The Abduction from the Seraglio*.

¹² BD: In literature a confused and deliberately senseless text, in music often a composition pieced together from fragments of other compositions.

¹³ BD: Johann Mederitsch, known as Gallus (rooster, cock). Contrary to Mozart's dismissive judgement, his son Franz Xaver Wolfgang spoke of him as “perhaps the greatest contrapuntalist of our time”.

¹⁴ = “The singing cock, sitting in a tree, going cock-a-doodle-doo”.

¹⁵ BD: Florian Leopold Gassmann (1729-1774).

¹⁶ BD: Text by Carlo Goldoni; the Italian version was first performed on 5th January, 1768.

¹⁷ BD: Mozart intends the French *exécrable* (abominable).

getting as far as the third performance; – [30] it is as if, since the German Opera will die after Easter anyway, they wanted to finish it off even before its time; – and Germans themselves are doing this – the devil’s work! –

In my last letter I requested you to remind *Gatti* diligently regarding the books with Italian *opera* texts, and I do this again now; – now I must tell you about my *idea*; – I do not believe that Italian *opera* will last long [35] – and I – furthermore back German opera. – Even if it costs me more effort, ultimately I still prefer it. – Every *nation* has its opera – why should we Germans not have it? – is the German language not as good to sing as French or English? – not more singable than Russian? – Well; – I am now writing a German *opera* for myself: – [40] I have chosen for it this play from *Goldoni* – *Il servitore di Due Padroni*¹⁹ – and the first act has already been translated entirely – the translator is *Baron Binder*.²⁰ – but it is still all a secret until everything is finished;²¹ – well, what do you think of that? – do you not think that I can play my part well in this? – Now – I must close; *Fischer*²² is with me – the *bass* [45] – he has asked me if I would write to *Le grôs*²³ in Paris on his behalf – because he will leave for there before the end of this Lent; – here they are playing the fools’ stunt and letting a man go who will never be replaced; – My wife and I kiss your hands 1000 thousand times and we embrace our dear sister from the heart and are, sir, eternally your

[50]

most obedient children,
*W: et C: Mozart mp*²⁴

¹⁸ BD: Ignaz Umlauf (1746-1796), established as composer, viola player and music director in Vienna. On the opera cf. No. 0713/56.

¹⁹ BD: Carlo Goldoni (1707-1793): “The Servant of Two Masters”.

²⁰ BD: Johann Nepomuk Friedrich, Baron [Freiherr] Binder von Krieglstein.

²¹ BD: Mozart never finished the music. KV 435 (416b, fragment) and KV 433 (416c, draft) may be linked to this project.

²² BD: Johann Ignaz Ludwig Fischer, pupil of Raaff, distinguished singer. Mozart wrote at least one “*scena*” for him.

²³ BD: Joseph le Gros, originally a singer who made his debut at the Paris Opera in 1764, was director of the *Concert spirituel* 1777-1791.

²⁴ mp = “*manu propria*” = “in his/her own hand”.