

1069. MOZART TO GOTTFRIED VON JACQUIN,¹ VIENNA

*À / Monsieur / Monsieur Geoffroy de Jacquin / à / Vienne. / On the
Rennweg / in the Botanic Garden.*

Dearest friend! –

Prague, 15th Oct., 1787.

You will probably believe, sir, that my *opera*² is already over – yet – [5] in that you err somewhat. First of all, the theatre personnel are not as skilful here as in Vienna, as would be necessary to rehearse such an opera in this short time.

Secondly, I found so few preparations and arrangements on my arrival here that it would have been a sheer impossibility to give it on the 14th, which was yesterday; [10] – so yesterday³ they put on my *Figaro*, which I conducted myself, in the fully *illuminated* theatre. – In this context I must tell you something amusing. – Some of the most prominent ladies here |: especially a most illustrious one :| condescended to find it ridiculous, unfitting, and heaven knows what else, that they wished to stage *Figaro* for the Princess,⁴ *The Mad Day*⁵ |: as they like to call it here :|; [15] – It did not cross their minds that no *opera* in the world can be suitable for such an occasion unless it is specially written for it; that it is absolutely all the same whether they put on this opera or that one, as long as it is a good one and one the Princess does not know, and that, at least, is certainly the case with *Figaro*. – [20] In short, the ring-leader was so successful with her eloquence that the government refused to let the *impresario*⁶ use the piece on that day. – Now she was triumphant! – *hò vinta*,⁷ she shouted from her *box* one evening; – She quite certainly did not suspect that the *hò* could change to a *sono*!⁸ – But the following day *le Noble*⁹ came – brought His Majesty's¹⁰ order [25] that if the new *opera* cannot be given, they must put on *Figaro*! – If you, my friend, had only seen the beautiful, magnificent nose of this lady now! – Oh, it would have caused you as much pleasure as it did me! – *Don Giovanni* has now been scheduled for the 24th; –

the 21st: it was scheduled for the 24th, but one of the female singers, [30] has fallen ill, causing a new delay; – since the troupe is small, the *impresario* lives in constant worry, and spares his people as much as possible so as not to be placed, due to an unexpected indisposition, in the most critical of all critical situations, that of being unable to put on a performance at all! – That is why everything drags out here, [35] because the *singers* |: out of laziness :| do not want to rehearse on opera days, and the *entrepreneur* |: out of fear and anxiety :| will not force them to do so, but what is this? – – Is this possible? – What do my ears see, what do my eyes hear? – – a letter from – – – I could almost rub my eyes red – it is – may the devil take me † God stand by us † indeed from you, sir;¹¹ – it is true; [40] If winter were not just before the door, I would smash the oven to pieces.¹² But since I currently use it

¹ BD: Gottfried von Jacquin (cf. Nos. 1022, 1069, 1072), whose sister Franziska was one of Mozart's keyboard pupils (cf. note on No. 0972/2). Their father was a famous botanist.

² BD: Don Giovanni.

³ BD: In the presence of Archduchess [Erzherzogin] Maria Theresia, the "Princess" of line 14, and her brother Franz.

⁴ "Prinzessin".

⁵ "den tollen tag".

⁶ BD: Pasquale Bondini († 1789), already singing as a bass in Prague in 1762/63, was in charge of the German Theatre in Dresden and an Italian opera company performing in Prague and Leipzig.

⁷ = "I have won".

⁸ = "I have been beaten".

⁹ BD: The actor Le Noble, member of the "Comédie française" of the Electoral Palatinate, founded in 1770. Mozart met him again in Frankfurt am Main in 1890.

¹⁰ "S: Mayt:".

¹¹ BD: No. 1068 (lost).

¹² BD: An exuberant expression of joy.

often, and anticipate using it even more in future, I will take the liberty of moderating my astonishment a little and of telling you in only a few words that I am extraordinarily glad to receive news from you and of a family which I value so greatly. –

[45] the 25th: – today is the 11th day that I have scribbled on this letter; – from that you will certainly see that there is no lack of goodwill – if I find a little time, I will continue to fill out the painting a little – but I simply cannot remain on the job for long – because I belong too much to other people – and too little to myself; – this is not my life of choice, as I surely hardly need to tell you; – [50]

On the coming Monday, the 29th, the opera will be performed for the first time; – you shall receive an *account*¹³ of it immediately afterwards; – as far as the *aria* is concerned¹⁴, it is simply impossible |: for reasons of which I will tell you in person :| to send it to you. –

[55] I am very glad indeed to read what you tell me about Kathel,¹⁵ that she is in fine fettle, and knows to behave *respectfully* towards the cats, but with friendliness towards the dogs; – if your Papa |: to whom I commend myself most warmly :| is happy to keep her, that is then the same for me as if she had never been mine; – Now, I wish you well; – I would ask you to kiss the hands of your gracious esteemed Mama in my name, [60] to commend me warmly to your esteemed sister and brother,¹⁶ and to rest assured that I will always be, sir,

your true friend and servant

W: A: Mozart mp¹⁷

¹³ BD: Cf. No. 1072.

¹⁴ BD: Cf. No. 1072/8; the aria is perhaps KV 621a.

¹⁵ BD: Possibly a serving girl previously employed by Mozart and now in service with the von Jacquin family.

¹⁶ BD: “Papa”, “Mama”, “sister”, “brother”: cf. notes on No. 1022/47, 68, 70. Father: Nikolaus Joseph, Baron [Freiherr] von Jacquin (1728-1817), was one of the most significant botanists. Born in Leyden; studied in Antwerp, Louvain and Leyden. Sister: Franziska, Edle [the lowest noble title, equivalent in rank to “Esquire”] von Jacquin (1769-1850), one of Mozart’s keyboard pupils; Mozart wrote the piano part of the so-called “Kegelstatt” (“skittles”) Trio KV 498 for her. 1022/68: Joseph Franz, Baron [Freiherr] von Jacquin (1766-1839), botanist, succeeded his father as university professor. Mozart wrote the double canon KV 228 (515b) in his house album. Joseph Franz made an entry in Mozart’s house album on the same day.

¹⁷ mp = manu propria = in his own hand.