

Paris, 12th June
1778

My dear husband,

Your letter of 28th May¹ reached me safely on 9th June, and I was pleased to read there of your good health. I and Wolfgang, [5] thanks be to God, are well; yesterday I had my blood let,² so will not be able to write much at all today. Wolfgang is not at home, he is eating with *Monsieur Raff*³ at Count Sickingen's,⁴ where they call on him at least once every week, for he loves Wolfgang above everything else and has a great knowledge of music himself, also composes himself. Herr Raff [10] calls on us almost every day, he also calls me Frau Mother, and is thoroughly fond of us, often stays with us for 2 or 3 hours. He has called on me specially to sing to me, and has sung me 3 arias, which was a true joy to me; whenever he comes here, he always sings me something, I am completely in love with his singing. He is a true man of honour, sincerity in person; you would, if you knew him, [15] love him with your whole heart. You want to know where we are lodging: first of all, simply look for the *Rue Montmartre*,⁵ and after that the *Rue Cléry*.⁶ In this *Rue Cléry* it is the first street on the left when one comes from the *Rue Montmartre*; it is a beautiful street, and mainly people of rank reside there, absolutely tidy, not far from the boulevard, and healthy air, the house owners very good [20] and honest, not thinking of profit, which is unusual in Paris. The day before yesterday I dined at Herr Haina's⁷ and in the afternoon went for a walk to Luxembourg Gardens, afterwards to the Palace,⁸ saw the beautiful picture gallery and came home astonishingly tired. I was alone, for Wolfgang had eaten with *Raff* at *Monsieur Grim*'s,⁹ Herr Heima took me home, [25] he often calls on us, and his wife has also visited us twice with her daughter, who is already married. You did not write how the *serenata*¹⁰ was received, if it was beautiful, and if the Archbishop¹¹ was happy with it. Which, then, of the *Colloredos* is the Bishop of Olmiz,¹² is he a brother or a cousin of our prince?¹³

¹ BD: No. 0450.

² BD: Leopold reminded his wife of this: cf. Nos. 0448/230; 0451/45; 0471/52 ff.

³ BD: Anton Raaff (1714-1797), son of a shepherd, originally intended for the priesthood, appeared as a singer in Bonn, Vienna, Paris, Lisbon, Madrid and Naples before a longer period of service in Mannheim and Munich. Cf. No. 0120/54.

⁴ BD: Karl Heinrich Joseph, Count [Graf] Sickingen zu Sickingen, Palatine Ambassador (1777-1791) and patron of music in Paris.

⁵ Rue Montmartre.

⁶ Rue de Cléry.

⁷ BD: Franz Joseph (François-Joseph) Haina (1720-1780), born near Prague, husband of the music publisher Gertrude Haina, nee Brockmüller: they were the first publishers of KV 179 (189a); 180 (173c); 254; 309 (284b); 310 (300d); 311 (284c); 354 (299a), cf. No. 617/66-68. Horn player to Baron Bagge, later trumpeter in royal service. Friend of Mozart in Paris in 1778, especially during the last days of his mother's life. Cf. No. 0084/18.

⁸ BD: The *Jardin de Luxembourg* and the *Palais de Luxembourg*.

⁹ BD: Friedrich Melchior von Grimm (1723-1807), 1748 private secretary to the Saxon Count [Graf] Friese, with whom he moved to Paris, where he was in contact with the Encyclopaedists. Various publications, one of which, in 1763, mentioned the Mozart children. His relationship with Mozart broke down in 1778 during the latter's stay in Paris.

¹⁰ BD: Giacomo (Jakob) Rust, (1741-1786), 1776-1777 music director in Salzburg, wrote the *Serenata II Parnasso confuso*, cf. No. 0403/66 ff., 0448/242.

¹¹ BD: Hieronymus Joseph Franz de Paula, Count [Graf] Colloredo (1732-1812), Prince-Archbishop [Fürst-Erzbischof] of Salzburg from 1772. Employer of Leopold and, for a time, of Wolfgang. Cf. No. 0263/9.

¹² BD: Anton Theodor, Count [Graf] Colloredo-Mels und Wallsee, a cousin of the Salzburg Archbishop. Bishop of Olmütz 1777-1811. Cf. No. 0403/68.

¹³ "fürsten". BD: = Hieronymus, cf. line 27.

[30] *Apropof[s]*,¹⁴ what is Lenerl *Mardinelli*¹⁵ doing, where has she gone, to her relatives¹⁶ or to the lieutenant of the guards?¹⁷ As far as the lightning conductors¹⁸ are concerned, I cannot say much about them here because I can't speak the language, but I have not noticed any, but in Manheim the conversation once turned to that: there they do not find it is a good thing, they say they attract the lightning where often no storm would come, [35] and when there such a lot of conductors, the storm stays in that place, and does not move until everything erupts and flattens all the crops in the fields; it is better to let nature have its way than for man to force it, God can find a person in the end, and then a lightning conductor is of no help. The rockfall on Capuchin Mountain¹⁹ is surely another piece of luck, a big accident could have happened, [40] the mountains simply are not good if there are houses standing so close to them. The New Gate²⁰ could also collapse sometime. Here we have the most beautiful summer, most pleasant; thanks be to God, we have not had any thunderstorms yet. I and Wolfgang |: if he is eating at home:| eat for only 15 *sols* at midday, but in the evening 4 Pleasures for 4 *sols*. But so that you know what this is in German, [45] they are rolled wafers which are called *Plaisirs* in French. Our compliments please to all good friends, both gentlemen and ladies, we speak of our Salzburg friends almost daily and wish they were here with us, their eyes and mouths would open wide if they saw what is to be seen here. *Adio*, keep well, both of you, I kiss you many 1000 times and remain your true Frau Mozart; [50] I must finish, for my arm and eyes are hurting.

MOZART'S POSTSCRIPT:

Now I too must certainly write something about our *Raaff*. You will no doubt remember that I did not write²¹ well of him at all from Mannheim, that I was not satisfied with his singing, [55] *enfin*²² that I simply did not like him at all. This, however, was the reason: that I had not, so to speak, heard him at all in Mannheim. I heard him for the first time in the rehearsal of Holzbauer's *Günther*.²³ Well, there he was in his own clothes, his hat on his head, and a stick in his hand. When he was not singing, he stood there like a child standing next to its sh--.²⁴ When he started to sing the first *recitative*, [60] it went quite passably, but now and again he let out a shout – which did not please me; he sang the arias with a certain laziness – and often some notes with too much spirit – it was not to my taste at all. This is a habit that he has always had – which the *Pernachi*²⁵ school perhaps brings with it, for he is a pupil of *Bernachi*. At court he always sang arias which in my opinion

¹⁴ Here: = “By the way”.

¹⁵ BD: Widow of Anton Martinelli, 1753-1776 teacher of Italian at court for pages in training, cf. No. 0217/39, 42.

¹⁶ BD: Not identified.

¹⁷ BD: Leopold, Count [Graf] Lodron (1730-1802), received the vacant position of captain of the bodyguard [Leibgarde-Hauptmann] in 1761. Chamber Councillor [Kammerrath]. Tax collector [Generaleinnehmer].

¹⁸ BD: The installation of such wires on a palace in Salzburg is described in No. 0450/29 ff.

¹⁹ BD: Kapuzinerberg, Salzburg. On the recent rockfall cf. No. 0450/61 ff.

²⁰ BD: Neutor, Salzburg, recently tunnelled through a rocky outcrop. Cf. No. 0089/65.

²¹ BD: No. 0373/59 ff.

²² = “In short”.

²³ BD: Ignaz Jakob Holzbauer (1711-1783), from 1753 senior music director [Oberkapellmeister] in Mannheim, composer. Stayed in Mannheim rather than moving to Munich with the Elector in 1778. Mozart was positively impressed by his singspiel *Günther von Schwarzburg* in 1777 (première 5 January 1777), cf. No. 0373/52; No. 0377/59 ff.

²⁴ BD: Still current in Bavaria and Austria as a description of an awkward or clumsy person.

²⁵ BD: “Pernachi”, in lines 64, 71: “Bernachi”. Antonio Bernachi (1685-1756), from Bologna, one of the great belcanto castratos. From 1701 in Düsseldorf, Munich, Vienna and London. From 1736 a revered teacher in Bologna.

[65] were not at all suitable for him, because he did not please me at all. Here, finally, when he made his debut at the *Concert Spirituel*,²⁶ he sang the scene *non sò d'onde viene* by Bach,²⁷ which is my favourite piece anyway, and there I heard him singing for the first time – he was to my liking – that is, in singing of this kind – but the manner in itself – the *Bernachi* school – [70] it is not to my *gusto*.²⁸ He goes into the *cantabile* too much for me. I admit that when he was younger, and in his heyday, it will have had its effect, that he will have surprised people – and I do like it, but it is too much for me, to me it often seems ridiculous. What I do like about him is when he sings those little things, those certain *andantinos* – just as he also has certain arias, [75] in these he has his own manner. Everyone has his place. I imagine that his main strength was the *bravura* – which one still notices in him, as far as his age allows it: a good chest and long breath, and then – these *andantinos*. His voice is beautiful and very pleasant. If I simply close my eyes when I listen to him – then I find in him much that is the same as with Meissner,²⁹ [80] only that *Raff's* voice seems to me even more pleasant – I am speaking about now, for I did not hear either of them in their good years – so I cannot speak about anything except the manner or method of singing, for singers retain this. Meissner, as you know, has the nasty habit that he often deliberately lets his voice tremble, and often marks – complete quarter-notes – yes, often even eight-notes in held notes [85] – and I have never been able to stand this in him. And this is truly repulsive, it is singing completely contrary to nature. The human voice trembles on its own anyway – but in a manner – to such an extent that it is beautiful – that is the nature of the voice. One imitates this not only on wind instruments, but also on bowed instruments [90] – yes, even on keyboard instruments – but as soon as one goes over the limits it is no longer beautiful – because it is contrary to nature. This seems to me just as on the organ when the bellows puff jerkily. – Now, *Raff* does not have this, he cannot bear it either. As far as the true *cantabile* is concerned, however, it is Meissner that I like |: although he too is not entirely to my liking, [95] for he also does it too much for me:| yet certainly better than *Raff*. As far as the *bravura* is concerned, however, the passagework and *roulades*, there *Raff* is the master – and then his good and clear pronunciation – that is very fine. And then, as I said above, *andantinos*, or short *canzonetti* – he wrote four German songs³⁰ which are truly charming. He is very fond of me. We are very good friends together. [100] He calls on us almost every day. I have now dined certainly 6 times at Count Sücküngen's, the Palatine Ambassador³¹ – there one always stays from 1 o'clock to 10, but the time passes so quickly with him that one does not notice it at all. He is very fond of me, but I also very much like being in his home – he is such a friendly and sensible gentleman and has such a sound faculty of reason [105] – and has such true insight into music; I was there once again today with *Raff*; because he had asked me |: a long time ago now :|, I brought him some of my things. Today I took the new *symphony*³² with me, which I had just finished, and with which the *Concert Spirituel* will open on Corpus Christi. This was exceptionally pleasing to both. [110] I too am very well satisfied with it, but whether it will be received well I do not know – and, to tell the truth, that is of very little importance

²⁶ BD: Cf. No. 0383/65: The *Concert spirituel*, the first commercial concert series in Paris, was founded by Anne Danican-Philidor in 1725. It featured a chorus and orchestra performing in *Les Tuileries*.

²⁷ BD: Wolfgang knew it from Johann Christian Bach's opera *Ezio* in the King's Theatre on 24th November, 1764, during the Mozarts' stay in London.

²⁸ = "Taste/style".

²⁹ BD VII: Joseph Nikolaus Meissner (c. 1725-1795), son of the Salzburg court musician Niklas Meissner (c. 1691-1760). Employed in Salzburg from 1747, but often on tour. Reputed to sing everything from high tenor to deep bass, but cf. Mozart's judgement in No. 0453/83 ff. His sister also sang in Salzburg.

³⁰ BD: Lost.

³¹ BD: "graf Sücküngen, Pfälzischen gesandten". Cf. line 7.

³² BD: KV 297 (300a), the so-called Paris Symphony, performed for the first time on 19th June, 1778, in the *Concert Spirituel*.

to me. For who are the ones who will not like it? – The few sensible Frenchmen who are there, I vouch for it, will like it; the stupid ones – I see no great disaster if it does not please them – but I do indeed have hopes [115] that the donkeys will also find something in it that they may like; and then I have not misjudged my *premier coup d’archet*!³³ – and that is indeed enough. The oxen³⁴ here have a field day with it! – What the devil! I see no difference – and they just start on it right away – as elsewhere. It is laughable. *Raff* told me a story about *Abaco*³⁵ on this subject – [120] he was asked by a Frenchman in Munich or somewhere: – *M:’, vous avés etè à Paris? – oui; est-ce que vous étîés au Concert spirituel? – oui; que dites vous du Premier coup d’archet? – avés vous entendu le premier coup d’archet? – oui; j’ai entendu le premier et le dernier – coment le dernier? – que veut dire cela? – maisoui, le premier et le dernier – et le dernier même m’a donnè plus de plaisir.*³⁶ [125] – Now I must finish. Please give my compliments to all good friends, both gentlemen and ladies, especially to Herr Bullinger.³⁷ I kiss your hands a thousand times, and I embrace my sister with my whole heart, and I am, sir, your most obedient son,

Wolfgang Amadè Mozart

³³ Literally “first stroke of the bow”. In the late eighteenth century the loud tutti passage with which many symphonies began.

³⁴ BD: A characteristic expression of Mozart’s for those of little culture or understanding.

³⁵ BD: Evaristo Felice dall’Abaco (1675-1742), from 1704 cellist at the Bavarian court; went with Elector Max Emanuel into exile in Brussels. From 1715 back in Munich as concertmaster.

³⁶ = “Monsieur, have you been in Paris? – Yes. Were you at the concert spirituel? – yes. What do you say about the first stroke of the bow? – Did you hear the first stroke of the bow? – yes; I heard the first and the last – Eh, the last? – what does that mean? – Exactly, the first and the last – and the last gave me even greater pleasure.”

³⁷ BD: Abbé Franz Joseph Johann Nepomuk Bullinger (1744-1810), Jesuit, private tutor, friend of the Mozart family in Salzburg, where he seems to have arrived between 1774 and 1776. House tutor to Count [Graf] Leopold Ferdinand Arco, later to Count [Graf] Sigmund (“Sigerl”) Lodron. Amateur viola player. Mozart called him “his best of all friends” (cf. Nos. 0331/5; 0459/1).