

0773. MOZART TO HIS FATHER, SALZBURG

À / Monsieur / Monsieur Leopold de Mozart / Maitre de la Chapelle de
S: A: R: / L'archeveque de et à / Salzbourg

Vienne ce 24 de Xber
1783

Mon très cher Père!¹ –

[5] I have received your last letter² of the 19th safely, along with the enclosure for the *opera*.³ Now about the *opera*, being the most urgent: – Esteemed *Abate Varesco*⁴ wrote this specially over *Lavina's cavatina: à cui servirà la musica della cavatina antecedente*⁵ – namely *Celidora's cavatina*. – But this is impossible – for in *Celidora's cavatina* the text is quite without comfort or hope. [10] – and in *Lavina's cavatina* it is very full of comfort and hope. – By the way, the *fashion* for having one re-babbling the other's little song has been flogged to death and is no longer customary. – It can at best apply, for example, to a *soubrette* with her *amante*, namely in the *ultime parti*.⁶ – my idea would be to have the *scene* begin with a beautiful *duet* [15] which can easily start with the same text by means of a little *aggiunta*⁷ to the *coda*. – After the *duet* the dialogue follows as otherwise. – *e quando s'ode il campanello della Custode*, then *Mad:^{selle} Lavina* will be so gracious as to make way for *Celidora* so that *Celidora* has the opportunity to sing a beautiful *bravour aria* as *prima donna*. – [20] this way, I would think, it would be better for the *compositeur*,⁸ for the singer, and for those watching and listening, and the whole *scene* would most certainly become more interesting as a result. – Moreover, one will hardly be able to tolerate the same aria from the 2nd singer after one has heard it sung by the first. – Now, I do not know what you intend with the following sequence: – [25] at the end of the newly inserted *scene* with the 2 ladies in act one, the esteemed *Abate* writes: – *siegue la scena VIII. che prima era la VII. e così cangiansi di mano in mano i numeri*.⁹ – according to this description, I must surmise, once again contrary to expectations, that the *scene* after the *quartet*, where both *ladies* sing their little songs down to us from the window one after the other, is to be retained. [30] – that is quite impossible. – By this the *act* would not only pointlessly become longer for nothing, but also very insipid – to me it was furthermore very laughable to read this: – *Celidora: tu quì m'attendi, amica. alla Custode farmi veder vogl'io; ci andrai tu puoi*.¹⁰ *Lavina. si dolce amica, addio. (Celidora parte)*. *Lavina* sings her *aria*. |: *Celidora* returns again and says :| *Eccomi, or vanne* etc. [35] and now *Lavina* goes and *Celidora* sings her *aria*. – they change places with each other like *soldiers* on guard. – Moreover it is also much more natural for the men, since in the *quartet* they have all agreed about carrying out their plot, to leave to drum up the necessary people for it and for the 2 ladies to retire quietly to their *seclusion*. – [40] the only thing one can still allow them is a couple of lines of *recitative*. Yet I also believe quite firmly that there was never any intention of retaining the *scene*, but that the indication that it should be dropped was simply forgotten. – I am very curious to hear your good idea for getting *Biondello* into the tower. – as long as it is

¹ = “To Monsieur Leopold de Mozart, Music Director to His Royal Highness the Archbishop of and in Salzburg. Vienna, this 24th day of December, 1783 / My very dear father!” (“de” added before “Mozart” in the Viennese style).

² BD: No. 0772, lost.

³ BD: Probably more text for the opera *L'oca del Cairo*.

⁴ BD: Abbate Giambattista Varesco (c. 1736-1805), court chaplain in Salzburg from 1766, wrote the texts for *Idomeneo* KV 366 and *L'oca del Cairo* KV 422. Asked by Mozart to write an opera buffa (*L'oca del Cairo*) for him for Vienna.

⁵ = “For which the music of the preceding cavatina will serve”.

⁶ = “Final sections”.

⁷ = “Addition”.

⁸ = “Composer”.

⁹ = “Now follows scene VIII, which was previously VII, and thus the numbers change from hand to hand.”

¹⁰ BD: Erroneous; either “poi” or “andar”.

comical we will quite willingly allow a little unnaturalness here. [45] – I have no worries at all about a few fireworks. – There are such good fire regulations here that one has nothing at all to fear from a theatrical firework. – For *Medea*¹¹ is of course given so often here, at the end of which half of the *palace* collapses, the other half goes up in flames. – Tomorrow I will have a look for the book with the text of the Rauchfangkehrer.¹² [50] – I have not yet been able to ask about the *Contessina*¹³ |: or the Countess :|. – If it turns out not to be available, perhaps Umlauff's¹⁴ Irrlicht – Die Schöne Schusterin by Umlauf – Die Pilgrimme von Mecka¹⁵ would be suitable? – the last 2 of these *operas* are very easy to perform. – But Kühne¹⁶ will probably already have them. – I ask you to pass on compliments from both of us to him and to her. [55] – You will hopefully have received my last short letter. – Once again, I ask you to send me the 2 *duets*, Bach's *fugues*, and especially *Idomeneo*. – you know why. – I attach great importance to going through this *opera* on the *keyboard* with Count Sickingen.¹⁷ – if you could have the *fugues* of *Emanuel Bach* copied |: I believe there are 6 of them :| and sent to me, you would be doing me a further great favour. – I forgot to request this of you in Salzburg. – In the meantime I wish you well in every way. – Two days ago, on Monday, the *society*¹⁸ once again had its grand *concert* – I played a *concerto* for them and *Adamberger*¹⁹ sang one of my *rondeaux*. – It was repeated yesterday – only with a *violinist*²⁰ playing instead of my *concerto*. [65]. – two days ago the *theatre* was full. – but yesterday empty. – N.B. the *violinist* was presenting himself in public for the first time. – Now *Adieu*. I kiss your hands 1000 times, and we are both your

to my sister and everyone
1000 little kisses. Adieu

most obedient children,
W et C: Mozart mp²¹

¹¹ BD: Probably the monodrama by Benda (1722-1795). Cf. No. 0504/39 ff.

¹² BD: Salieri's opera; cf. No. 0771/3, 9.

¹³ BD: *La Contessina*, opera buffa in three acts, text by Goldoni/Coltellini; German version by Gassmann (1729-1774).

¹⁴ BD: Ignaz Umlauf (1746-1796), established as composer, viola player and music director in Vienna.

¹⁵ BD: *Les Pèlerins de Mecque* by Gluck.

¹⁶ BD: Actor and theatre director. Cf. No. 0765/32 etc.

¹⁷ “graf Sickingen”. BD: It is not clear which member of the Sickingen family is meant here.

¹⁸ BD: Concert of the Vienna Tonkünstler-Societät [Musicians' Society], a benevolent association.

¹⁹ BD: Josef Valentin Adamberger, sang in Germany, Italy and then in Vienna, where he was well paid. Sung in many of Mozart's works. Freemason.

²⁰ BD: Probably Martin Schlesinger from Pressburg/Bratislava (c. 1751-1818).

²¹ mp = “manu propria” = “in his/her own hand”.