

[Vienna, 21st March,³ 1785]Most highly estimable Privy Counsellor!⁴ –

I was greatly at fault: I must confess that I did not immediately inform you of the safe arrival of your letter and the *packet* sent with it; – [5] that I have in the meantime supposedly received 2 further letters from you: – that is not the case. I would have been woken out of my sleep at once by the first one and would have answered you as I am doing now. – I received your 2 letters together last post-day. – I have already made my confession that I was at fault here in not answering you at once; – [10] but as far as the opera⁵ is concerned, I would have been able to write as little to you then as now. – Dear, esteemed Privy Counsellor –! – I have so much work on my hands that I can hardly find a minute that I could use for myself. – As a man of such great insight and experience, you yourself know better than I do that one must read through something of this kind with all the attention and consideration possible [15] – not once – but many times. – So far I have not had time to read it once – without interruption. – All that I can say at the moment is that – I would not like to part with it yet; – I therefore beg you to entrust this piece to me for a little time more. – In the event of its stimulating me to set it to music, [20] I would certainly wish to know in advance whether a performance in a particular place has in fact been decided upon? – for such a work deserves, from the perspective of both poetry and music, not to be written in vain. – On this point I hope for an elucidation from you, sir. – Regarding the future theatre for German opera, I cannot give you any information at the moment, [25] since |: with the exception of the building work in the Kärntnerthortheater set aside for the purpose :| it is proceeding very quietly. – It is to open with the beginning of October. For my part, I do not promise it much luck. – To judge by the measures taken so far, they are trying rather to bring down the German opera completely, when it had perhaps only fallen for a limited time, – instead of helping it up onto its feet again – [30] and preserving it. – My sister-in-law *Lange*⁶ is the only one allowed to take part in the German singspiels. – *Cavallieri*,⁷ *Adamberger*,⁸ *Teüber*,⁹ all Germans of whom Germany may be proud, have to stay at the Italian theatre – have to do battle against their own compatriots! – – – the German singers, male or female, are easy to count at the moment! – [35] and should there really be others as good as those named, yes, even better, which however I very much doubt, the theatre *management* here seems to me to think too much about *economics* and not

¹ BD VIII, p. 130: The letters Nos. 0867 and 0866 come between Nos. 0852a and 0853; 0867 precedes 0866.

² BD: Anton Klein (1748-1810), linguist and poet, entered state service when the Jesuit order, to which he had belonged, was dissolved; he became a professor of poetry and philosophy in Mannheim. Wrote dramas and texts for singspiels. He sent the text of *Kaiser Rudolf von Habsburg* to Mozart, whose reaction (No. 0867) was restrained. In the end Mozart made no use of the text.

³ Corrected according to BD VIII, p. 130.

⁴ “Hoch Schätzbarester Herr geheimer Rath”.

⁵ BD: Cf. No. 0866. Klein’s text *Kaiser Rudolf von Habsburg*, finally not realised.

⁶ BD: Aloisia Lange, née Weber, an outstanding soprano whom Mozart met in Mannheim. His first love, who, as he admitted on 25th Dec., 1780 (No. 0596/27), was “not yet a matter of indifference” to him. From August, 1782, Mozart’s sister-in-law.

⁷ BD: Catarina Cavalieri (1755 in Vienna – 1801 in Vienna), trained by Salieri, active in German and Italian opera troupes in Vienna 1778-1793, sang *Konstanze* in the première of the *Abduction*, *Donna Elvira* in the Vienna première of *Don Giovanni*, *Demoiselle Silberklang* in the *Schauspieldirektor*, and the *Gräfin* in the Vienna performance of *Figaro* on 28th August, 1789; Mozart wrote for her KV 469 No. 8; KV 540c.

⁸ 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.

⁹ BD: Elisabeth Teyber (1744-1816), singer, member of perhaps the only family in Vienna to have maintained contacts with all the members of the Mozart family for 20 years.

enough about *patriotism* when they send for costly people from elsewhere while they have the same here locally – at least equally good – and free of charge; – for the Italian troupe does not need any of them – as far as numbers are concerned, [40] the Italians can play on their own. – The *idea* at the moment is to fill up the gaps in the German opera with *actors* and *actresses* who only sing if absolutely needed; – most unfortunately, the *managers* of both the theatre and the orchestra have been kept on, the people who have contributed the most, by their ignorance and indolence, to causing the fall of the work of their own hands. [45] If only one single patriot were taking part in the game – it would take on a new face! – but then the National Theatre, which is already springing up so nicely, would perhaps go on to blossom, and it would of course be an eternally shameful stain on Germany if we Germans once started seriously to be German in our thinking – German in our deeds – German in our speaking and even German – in our singing!!! –

[50] Do not be offended, my most worthy Privy Counsellor, if I have perhaps gone too far in my fervour! – Completely convinced that I am speaking with a German man, I gave my tongue free rein, which at the moment is unfortunately so seldom allowed to happen that one could brazenly get drunk after such an outpouring from the heart without running any risk of damaging one's health. – I remain, sir, with the most profound respect,

My most estimable Privy Counsellor,

Vienna, 21st May, 1785.

Your most obedient servant,

W: A: Mozart mp¹⁰

¹⁰ mp = *manu propria* = in his own hand.